

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
HYDERABAD | MONDAY | 30 DECEMBER 2024

WEATHER

 **Max:** 30.4°C
Min: 19.2°C
RH: 48%
Rainfall: 00.0mm

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Max/Min temp. 30/18 °C

ASTROGUIDE

Krodhi: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Margasira Bahula
Amavasya till 3.55 am (Tuesday)
Star: Moola till 11.54 pm
Varjyam: 10.15 pm to 11.54 pm
Durmuhurtham: 12.40 pm to 1.24 pm; 2.52 pm to 3.36 pm
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am

HJRI CALENDAR

Jamadi-us-Saani 27, 1446 H

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.41 am

Zohar: 12.29 pm

Asar: 4.16 pm

Maghrib: 5.58 pm

Isha: 7.11 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 06.45 AM

SUNSET TODAY 05.51 PM

MOONRISE 06.10 AM

MOONSET 05.16 PM

COUNTER POINT



Not for a New Year's party... It's an invitation from our rebels to start a new political party!

IN BRIEF

Bhopal gas: Toxics wastes shifted

Bhopal: Forty years and 26 days after the Bhopal gas tragedy, officials on Sunday began shifting 337 tonnes of toxic waste from the Union Carbide factory premises, site of the gas leak here, to an incineration facility in Pithapuram in Dhar district in Madhya Pradesh. Leak of the methyl isocyanate from the Union Carbide plant on the intervening night of December 2 and 3, 1984 leading to death of around 15,000 people and injuries to around one lakh others.

■ Full report Page 7

MANMOHAN'S ASHES IMMERSSED IN YAMUNA

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 29

In a solemn ceremony on Sunday, the ashes of former prime minister Manmohan Singh were immersed in the Yamuna River near the Majnu ka Tila Gurdwara by his family members, adhering to Sikh rituals.

The ashes were collected from Nigambodh Ghat early Sunday morning by his family and subsequently taken to Asth Ghat on the Yamuna riverbank near the Gurdwara for immersion. Present at the site were Singh's wife, Gursharan Kaur, their three daughters, Upinder Singh, Daman Singh, and Amrit Singh — and other close relatives.

As part of the Sikh mourning traditions, the family is set to conduct an 'Akhand Path' at their official residence on 3, Motilal Nehru Marg on January 1. Additionally, a 'Bhog' ceremony, 'Antim Ardas,' and 'Kirtan' will be held on January 3 at the Rakab Ganj Gurdwara near the Parliament complex.

"We will always remember Manmohan Singh Ji's service to the nation, his dedication, and his simplicity," the Congress stated on its official X (formerly Twitter) handle, sharing images of the immersion ceremony. However, BJP leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa expressed disappointment over the absence of representatives from the Gandhi family.

■ Full report Page 9



WORLD | 9

Russia to abandon missile moratorium, says Lavrov

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SPORTS | 11

Melbourne Test poised for exciting final day

TABLOID

Hidden dangers when swimming in the Sea



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Flight from Bangkok belly-lands, crashes, bursts into flames

South Korean jet crash kills 179; 2 crew members rescued

Muan County, South Korea, Dec. 29: The deadliest air accident ever in South Korea killed 179 people on Sunday, when an airliner belly-landed and skidded off the end of the runway, erupting in a fireball as it slammed into a wall at Muan International Airport.

Jeju Air flight 7C2216, arriving from the Thai capital Bangkok with 175 passengers and six crew on board, was trying to land shortly after 9 am locally at the airport in the south of the country, South Korea's transport ministry said.

Two crew members survived and were being treated for injuries.

The deadliest air accident on South Korean soil was also the worst involving a South Korean airline in nearly three decades, according to the transport ministry. The twin-engine Boeing 737-800 was seen in local media video skidding down the runway with no visible landing gear before crashing into navigation equipment and a wall in an explosion of flames and debris. The Boeing model involved in the crash, a 737-800, is one of the world's most flown airliners with a strong safety record. It was developed well before the MAX variant involved in a recent Boeing safety crisis. "Only



A passenger plane is in flames at the Muan International Airport in Muan, South Korea, on Sunday. 179 people on board died in the crash. — AP/PTI

the tail part retains a little bit of shape, and the rest looks almost impossible to recognise," Muan fire chief Lee Jung-hyun told a press briefing. The two crew members, a man and a woman, were rescued from the tail section of the burning plane, Lee said. They were being treated at hospitals with medium to severe injuries, said the head of the local public health centre. — Reuters

■ More report Page 9

Air Canada flight catches fire, all passengers evacuated safely

Ottawa, Dec. 29: An Air Canada flight coming from St John's city on Newfoundland Island had a rough landing at the Halifax airport in Goffs in Nova Scotia province that saw the aircraft skid down the runway and part of it catching fire.

A statement issued by the airport said the inci-

dent involved Air Canada Flight 2259, which was operated by PAL Airlines, CBC News reported. The incident happened around 9:30 pm local time. The statement does not say how many people were on the plane. The people on board were evacuated, and then taken to a hangar.



Koneru Humpy

Humpy wins Rapid chess world title

New York, Dec. 29: Grandmaster Koneru Humpy capped a wonderful year for Indian chess, defeating Irene Sukandar of Indonesia to emerge the FIDE Women's World Rapid Chess champion here on Sunday.

Humpy had won the event back in 2019 at Georgia and the Indian No. 1 is only the second player after China's Ju Wenjun to clinch the title more than once.

Humpy's achievement laced a sensational year for the chess fraternity.

■ Full report Page 11

Russia shot down plane: Azerbaijan

Baku, Dec. 29: Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev said Sunday that the Azerbaijani airliner that crashed last week was shot down by Russia, albeit unintentionally, and criticised Moscow for trying to hush up the issue for days.

"We can say with complete clarity that the plane was shot down by Russia. (...) We are not saying that it was done intentionally, but it was done", he said. Aliyev said that the airliner was hit by fire from the ground over Russia and rendered uncontrollable.

New Year to see key poll battles in TG civic bodies

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

The year 2025 is poised to witness a high-stakes political showdown in the state as the tenure of multiple local bodies comes to an end. With the term of the existing municipalities concluding on January 26, and the tenure of gram panchayats having ended this February, followed by those of zilla and mandal parishads in July, the state government is preparing for a series of elections.

It is planning to conduct local body elections in phases between January and March. Incidentally, they will coincide with elections to teacher MLC seats and one graduate MLC seat, which are slated for March.

The state Cabinet, in its scheduled meeting on December 30, is expected to finalise the election roadmap for these local bodies. The term of incumbent MLCs, including Graduate MLC T. Jeevan



Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy visited Kanha Vanam in Rangareddy district on Sunday and planted saplings.

— BY ARRANGEMENT

Reddy (Congress) from the Nizamabad-Adilabad-Medak-Karimnagar constituency, and two Teacher MLCs — Alugubelli Narsi Reddy (Independent) from Nalgonda-Warangal-Khammam, and Kura Raghotham Reddy (PRTU) from Nizamabad-Adilabad-Medak-Karimnagar, will expire on March 29.

The Congress govern-

ment is sparing no effort to secure these seats, towards which it is engaging with voters across seven of the ten undivided districts in Telangana.

The elections are widely seen as a referendum on the Congress government's performance since assuming office in December 2023.

■ Page 3: Cong. pins hope on its welfare schemes

MERIT OVER | MEDIOCRITY

Musk has been consistently posting on X in favour of H-1B programme

Trump defies MAGA, backs Musk on H-1B

Washington, Dec. 29: President-elect Donald Trump has supported billionaire Elon Musk's defence of H-1B visas, following disquiet among the backers of Trump's Make America Great Again (MAGA) campaign.

The tech billionaire vowed to "go to war" to defend the H-1B programme, which was responsible for attracting the best talent from across the world to the US. He argued last week that foreign workers are needed for tech companies like Musk's SpaceX and Tesla.

Musk had blasted a user on X who used a video of

Musk discussing SpaceX processes to go after the billionaire's stance on the visa programme.

"The reason I'm in America along with so many critical people who built SpaceX, Tesla and hundreds of other companies that made America strong are because of H1B," Musk wrote on X.

He also used a profane quote from Tom Cruise's character in the movie *Tropic Thunder* to attack his critics.

"Take a big step back and F--- YOURSELF in the face (sic)," Musk said.

Trump on Saturday sided with Musk, saying he fully

backs the programme opposed by some of his supporters.

"I've always liked the visas; I have always been in favour of the visas. That's why we have them," Trump told the *New York Post* newspaper.

Trump's first administra-



Elon Musk

tion restricted the programme in 2020, arguing that it allows businesses to replace Americans with lower-paid foreigners.

Musk, himself once on an H-1B visa and whose Tesla has hired workers using the programme, defended the tech industry's need to

bring in foreign workers. Several of Trump's supporters and immigration hardliners have been increasingly pushing for scrapping the H-1B visa programme amid debate over immigration.

The debate sparked when Laura Loomer, a right-wing influencer, criticised Trump's selection of Indian-American entrepreneur Sriram Krishnan as an adviser on artificial intelligence policy in his coming administration.

Krishnan favours the ability to bring more skilled immigrants into the US.

Loomer declared the stance to be "not America

First policy" and said the tech executives who have aligned themselves with Trump were doing so to enrich themselves.

The debate intensified when Ramaswamy criticised American culture for promoting mediocrity. He faced backlash for the comment.

In response, Musk called for removing contemptible fools from the Republican Party who oppose his immigration agenda.

Musk later clarified that his statement was addressing the hateful, unrepentant racists he considers a threat to the Republican Party's future. — PTI



THERE is no discrimination anywhere, no one is big, no one is small. Our 'Kumbh' is the 'Maha Kumbh' of unity.

— NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister

ing 'Maha Kumbh' in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, beginning January 13, Modi described it as the "Maha Kumbh of unity." He highlighted the event's diversity and inclusivity, stating, "There is no discrimination anywhere, no one is big, no one is small. Our 'Kumbh' is the 'Maha Kumbh' of unity." Modi urged devotees to return with a resolve to eliminate hate and division, encapsulating his message with, "Mahakumbh Ka Sandesh, Ek Ho Poora Desh" and

"Ganga Ki Aviral Dhara, Na Bante Samaj Hamara."

Highlighting technological advancements, Modi revealed that this year's Kumbh would feature a digital experience with AI-driven navigation and a chatbot providing information in 11 Indian languages. This innovation aims to enhance the experience for both domestic and international devotees.

In a significant announcement, Modi declared that India will host the "World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit" (WAVES) from February 5-9 next year. Comparing WAVES to global gatherings like Davos, he underscored its potential to showcase India's creative talent on the world stage.

"Giants from the media and entertainment industry, as well as creative minds from across the globe, will gather in India," he remarked, highlighting the summit's role in establishing India as a hub for global content creation.

■ Page 7: PM remembers ANR, hails Bastar Olympics role

Farmers allocated ₹72,659 cr in state Budget, says Bhatti

MOULI MAREEDU | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, who heads the Cabinet sub-committee on Rythu Bharosa, on Sunday said that the Congress government has allocated ₹72,659 crore for agriculture and allied sectors in the Budget and was committed to providing financial assistance to farmers despite financial constraints.

He was chairing a meeting with committee members, ministers Tummala Nageswara Rao, D. Sridhar Babu, and Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, at the secretariat to discuss issues concerning farmers.

The members took stock of the procedures that had to be finalised for seamless implementation of the scheme for the upcoming yasangi crop. They reviewed opinions and the requests of farmers received during the sub-committee's tour of the state.

Bhatti said that ₹21,000 crore had been deposited in the bank accounts of



Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka

● THE DEPUTY Chief Minister said that ₹21,000 crore had been deposited in the bank accounts of farmers within two months under the scheme to waive farmer loans of up to ₹2 lakh.

farmers within two months under the scheme to waive farmer loans of up to ₹2 lakh. An agriculture commission has been set up to work for the welfare of the farmers to make agriculture a profitable proposition.

Bhatti said that it has been decided to bring farmer forums built by the previous government into full use.

■ Page 3: Rythu Bharosa funds released: Bhatti

EVENTS
TODAY

Seminar on Fascism in the 21st Century: Elements of continuity and change
Time: 11 am
Venue: Sundarayya Vignana Kendram
Book release by Mrunalini
Time: 9 am
Venue: Ravindra Bharathi

Patola art exhibition
Time: 10 am; Venue: Labels, the pop up space
All India Crafts Mela
Time: 10.30 am
Venue: Shilparamam
Art and Dreams: Art exhibition by Amya Singh
Time: 10 am
Venue: Sublime Galleria
Kuchipudi dance by Arjun Dasanamayan; Time: 6 pm
Venue: Ravindra Bharathi

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SURVALOK COMPLEX, Gunfoundry, Hyderabad, Ground floor, with car parking, bathroom and water, near Girls hostel College, two shops for rent, Doctor Clinic, Beauty Parlor, any business. Contact: 8919409235. (S/2425/C02075)

FLATS

THREE & MORE

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DECCAN Chronicle

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3-day delay for Numaish due to mourning for Manmohan Singh

Over 1,500 exhibitors to showcase diverse products, services for visitors

DC CORRESPONDENTS
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

Hyderabad's annual shopping extravaganza Numaish or All India Industrial Exhibition will begin three days late on January 3, due to the seven-day national mourning period declared following the passing away of former prime minister Manmohan Singh.

Organised by the Exhibition Society, Numaish has been a cherished tradition for over eight decades, blending shopping, entertainment and cultural experiences. The exhibition will run until February 15.

With more than 1,500 exhibitors from government departments, public sector undertakings, corporate and multinational companies, visitors can expect a showcase of diverse products and services.

Also in place are clear signages for easy navigation, free parking, open-air theatre hosting cultural programmes, relaxation areas and effective security measures with CCTV cameras and metal detectors at all entry points.



Visitors will also enjoy amenities like free drinking water, an on-site medical dispensary, a corporate hospital, a 24/7 ambulance service for emergencies. Getting to the venue has been made convenient.

Hyderabad Metro Rail will run additional trains and offer ticket counters on-site, while TSRTC will operate special bus services, ensuring smooth transportation for all attendees. The Exhibition Society manages 20 educational institutions, providing affordable education to nearly 30,000 students annually.



Workers prepare joy rides to be set up for the 84th All India Industrial Exhibition (Numaish) that will start at Nampally on January 3.

—P.SURENDRA

The society generates employment for over 10,000 people and supports 1,000 small enterprises each year.

The boy, visiting with his parents, K. Dayakar, from Boduppall, Hyderabad, was in the Rs 150 ticket queue for darshan when he tried to relieve himself and accidentally wedged his head between the grills.



Yadagirigutta staff rescues boy trapped in queue grills.

—DC

KID SAFE AFTER HIS HEAD GETS STUCK IN TEMPLE QUEUE GRILL

DC CORRESPONDENT
YADADRI-BHONGIR, DEC. 29

Yadagirigutta Sri Lakshminarasimha Swamy temple employees rescued a six-year-old boy whose head got stuck between the grills of the queue lines on Sunday.

The boy, visiting with his parents, K. Dayakar, from Boduppall, Hyderabad, was in the Rs 150 ticket queue for darshan when he tried to relieve himself and accidentally wedged his head between the grills.

Temple staff quickly calmed the child and safely freed his head without causing any injuries, ensuring the situation was resolved promptly.

ENCROACHMENTS RAZED IN SCB NEAR B'PALLY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

In a joint operation led by SCB chief executive officer Madhukar Naik and the cantonment traffic police, encroachments were removed in Bowenpally, the area near Diamond Point, Delhi Public School and Imperial Gardens.

The drive focused on clearing illegally erected structures that were occupying footpaths, particularly near schools and market areas.

CEO Naik, along with superintendent of police M. Devender and traffic officers Shariq, Sridhar, Madhu Babu and Paul, supervised the operation.

OU-JAC LEADERS THREATENED BY ALLU ARJUN FANS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD DEC.29

OU-JAC leaders filed a complaint at the Osmania University police on Sunday, alleging that they are receiving threatening calls from persons purporting to be fans of the actor Allu Arjun.

The JAC leaders stated: "We are receiving hundreds of calls in the name of 'Allu Army' and 'Allu Arjun fans' demanding that we apologise to the actor for attacking his house." Their phone numbers were being put up on social media, leading to more calls.

OU station house officer N. Rajender said the police were investigating the complaint.

"It is Allu Arjun's responsibility to stop the phone calls," the JAC leaders demanded and threatened: "If the threatening calls do not stop, we will surround up Allu Arjun's house with thousands of people."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Air Force Academy trains 54 NCC cadets

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

The Air Force Academy (AFA) here hosted a two-week training camp for 54 National Cadet Corps (NCC) Air Wing cadets across India, including 18 girls.

Coordinated by the No. 1 Telangana Air Squadron NCC, the camp offered cadets a rare glimpse into the day-to-day workings of IAF departments.

Cadets interacted with trainees who entered the IAF through the NCC entry scheme. his initiative is part of an ongoing effort to align NCC training with military expo-



NCC Air Wing cadets at the Air Force Academy, in Hyderabad on Sunday.

—DC

sure, allowing cadets to experience the practical aspects of armed forces operations.

Cadets described the programme as an eye-opener, with several noting that it deepened their interest in pursuing military careers.

TGSRTC to operate 6,500 special buses

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

The TGSRTC said that it would operate 6,500 special buses for the Sankranti festival season, including 300 for Andhra Pradesh. The fare would be 1.5 per cent more than normal services.

The services will be operated from January 7 to 15 from Hyderabad to various destinations.

The free travel facility for women will applicable in these special buses of Palle Velugu and Express categories, but only within the state borders.

TGSRTC Rangareddy regional manager Sreelatha stated that

improved facilities will be provided to passengers.

Officials expected a big demand on January 10, when 1,600 buses will be operated, and January 11, when 1,900 buses will run.

To reduce congestion at the main bus terminals, the services will be operated from local areas.

Kids protest delay in road completion

NABINDER BOMMALA | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

Schoolchildren on Sunday protested against an inordinate delay in the completion of a 3-km road connecting Vattinagulapally and Osmannagar. The children, protesting with their parents, held placards that read "No road, no tax", "Fix the roads", "roads are for everyone" among others.

Work has been going on for two years, and the road surface is pitted with potholes. The plying of heavy vehicles on the road further deteriorates its condition.

Works related to another road used by school children connecting a gated community to a school in Osmannagar are yet to commence though the foundation stone was laid before the Assembly elections in November last year.

"Over 5,000 people, who live in these areas, are being affected adversely due to the pathetic condition of the roads.

Our multiple requests seeking completion of the road were in vain," said Ramana Eshwaragari, the president of Tellapur Neighbourhood Association (TeNA) comprising over 50 gated communities.

SAALINI LOKESH | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

Over 1,700 runners, including many senior citizens, ran the distance at the ACE East Hyderabad Half Marathon organised by the LB Nagar Runners on Sunday. The group, formed in 2011 with four members, now has nearly 500 active participants.

Chiranjeevi Gondapaka, one of the founding members, said: "We have participants from all walks of life — doctors, lawyers, politicians, real estate professionals, and police officers. On the ground, we are all runners, united by a common goal."The



Hyderabad runners (LB Nagar) participating Ace east Hyderabad Half Marathon at Unicent School Vanasthali Hills, Tatti Annaram on Sunday.

—P.SURENDRA

event featured runs in four distances: 5 km, 10 km, 16 km, and 21 km. The longest run saw 450 registrations, while the 16 km and combined 5 km and 10 km runs attracted over 1,300 participants.

The event followed an "untimed run" format, focusing on self-improvement rather than competition.



The event followed an "untimed run" format, focusing on self-improvement rather than competition.

ELIXIR | OF LIFE

Colonies get potable water from board in dead of night with no fixed timing

Sleepless in Hyd? Blame erratic water supply

SABA ANJUM SHAIK | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

Residents from various localities in Hyderabad are suffering with water supply timings, disrupting their routines and sleep cycles. Many have raised their concerns and are asking authorities to address the issue.

In Kukatpally's Baghameer, residents complain of receiving water at 3.20 am. Rajendar Goud, a resident, said, "We are sleeping at 12 midnight due to today's busy lifestyle, and waking up at 3 am to collect water.

SUPPLY CRISIS

● **WATER** is released from 10 pm to 4 am, causing inconvenience.

● **CITIZENS** express frustration over late-night water supply schedules.

● **RESIDENTS** ask for water supply during daytime or early evening hours.



PEOPLE seek timely updates on water supply schedules to plan accordingly.

CALLS FOR regularity and predictability in water distribution.

LATE-NIGHT WATER SUPPLY DISRUPTS SLEEP AND DAILY ROUTINES FOR RESIDENTS.

These timings are severely affecting our sleep cycle. We request the authorities to release water at a more

reasonable time, like 4.30 am." Residents of Nagarkhanna in Begum

Bazaar are facing inconvenience by late-night water supply, between 11 pm and 11.30 pm and last-

ing for 30-45 minutes.

"I sleep early at night as I have to leave early for my morning shift. But due to these odd water timings, I have to set an alarm and wake up around 11.30 pm to fill water, which is very problematic," said one resident.

In Sai Krupa Colony, Yaprall, residents face another challenge. Water arrives without any prior intimation, forcing people to remain alert during odd hours.

"I have to wake up early in the morning and keep checking for water. This process is exhausting,"

said Sudha Rani, a resident of the colony.

Citizens across these areas are asking for rescheduling water supply to more convenient hours and providing timely intimation about water supply timings to avoid confusion.

Water board chief general manager Amarendra Reddy explained that water was typically released only between 10 pm and 4 am.

However, a breakdown in Singur Manjeera Phase 3 and Phase 4 was causing the current spell of inconvenience.

SHORT TAKES

GHMC TEAMS UP WITH NIT TO EASE TRAFFIC SNARLS

NABINDER BOMMALA
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

The GHMC, in collaboration with National Institute of Technology (NIT)-Warangal, is proposing to establish a technology centre to address urban challenges such as traffic congestion and drainage management. The aim is to develop deliver modern, practical, and sustainable solutions, incorporating them at the planning stage. The centre's traffic and transportation division will conduct in-depth analyses of the city's traffic patterns and transportation systems. The drainage information centre will undertake a comprehensive study of Hyderabad's drainage network.

During a meeting on Saturday, GHMC commissioner K. Ilambarithi emphasised the importance of collaborative efforts between GHMC and NIT-Warangal. Prof. C.S.R.K. Prasad from NIT Warangal suggested entering into a structured agreement to ensure sustained operations.

BANDI ASKS TG TO CLEAR FEE REIMBURSEMENT

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

Union minister of state Bandi Sanjay Kumar demanded that the state government clear the fee reimbursement arrears of students before Sankranti, and said the BJP would launch a protest if it failed to do so. He demanded immediate fulfillment of the promise to recruit 2 lakh jobs without delay.

The Congress government had only notified 25,000 posts but claimed that it had 50,000 posts, he said, while speaking to students who took free coaching at the Deendayal coaching centre arranged by him in Karimnagar.

He said that four years after the Biswal Committee announced 2 lakh vacant posts, they remained unfilled. The state government hadn't fulfilled its promise of providing unemployment dole of ₹4,000 a month.

In contrast, he said, the Narendra Modi government had announced that it would fill up 10 lakh jobs in October 2022, and had so far completed 9.25 lakh recruitments.

30-YR-OLD LABOURER DIES BY SUICIDE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

A 30-year-old man died allegedly by suicide at his residence in Balapur. Inspector Sudhakar identified the deceased as Mohd Waseem, a labourer. Police said he had sent his wife and three children to stay with her parents some days ago. On December 27, he did not answer his wife's phone calls. She sent Waseem's brother Mohd Khaleem to check on him. Kalem found all main door locked. On breaking the door and entering the house, he found Waseem's body.

On information, police registered a case of death under suspicious circumstances and launched a probe.

Revanth wants KCR invited to spl session

Assembly Session to pay tributes to Manmohan Singh

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

With the Assembly holding a special session on Monday to pay tribute to the late former prime minister Manmohan Singh, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has directed officials to invite all Opposition leaders including BRS president and former chief minister K. Chandrashekar Rao to honour the architect of economic reforms.

The Chief Minister recalled the services of Dr Singh which led to the formation of the Telangana state during the UPA-II regime.

Apart from the economic reforms, he said that Dr Singh had contributed immensely in the formation of Telangana state by coordinating with the UPA



Workers make arrangements for one-day Assembly session convened to mourn the death of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Monday. — P. SURENDRA

allies.

As Rao had praised Dr Singh in the Assembly a few years ago, the Congress government invited him to pay

respect to the former

prime minister.

The Opposition leaders of all political parties would have enough time to pay their tributes to

the former prime minister.

The invitations were sent to all floor leaders to attend the special session.

Cong. pins hope on welfare sops

FROM PAGE 1

The last local body elections in 2019 resulted in an overwhelming victory for the then-ruling party BRS. However, the political dynamics have since shifted significantly. Over the past year, numerous district-level leaders and grassroots cadre have defected from the BRS to the Congress, altering the state's political landscape.

The Congress is pinning hopes on its flagship farmer-centric welfare schemes to sway the rural electorate. The ₹21,000 crore crop loan waiver that has benefited 23 lakh farmers is expected to resonate strongly with the rural populace. The scheduled Sankranti launch of the Rythu Bharosa scheme will replace the BRS-initiated Rythu Bandhu. It promises ₹15,000 per acre annually to farmers—an increase from the ₹10,000 provided under Rythu Bandhu. Additionally, Rythu Bharosa will extend support to landless and tenant farmers with ₹12,000 per year, a

BJP eyes TG panchayat polls

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

The BJP national leadership is focusing to extend the party's gains in the Lok Sabha elections to the coming local body polls in the state.

The party's national leadership met in Delhi to prepare an action plan for the local body polls in Telangana. The meeting was attended by national general secretary and party's Telangana incharge Sunil Bansal, party organisation incharge Chandrasekhar, a num-

ber of senior leaders from the state including Telangana BJP president Kishan Reddy, national vice-president and Mahbubnagar MP D.K. Aruna and the party's AP unit incharge Purandeswari.

The party discussed the Congress' promise to increase reservation for backward classes (BC) in elections for panchayat raj bodies and deliberated on ways to expose the ruling party in the state. The BJP's new face, R. Krishnaiah, has conducted 'BC Mahasabha' with over 30 BC associa-

provision that did not exist earlier.

The Congress has also wooed paddy farmers by providing a bonus of ₹500 per quintal for fine variety paddy during the kharif season. These initiatives are expected to tilt the rural vote bank in Congress's favour, feel its leaders. The elections will cover a vast demo-

graphic, with the state's rural and urban electorate set to vote for ward members and sarpanches in 12,769 gram panchayats, 5,857 MPTCs (mandal parishad territorial constituencies) and 539 ZPTCs (zilla parishad territorial constituencies). These elections are critical for the Congress,

which recently marked its first anniversary in power on December 7.

As the BRS attempts to regain lost ground and BJP attempts to make inroads into rural areas, the Congress hopes that its pro-farmer schemes and grassroots mobilisation will consolidate its position ahead of these crucial elections.

In memory of Singh



Members of Sikh community conducted special prayers (Ardas) for strength and peace of departed leader and former prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh at Gurudwara in Ashok Bazaar, near Afzal Gunj on Sunday. — DC

80% ATTEND RECRUITMENT TEST FOR MPHA

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

The Medical and Health Services Recruitment Board (MHSRB) conducted the recruitment test for multipurpose health assistant (female) on Sunday.

The test was conducted in the computer-based test mode. Of the 24,268 candidates who had applied for the posts, 20,600 appeared for the exam.

The attendance was 84.89 per cent.

Yadagirigutta Temple Board set to get Cabinet approval

NEERAJ KUMAR | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

The state Cabinet is likely to approve the constitution of the Yadagirigutta Temple Board, which will administer the famous temple of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy atop Yadagirigutta. The board will follow successful examples like the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) and incorporate the best practices from Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple Board of Kerala, among others.

The file to constitute the board has been forwarded to the legal department for its review. After the Chief Minister's approval, the special law to constitute the Board would be tabled before the next Assembly session.

According to sources, the temple board is likely to have 18 members and the focus is to include a sizable number of Vedic Scholars



and eminent religious personalities. The board is likely to include endowment commissioner and temple executive officer.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has given clear directions to officials on how the board should be a unique one in the country. He has given more emphasis on spirituality, cultural activity and involvement in philanthropic initiatives like TTD.

He emphasised the use of technology to streamline temple operations, such as

online booking for darshan, donations and accommodation etc. The new board would function accordingly to maintain transparent financial systems to build trust among devotees.

To have a spiritual feel, the board would be set to function to blend spirituality with world-class infrastructure, making it a destination for both devotees and tourists. It would have a dedicated eco-friendly temple town surrounding the temple to enhance the experience, promoting sustainable tourism.

Like TTD, the new board's administrative management theory will have a clear approach for the grand celebration of annual 11-day long Brahmotsavams, the major festival to be held in February and March. It would include a grand religious event with a number of unique cultural programmes to engage people from Telangana and other parts in the country.

CM SEEKS SPECIAL SKILLS FOR GOVT SCHOOL STUDENTS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Sunday visited Kanha Shanti Vanam at Kanha village of Nandigama mandal of Ranga Reddy district, where learned about the soft skills provided to children and students.

He congratulated students who demonstrated skills like identifying colours and reading words while blindfolded.

The Chief Minister opined that steps need to be taken to provide such skills in government schools and residential schools as well.

Later, he visited the tree conservation centre in the Kanha Shanti Vanam premises.

The administrators explained to the Chief Minister the procedures related to the development of various types of trees and planting.

CM PATS MINISTER AS RRR TENDER PROCESS STARTS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Sunday called minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy over the phone and congratulated him for initiating the tender process for the north part of the Regional Ring Road project.

In reply, Venkat Reddy thanked the Chief Minister stating that the groundwork for the RRR project had been completed thanks to his support and cooperation in meeting Union Ministers and officials to clear road blocks.



Irrigation minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy addressing IIM-A students in Ahmedabad. — BY ARRANGEMENT

Uttam: Democracy can achieve dreams

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

Stressing the vital role of parliamentary democracy in empowering individuals, irrigation minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Sunday said that India's democratic framework was the foundation for realising the dreams of common people.

Addressing students and faculty at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad on Sunday, Reddy said that parliamentary democracy in India has given countless individuals, including himself an opportunity to grow and serve the nation. "It's a system that we must cherish and protect through all our efforts," he said. He praised IIM Ahmedabad as one of the leading business schools not only in India but globally and said it has produced alumni who've reached dizzy heights as corporate leaders in various sectors.

Uttam Kumar Reddy shared the story of his inspiring journey from a fighter pilot in the Indian Air Force to a prominent political leader. He said he

had flown MiG-21 and MiG-23 jets in frontline squadrons. "Discipline, focus, and precision were non-negotiable, as even a minor error could cost lives and compromise missions," he said. The minister said he worked at Rashtrapati Bhavan as a senior officer under Presidents R. Venkataraman and Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma. "Serving two Presidents was a unique experience. It gave me a deep understanding of the functioning of our country's highest office and further strengthened my admiration for our democracy," he said. Transitioning to his political journey, Uttam Kumar Reddy told the audience how he left his government role in 1994 to join the Congress. "I was inspired by the idea of serving people directly. It wasn't an easy start — I lost my first election in Kodad. It was a bitter experience, but one that taught me resilience and determination. I continued working for the people and won the Kodad seat in 1999. That victory marked the beginning of a journey I deeply cherish."

COUNTER | IDEOLOGY

Five-day event to discuss strategies, sees intense debate by participants

Seminar explores aspects of fascism in 21st century

SHRIMANSI KAUSHIK | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

Is there a difference between the fascism experienced in the 21st century and the one witnessed by Germany and Italy in the previous century? This and many other aspects of fascism were explored in a seminar organised by the Arvind Memorial Trust here on Sunday.

The inaugural event of the seventh 'International Arvind Memorial Seminar' saw participation of hundreds of activists and academics from across the country. The five-day-long seminar, 'Fascism in the Twenty-First Century: Elements of Continuity and Change and the Question of the Contemporary Proletarian Strategy' aims to understand the various aspects of fascism and what could be an effective strategy



Speakers at the inaugural event of the seventh 'International Arvind Memorial Seminar' on Hyderabad on Saturday. — DC

against it.

The seminar was organised by Arvind Institute of Marxist Studies — an initiative of Arvind Memorial Trust in memory of Arvind Singh, a prominent Left-leaning intellectual and political activist. The trust organises a national

seminar every year at different locations on some important aspects of social change, and the city hosted the event for the first time.

The first day's event was presided by R. Raghu, Dr Nikhil Ekade, Prem Prakash, Shivani Kaul, and K.G. Ramachandra Rao.

The inaugural event saw participants from different parts of the country including Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and from the United States,

Australia and Nepal. The attendees partook in a detailed discussion on the question of fascism.

The key paper of the seminar, 'Fascism in the Twenty-first Century: Elements of Continuity and Change' was presented by Abhinav Sinha, who is a Marxist theorist and editor of a workers' newspaper 'Mazdoor Bigul'.

The paper examined the essential characteristics of fascism throughout history and analysed the various aspects that distinguish fascism in the 21st century from that of the 20th century witnessed by Italy and Germany.

Abhinav criticised the common tendency to term all reactionary forces as fascist and to expect all features of fascism to repeat themselves in an identical manner. He also mentioned that the Modi-Shah regime in India is undoubtedly an example of fascist regime.

The presentation was followed by an in-depth discussion which was enriched by several questions and additions from the participants. The session also witnessed intense debates among different aspects of fascism.

Senior Supreme Court lawyer Colin Gonsalves will speak on the 'Rise of Fascism and the Question of Law and Judiciary' on Monday.

Many prominent activists, intellectuals, writers and professors from various states are expected to attend the seminar. About a dozen other papers by prominent writers such as Shivani Kaul, P.J. James, Nicolai Messerschmidt, Jiselle Hannah from Australia Asia Worker Links (AAWL) and others, analysing the phenomenon of fascism and the strategy of resistance will be presented in the next four days.

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Telangana State Trade Promotion Corporation Ltd., Invites e-Tenders from reputed Manpower Agencies for supply of Manpower.

Tender can be downloaded from website: <https://tender.telangana.gov.in> (NIT No. TSTPC/ADMIN/MANPOWER/TENDER/2024) from 11.00 AM on 30.12.2024.

Last date for submission of online tender on: 16.01.2025 at 5.00 PM.

For further clarification if any contact DGM (Admn): Mobile No. 9000991829.

Sd/- JOINT MANAGING DIRECTOR
DIPR RO No: 8434-PP/CL/Adv/1/2024-25

IN BRIEF

Excise cops seize foreign liquor

Hyderabad: State excise cops seized 43 bottles of foreign liquor valued at ₹2 lakh from a house in Shamshabad on Sunday. Excise official Jeevan Kiran said 20 special teams personnel were checking for liquor smuggling in the city.

Man arrested for carrying drugs

Hyderabad: Excise cops during a routine check at Rampur crossroads in Kodad in Nalgonda district arrested Anil Kumar of Odisha for smuggling ganja-laced chocolates from Bhubaneswar to the city. They seized 1,000 contraband chocolates, which he planned to sell at ₹30 apiece, Kodad excise circle inspector said.

Excise cops destroy ganja, hash oil

Hyderabad: State excise cops destroyed 240 kg ganja, 496 kg MDMA and hash oil, that were seized in 59 cases by the Narayanguda, Secundrabad, Ameerpet and Charminar stations. Excise enforcement DCP K.A.B. Shastri and AES Srinivasa Rao destroyed the drugs at a facility in Suryapet district. The value of the contraband was ₹2 crore, said V.B. Kamalasan Reddy, director, excise.

One killed as bike rams into median

Hyderabad: A 25-year-old died and another was injured after their two-wheeler rammed into a road median in Kokapet in Narsingi on Saturday night. The deceased was identified as Sathwik, 25, and the survivor as Kiran. They were reportedly heading to Kokapet from Moinabad on the bike. After locals spotted them and dialled 100, police shifted Kiran to a hospital for treatment.

HAMMER FROM BUILDING SITE FALLS ON CAR

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 28

A car occupant narrowly escaped after a hammer fell on his vehicle from an under-construction flyover near Kondapur. The windshield of his car was damaged. He posted the image on social media. The motorist called for awareness on safe construction practices. It was also reported that when a traffic police official confronted the contractor who allegedly reacted to it in a casual manner. The matter was later settled after the contractor compensated the motorist for the damage, police said.

GMR: NO STAFFERS INVOLVED IN GANJA SMUGGLING

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited in a statement said that none of its staff members was involved in liquor smuggling. In a rejoinder to a report in these columns on December 28, the GHIAL said the two arrested persons, a constable and a home guard, did not work in the international airport.

The headline of the report inadvertently mentioned that RGIA staff was held. The error is regretted.

FUND | CRUNCH

Regular maintenance becomes a challenge as is the purchase of spare parts

40% of police patrolling vehicles 'unfit' for use

MOULI MAREEDU | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 28

Almost 4,000 vehicles belonging to the state police department suffer from poor to nil maintenance due to 'paucity of funds'. Ironically, all these were earmarked for regular patrolling purposes. Reportedly, almost 40 per cent of vehicles, including MUVs, are found 'unfit' for use on patrolling rounds. According to sources, the BRS government had sanctioned around ₹500 crore for purchase of 4,000 vehicles, including MUVs, motor-bikes and others, exclusively for patrolling. The vehicles were

equipped with sirens, flashing lights, GPS and radio systems. Now, regular maintenance of the vehicles has become a challenge in itself as is the purchase of spare parts. A few days back, some patrol vehicles, deployed when actor Allu Arjun was produced before the Nampally court, broke down. The driver of one vehicle sought the assistance of passersby to push the vehicle. "Drivers are facing difficulties in attending night patrol duty. When the vehicle breaks down, it is quite embarrassing for the police department. When this issue was reported to



Passersby helping the driver by pushing the police vehicle, which broke down in the middle of the road near Nampally court

DGP: Mobile, vehicle thefts increase crime rate in state

SC, ST atrocity cases at 2,257 in 2024 compared to 1,877 cases in 2023

MOULI MAREEDU | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

The incidence of crime went up nearly 10 per cent in the state this year, compared to 2023. The police has registered 2.34 lakh cases of theft, robbery and cheating, in 2024 as compared to 2.13 lakh reported in 2023. Crime against women, however, has declined slightly. Director General of Police Jitender said on Sunday. In his annual round-up, the DGP said the increase in theft cases could be largely related to cellphones and vehicles. "At least 10.06 per cent of cases were theft of mobile phones. Robbery cases have shown a marginal increase mainly due to registration of mobile phone snatching as robberies which contributed to almost 12 per cent of robbery," the DGP explained.

The cases of SC, ST atrocities have been increased to 2,257 in 2024 as compared to 1,877 cases registered in 2023. Dr Jitender said there would be zero tolerance to SC/ST atrocities and swift justice would be ensured to victims. In 2024, compensation of ₹3.56 crore was paid to victims in 766 cases.

The conviction rate has also gone down slightly: In 2024, 28,477 cases resulted in conviction, or 35.63 per cent, with it was 36.85 per cent or 39,371 cases in 2023.

The DGP said the police have been giving highest priority in getting conviction in cases being charged to deliver justice.

To get more convictions, the court constables and staff are being regularly guided and trained.

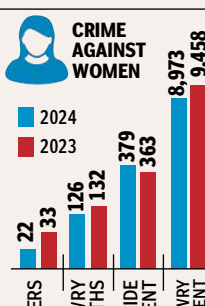


Telangana DGP Jitender releases the annual report during a press meet at the DGP headquarters in Hyderabad along with other senior police officials. — S. SURENDER REDDY

CRIME PICTURE

CRIME	2024	2023
Murder for gain	83	59
Dacoity	58	42
Robbery	703	495
Burglary	7,524	4,803
Theft	19,480	14,393
Murders	856	789
Kidnap	1,525	1,362
Rioting	324	447
Counterfeiting	13	15

CRIMES IN ALL CATEGORIES, EXCEPT RIOTING AND COUNTERFEITING, WERE NOTED IN 2024



DR JITENDER SAID

four exchanges of fire took place in Telangana in combating the banned Maoists, resulting in the neutralising of 14 extremists and arrest of 85 others including a special zonal committee member, a district committee secretary, 16 area committee members and other cadres of the Maoists.

CBI ON JOB TO GET PHONE TAPPING ACCUSED: DGP

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

Director General of Police (DGP) Jitender on Sunday said that the CBI was trying to get Interpol to issue red corner notices against former SIB chief T. Prabhakar Rao to bring him back to Hyderabad for questioning in the phone tapping case.

He refused to reply to questions on the issue of actor Allu Arjun as the matter was sub-judice. "Serving a red corner notice is an international issue which is taken up by the CBI. There is a standard operating procedure (SOP) that needs to be followed," Dr Jitender explained.

The DGP also responded on the rising incidence of suicide among police personnel. "It is common that the policemen also commit suicide. It could be pressure or other issues. We will look into the issues and provide proper counselling to policemen to prevent such incidents," the DGP said.

Harish Rao concerned over alarming rise in crime in TG

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

BRS leader and former minister T. Harish Rao expressed deep concern over the alarming rise in crime rate in the Telangana, including shocking cases involving women and minor girls. It highlighted the severe governance failure under the Congress government, Harish Rao said.

In a statement, Harish



T. Harish Rao

Rao pointed out that Telangana had witnessed a shocking 22.5 per cent surge in crime, with a 28.94 per cent rise in cases of rape, with 2,945 cases registered in a year, averaging eight

per day. "In a shameful reflection, 82 per cent kidnapping and abduction cases have been reported. Women's safety and dignity are at high risk," Harish Rao stated. "Heinous crimes like the murder of retired bank manager Gangareddy and his wife in Amberpet and BRS leader Sridhar Reddy remain unsolved and no arrests have been made so far," he said.

99.2% of rape accused known to victims

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

At least 99.2 per cent of the rape accused are known to the victims, which has become key concern in teenage relationships. The state also registered a rise in the number of women and children going missing. A total of 2,945 cases of rape were registered in

2024 compared to 2,284 cases in 2023. Director General of Police (DGP) Jitender said that Only in 23 cases, the rape accused was unknown to the victim. He said that 87 victims were aged below 15 years, 1,970 between 15-18 years and 888 victims were aged above 18 years. In

most cases, police had arrested the accused within eight hours of reporting of the incidents. "In 2024, police acted swiftly in 940 cases of rape against 812 in 2023. In rape and Pocso cases, ₹5.42 crore of compensation has been paid in 428 cases," the DGP said.

He said that 1,122 women were reported to be missing in 2024, while 403 boys were missing. Jitender said that these cases had shown an increasing trend mainly because all the cases of missing minors were registered as kidnap cases. At least 82 per cent of victims are underage or 18 years old, and most of the children were

traced. SHE teams have attended 10,862 complaints from women for harassment in public places resulting in 830 FIRs, 3,329 petty cases and 15,664 persons sent for counselling. Four accused were sentenced to life in three cases and five accused were awarded 20 years imprisonment in five cases.

YouTuber in new row for cash vow

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

A YouTuber, who faced police action in August for throwing money on busy streets and creating chaos, has sparked a fresh row by promising to give cash to anyone who met him at a popular city mall. The video the YouTuber, flanked by bouncers, confidently inviting his followers to the location. While he claimed it was a gesture to share his earnings with fans,

many criticised the act as another attempt to garner attention. His earlier stunt of tossing bundles of cash on crowded streets had resulted in public outrage and ruckus, leading to a police case against him by the Kukatpally police. Many condemned his latest announcement as reckless and attention-seeking, and requested the Cyberabad police to take action against him.

Disruptive flier taken off flight to Mumbai

SABA ANJUM SHAIK and MANVI VYAS | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

The RGIA police on Sunday booked a woman for allegedly behaving in an unruly manner on a flight to Mumbai.

Police identified the woman as Afreen Khan, 35, a homemaker from the Charminar area. She was heading to Mumbai to meet her husband.

Before take-off, she reportedly quarrelled with her husband over the phone. She later started quarrelling with the cabin crew and the passengers for changing her seat, police said.

The crew reported the matter to the RGIA police, who registered a case under the

City Police Act. The police made her disembark the flight, she was taken into custody for a while and then let off. It was suspected that she was under the influence.

Indigo Airlines released a formal statement regarding this issue. They said, "A customer on flight 6E 5195, scheduled to operate from Hyderabad to Mumbai, was declared unruly due to their inappropriate behaviour towards fellow passengers and crew. As per protocol, the individual was deboarded and handed over to the security agencies. We remain committed to ensuring a safe and respectful environment for all and regret any inconvenience caused."

QUACK NABBED FOR NEGLIGENCE LEADING TO WOMAN'S DEATH

SHRIMANSI KAUSHIK | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

Jajjeri Devender, an unauthorised medical practitioner, reportedly responsible for the death of a woman in Rajanna Siricilla, was arrested on Sunday.

The 30-year-old woman, Khasimbi, from Samudralingapur in Yellareddipet mandal, died on December 28 after receiving treatment from Devender of Thimmapur.

Sircilla DSP Chandrashekhara Reddy confirmed the arrest of Devender. The DSP urged the public to avoid seeking treatment from RMPs (rural medical practitioners) who lack basic medical knowledge.

"RMPs should only provide first aid. If they continue to perform allopathic practices under the guise of clinics and endanger lives, criminal cases will be filed against them," the DSP warned.

Khasimbi had consulted Devender on December 26 for a fever. He administered injections and medications. When her fever persisted she returned to Devender, who gave her glucose. She lost consciousness and her relatives rushed her to a hospital in Ellareddipet, where she died on December 28.

Khasimbi's husband, Mohammad Azim, filed a complaint with the Ellareddipet police, accusing Devender of negligence.

In a separate incident, three quacks were arrested and remanded in Vikarabad following a complaint by the Telangana Medical Council (TGMCC). Council vice-chairman Dr G. Srinivas identified the trio as G. Nagender, K. Nagayya and M. Danappa.

CLINIC FOUND STORING DRUGS WITHOUT PERMIT

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

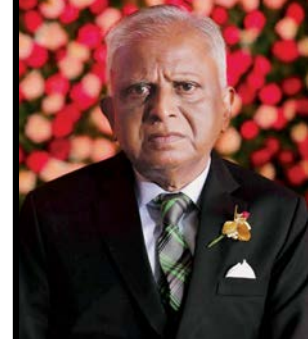
The Drugs Control Administration (DCA) raided the clinic of Majigi Manohar Lal, an unauthorised practitioner, on Saturday and seized drugs worth ₹47,000 kept for sale from Jajapur village in Narayanpet.

The DCA said it had registered cases against 137 quacks this year.

Elsewhere, the DCA raided Siddhartha Pharmacy in Mahabubabad for selling 'Thiohil Gel' at higher than maximum retail price (MRP). The officials also found medicines being sold with false advertisements from various places.

Sixth Death Anniversary

I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Ps:23:6



KOCHERLA SUDHEER ISAAC (Retd. SBH Staff) DOB:04-04-1943 DOD: 30-12-2018 Fondly Remembered by: FAMILY MEMBERS

11th DEATH ANNIVERSARY



Late Shri S VIVEKANAND S/o Late S Paramanand D.O.B: 12-4-1930 D.O.D: 30-12-2013 Retd. Sr. Labour Welfare Inspector of Sports, S.C.Rly. Former Secretary of A.P Athletics Association, Technical Official in Athletics & Coach- Basketball Federation of India. You will remain alive in our hearts forever Inserted By: SINGHU FAMILY (SI/2425/D00909)

MEMORIAL SERVICE

I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever Psalms 23:6



EDLA MARY JOHN W/o Late E.B. John D/o Late Rev. Neerudu Samuel 15th Oct 1934 - 27th Dec 2024 Memorial Service will be held on 31st Dec 2024 at CSI Wesley Church, Clock Tower, Secunderabad at 10:30 AM. Inserted by: Son, Daughter-in-law, Daughters, Son-in-law, Grandchildren & Great Grandchildren. (A/2425/D00909)

OBITUARY



Late Panchasara Vallabh Das V Mistry Ex-Employee of Hard Case Eng Works Passed away on 27th Dec 2024 after a brief illness. The Prathna Sabha will be held on 30 Dec 2024 at Our Residence from 4 PM to 5 PM. At Our Residence Lalitha Nivas, SRT 317, Street No 7, Ashok Nagar, Chikkalapally, Hyd. Panchasara Mohan : 9704178880 Panchasara Annuttal : 9959170072 Panchasara Dinesh : 8790922229 Inserted by: Panchasara Family

20th DEATH ANNIVERSARY



T. DEVI SINGH D.O.D.: 30-12-2004 Inserted by: T. Manoj Singh, T. Dilip Singh, T. Ranjeet Singh, T. Rajveer Singh & T. Kuvareet Singh. Purnanapoli, Hyd. Ph: 24562221 Devi Singh Eng. Works, Attapur Ph: 24015786

27th ANNIVERSARY

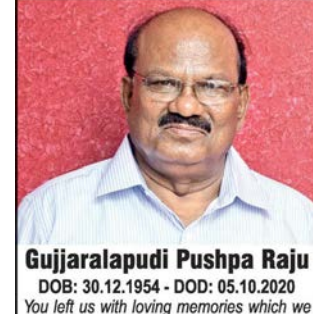
IN LOVING MEMORY OF



Sri D. PRABHAKAR CHETTY D.O.D: 28-12-1997 Wife: D.A. PRABHAKAR FAMILY MEMBERS Ph. No. 9849091711

Birthday Remembrance

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 2 Timothy 4:7



Gujjaralapudi Pushpa Raju DOB: 30.12.1954 - DOD: 05.10.2020 You left us with loving memories which we cherish forever. You are always in our hearts and we love you and We miss you every day. Inserted by: Wife: Mrs. Elizabeth Alice & Family

SHORT TAKES

GHMC INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR 16 LAWYER POSTS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

The GHMC has invited applications from advocates for appointment as standing counsel in 16 vacancies in the Rangareddy, Secunderabad and Hyderabad trial courts. Candidates should have 10 years of experience in the Bar Association of the respective district, seven years in the senior civil court and five years in the junior civil court. Aspirants must apply to the GHMC's legal cell at the head office by January 23.

CCTV IMAGE GRAB OF A SUSPECT AT A SCHOOL IN HYD

SYED OMAR FAROOQ | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

Police were on the look-out for a person who broke into the Brilliant Mission High School at NS Kunta and made off with ₹5.5 lakh from the principal's locker on December 24.

The suspect entered the school from the rear door, where there is no CCTV camera, said school correspondent and principal Ahmed Idrees Shareef. However, cameras placed inside the premises showed the suspect reaching inside from a window and opening the door latch to enter the building. He was seen briefly playing on the swivel chairs in the hall.

He then secured a bunch of keys from a drawer and entered the principal's room. He tripped the main power supply, which resulted in the CCTV cameras shutting down. He used the keys to open the almirah and made away with the cash, Shareef said, adding that the money was meant for the staff salary. On being informed, Kalapathar police with a CLUES Team collected some fingerprints believed to be of the suspect, and collected the available CCTV footage which shows his face.

Police, who registered a case, said they were checking their records and using other technical methods to trace the suspect.

PANEL: GOVT EYES WB LOAN TO FUND SCHOOL EDU.

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC
ADILABAD, DEC. 29

Telangana Education Commission (TEC) chairman Akunuri Murali on Sunday said the state government had a proposal to take a World Bank loan to strengthen the school education system.

The commission had a recent meeting with World Bank officials and discussed with it the ways and means to strengthen school education and the work the commission has done in this regard so far. Murali said the commission will meet Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and submit its report to him in a week on government residential schools and mid-day meals. Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Murali said the commission discussed with the World Bank about the state government's recent initiatives like Young India Integrated Residential Schools and recruitment of teachers.

Murali said they also met officials of Unicef and discussed with them the education models they have prepared to implement in the state and about the Big School concept and multi-language teaching and how small schools are affecting school education.

Beautification of Hyd Metro lags far behind Delhi, Chennai

Official says Metro Rail faced with shortage of funds to spend on other works

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

The city's beautification initiatives have seen the active participation of several government departments but that of Hyderabad metro rail is conspicuous absent. This is despite it being a swanky public transport medium.

The common pretext of the metro authorities has been 'running in losses and hardly any money to spend'. Not ironically, the two parties involved in running the metro, L & T and HMRL, shift the responsibility and the blame on one another. The civic authorities spent around ₹150 crore for beautifying 224 structures across the twin cities. The visual treat has drawn praise from the people and the tourists.

A senior HMRL official said, "The organisation is faced with paucity of funds, especially for spending on other activities. This is in a public-private partnership (PPP) mode. Moreover, nowhere in India can you find pillars and outside of Metro Rail stations any eye-pleasing art works. The beautiful paintings that you see on Begumpet Metro Rail pillars were done back in 2018," he said.

This remark stands exposed when we consider the Phase 2 plans of Chennai Metro Rail. To commemorate its first train between Ponnammallee and Porur, the authorities have started painting its pillars as part of the city beautification.

In 2023 September, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation beautified its Metro stations and pillars with amazing paintings ahead of the G20 Summit.

Meanwhile, a L&T Metro Rail official said "The beautification has to be taken up by HMRL's. Our role is painting the structure and advertising. These responsibilities have been defined quite appropriately."



Left: The space under Chennai metro rail is maintained beautifully decorated with plants. Right: The space below the Hyderabad Metro pillars looks ugly due to dumping of waste and not proper maintenance. —DC

People split on city beautification works

V. SHIVANI REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

GHMC beautification works across the city have transformed the urban space in terms of appeal but people are divided in their opinion about the artworks on walls.

Strong opinions have come from the artists' community and those who have seen beautification projects executed by municipalities in other metros like Chennai.

"Hyderabad is a city of great cultural history and heritage. The artist community here is very strong and vibrant. A city like this could have done a lot better," noted a person who has lived in Chennai and Delhi before.

Comparing the art works with that of Chennai, she pointed to a visible difference in the use of colours and style.

The GHMC's plans to beautify major structures like flyovers, rotaries and junctions were allocated a budget of ₹149.84 crore.

Passersby often spot these ongoing works at various spots, ranging from flyover pillars to compound walls. Most artists themes their creations on nature, animals, freedom fighters.

Renowned Indian contemporary painter Bolgam Nagesh Goud appreciated artworks, particularly those at Vishveshwaraiah flyover, depicting Indian



Above: Narayanaguda flyover is painted with birds giving a relief to the motorists driving on this road. Below: Art students from the Kolkata including girl students beautifying the Masab Tank flyover with their art works. — S. SURENDER REDDY, R. PAVAN

freedom fighters. However, he stated the need for thematic paintings with clear intent and high-quality

execution. "Authorities need to ensure that artworks are carefully curated," he

added. A citizen B. Naveen expressed concern over the durability of the paintings. He pointed out that monsoon rains could damage the murals, which will leave the spaces looking dull and neglected, thereafter.

M. Bhoopal Reddy from Vanasthalipuram praised the initiative. He noted that some paintings carry valuable messages and highlight India's achievements, which are quite educative.

Ch. Yashwant from LB Nagar appreciated the artistic work but suggested adding more elements of 'Telangana's culture to reflect the region's uniqueness. "I like the paintings around AOC, which have been done by JNFAU students. But at some places in the city, some artworks are unpleasant," she said.

symptoms such as anxiety, mood swings, attention deficits, poor handwriting, etc. These symptoms emerge abruptly, often following an infection or other immune response.

Dr C. Sairam, oncologist, highlighted that screening, manual checkups, prior detection and other modalities need to be followed to prevent cancer. Targeted therapies need to be implemented as part of cancer treatment.

"For integrative medicine, multi-national, multi-institute and multi-scope studies need to be conducted to explore the healing capacities of certain indigenous medicines, such as a Himalayan arsenic is now being studied in the context of acute promyelocytic leukemia (APML)," he told *Deccan Chronicle*.

Other members on the panel talked about preventive medicine, toxins gathered from the environment affecting the babies in the womb.

Groundwater blamed for fresh fluorosis cases

P. SRINIVAS | DC
NALGONDA, DEC. 29

The resurgence of fluorosis cases in the worst-affected Marriguda mandal is being blamed on the preference for RO water supplied by private persons as it is tastier, as also the use of untreated fluoride-heavy groundwater for agriculture.

The water from reverse osmosis (RO) plants is drawn from groundwater is not tested for fluoride content.

A Mission Bhagiratha official, speaking on condition of anonymity, pointed out that 14 RO plants operated by private people were active in the mandal. There was no monitoring of the fluoride content in the water supplied by these plants, which rely on untreated groundwater. Despite the availability of sufficient treated drinking water, many residents continue to consume water from these RO plants as they find it 'sweeter' than the bland water supplied by Mission Bhagiratha.

Water quality chemist and consultant T. Veera Reddy stated that the fluoride level in the water supplied under Mission Bhagiratha is less than 0.5 ppm, well below the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) permissible limit of 1.5 ppm.

Fluorosis Vimukthi Porata Samithi convenor Kanchukatl Subash emphasised that consuming crops such as vegetables and rice grown using fluoride-contaminated groundwater exacerbates fluorosis. He argued that providing safe drinking water alone is insufficient and called for irrigation facilities using river water to address the problem permanently.

Experts suggest that the fluorosis problem can only be resolved permanently by providing irrigation facilities for agriculture. They emphasise that farmers must stop relying on groundwater for cultivation, as crops grown with fluoride-laden groundwater contribute to the issue. Subash urged the state



Fluorosis victims K. Nikeesha, 21 from Sangari village in Nalgonda. — DC

HASTY DROP IN MONITORING STEPS LED TO CASES: NGO

DC CORRESPONDENT
NALGONDA, DEC. 29

Hasty withdrawal of fluoride monitoring systems by the BRS government could have contributed to the return of fluorosis in Marriguda mandal of Nalgonda district.

In 2020, the BRS government announced in the Assembly that no new fluorosis cases had been reported in Marriguda mandal for six years previously. This claim was based on a survey conducted by an NGO.

Following the BRS government's announcement, the district fluoride monitoring centre (DFMC), established to ensure inter-departmental coordination to combat fluorosis, was rendered inactive. Contract employees were removed, leaving the DFMC dormant. During the Munugode Assembly bypolls, political parties competed to take credit for achieving zero fluorosis cases in the area.

government to expedite the construction of the Shivannagudem reservoir, which aims to irrigate 1.5 lakh acres in the Munugode constituency. Completion of the reservoir under the Dindi Lift Irrigation Scheme would significantly reduce fluoride contamination in groundwater, he added.

Experts discuss impact of toxins on body

SHRIMANSI KAUSHIK | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

Medical experts discussed how environmental factors could lead to an increased incidence of autism, cancer and degenerative diseases, at a symposium here Sunday.

"Understanding the impact of toxins has become important when it comes to providing medical care. The growing burden of diseases linked to environmental contamination — from air, water, soil, food, or occupational sources — has become an urgent health crisis. These neglected diseases, often overlooked or silently endured by society, are placing an increasing strain on physicians," said Dr Praveen Saxena, convener.

The conference also aimed to look at the role of integrative medicine in counteracting the harmful effects of heavy metals and pesticides.



Experts from medical field speaking at a symposium on 'Environmental Impact on Health: Increasing Incidence of Autism, Cancer and Degenerative Diseases' organised by 'Physicians for Social Responsibility' in the city on Sunday. —DC

Former chief secretary Rajeshwar Tiwari urged doctors to learn from experiences such as the Minamata disease (arising out of mercury pollution) and be conscious of the contaminants that can cause body burden in several ways.

Narasimha Reddy Donthi, policy expert and member of the Pesticide Action Network India, explained how pesticides, known as forever chemicals, and persistent organic pollutants (POPs), stay in the environment for

long, thereby causing harmful effects on health of the farmers directly, and indirectly, the people eating the food.

"NCRB data shows that about 7,900 people die every year due to accidental intake of pesticides," he said. He urged the medical community to try and correlate ill health and deaths with pesticides depending on the context and life of the patient.

Dr Shilpa Rao, autism expert, shared case studies on how PANS (Pediatric Acute-onset

Neuropsychiatric Syndrome) or PANDAS (Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections) affect autism patients. "It is the most emerging co-morbidity now seen in Autism Spectrum Disorder with the frequency of three out of 200 kids on the spectrum having PANS," she said.

It was a condition characterised by the sudden onset of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) symptoms and tics, along with other neuropsychiatric

Counselling for Ist phase of PG medical seats out

SHRIMANSI KAUSHIK | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences (KNRUHS) on Sunday released the much-awaited notification for the first phase of state-level web-based counselling for postgraduate medical seats in Telangana. Counselling was opened for service and non-service candidates under the competent authority quota (CAQ) for PG medical degree and diploma courses in government, private non-minority, private minority medical colleges, and the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (Nims).

Candidates whose certificates were verified during

online registration and whose names appear in the provisional final merit list on the KNRUHS website are eligible to participate in the web-counselling.

Eligible candidates can exercise web options — the process started at 6 pm on Sunday — to 8 pm on December 31.

They can choose multiple courses and colleges based on their preferences and eligibility. The candidates to whom seats have been allotted need to pay ₹29,600 online as university fee and tuition fee to directly to the respective colleges. Minority quota seats in private minority medical colleges are reserved for Muslim candidates.

Property title can't be adjudicated in HC

L. RAVICHANDER
HYDERABAD, DEC. 29

The Telangana High Court ruled that the rights and title of the parties over property cannot be adjudicated in a proceeding under Article 226 of the Constitution. A panel delivered the order in the context of a dispute involving the management of Suryalaxmi Degree College, two advocates, and the government concerning 14 acres of land in Narayanpet. The panel, comprising Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice J. Sreenivas Rao, was dealing with a writ plea filed by Venkat Ramulu and Nagu Rao Namaji, advocates from Narayanpet, questioning the action of

the education department in not resuming the land and handing it over to the principal of Narayanpet Junior College as illegal.

According to the petitioners, the management of Suryalaxmi Degree College and others had obtained a fraudulent decree from the courts and illegally occupied the land. A government high school was existing on the land, before 1970. Some well-wishers wanted a government junior college and applied to the government. The authorities asked them to form a society and donate land and money for the purpose. The town elders floated Vidya Vardhak Samithi and purchased 14 acres and 29 guntas in Survey



No. 461 at Pallabuzurg of Narayanpet, through a registered sale deed, in the name of the government junior college. It is this land that is the subject matter of the litigation. It was stated that the management of a degree college, of which the then MLA Chittam Narsi Reddy was secretary, attempted to start constructions over the part of the land. One Chaitanya Bharati

Educational Society applied for permission to run a private degree college with Narsi Reddy as patron. The panel, speaking through Justice Rao, pointed out that the records showed that possession was handed over from Ram Mohan Reddy, correspondent of Suryalaxmi college, to the principal of Chittam Narsi Reddy Memorial Government Degree College on July 19, 2018.

The Narayanpet tahsildar carried out the changes in the revenue records on September 18, 2021. Justice Sreenivas Rao pointed out that the latter name was recorded in the revenue records except in Dharani records and the same was pending before the chief

commissioner of land administration. He said that the government authorities took possession in respect eight acres and 13 guntas in July 2018. The PIL did not find favour in questions of fact in the manner, which reiterated its willingness to adjudicate questions of title in the writ petition.

GOVT STAFFER SEEKS RETIREMENT

The Telangana High Court will hear a writ plea regarding the rejection of a government employee's request for retirement on medical grounds and her daughter's plea for compassionate appointment. Justice B. Vijayen Reddy took on file a writ plea

filed by P. Padma, 46, suffering from hypertension, diabetes and paralysis of the upper and lower limbs, who has been on medical leave for over two and a half years. The petitioner said her request for medical invalidation retirement was rejected despite securing a report from the medical board at Osmania General Hospital. She contended that this rejection was a violation of GO dated October 23, 2008. The petitioner also sought a direction to consider her daughter's application for compassionate appointment. Counsel for the respondents sought time and the judge scheduled the hearing to January 10.

Full reports in deccanchronicle.com

DECCAN
Chronicle
30 DECEMBER 2024

Bickering over memorial
for Manmohan shameful

The unseemly controversy around the spot where former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was to be cremated and a memorial for him was to be built must end at the earliest, lest it be seen as a great affront to the memory of a man who always kept the interest of the nation above all else and never engaged in self-promotion.

The Congress had demanded that the government earmark a space for the cremation of the former Prime Minister so that a memorial can be built for him at the same spot. This had been the practice in the case of the father of the nation and some of the former Prime Ministers. However, it must also be recalled that the UPA government headed by Dr Singh had in 2013 decided to scrap the practice of building separate memorials for national leaders and build a common one for all instead. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was cremated at the Rashtriya Smriti Sthal in 2018.

Despite the 2013 decision and the events that followed, the Congress to which Dr Singh belonged presented a demand before the Union government for allotting a separate place for his cremation where a memorial can be built later. The government in fact accepted it, too, even though it contradicted the 2013 decision.

As per the government's account, it then decided upon Nigambodh Ghat as the place for cremation in consultation with Dr Singh's family while making it known to the public and the Congress leadership that it will allot a site in the capital for the construction of an appropriate memorial for the former Prime Minister.

Why the choice of Nigambodh Ghat, instead of the Rashtriya Smriti Sthal where Vajpayee had been laid to rest, is a question that then begs an answer from the government.

Unwilling to accept the government's decision, the Opposition party now sees in this an attempt by the BJP to deliberately insult the memory of the country's "first Sikh Prime Minister". The party found fault with the way the last rites of Dr Singh were conducted which served as another excuse for it to raise the volume of its protests.

Nevertheless, whipping up passions based on imagined slights and invented stories of insult to the name of a man who himself was dignity personified in his private, professional and public lives is really the worst form of tribute that can be paid to his legacy. The Congress must immediately desist from further muddying waters. The party must also remember the treatment it itself had meted out to P.V. Narasimha Rao, its own leader and another Prime Minister.

After his death, Rao's body was not even allowed inside the AICC headquarters, never mind that he was an elected president of the top decision-making body of the Congress.

In the case of Dr Singh, he should be remembered for the creative contribution he has made to advance the collective intelligence of this country, and his specific contributions as an economist and an expert in public finance.

The government and the Congress should now bury the hatchet, and try and celebrate the memory of one of India's tallest sons instead in a fitting manner together.

MT: A writer for all time

The renaissance that started a century ago had almost dismantled the feudal remnants in Kerala when M.T. Vasudevan Nair published his first novel, *Nalukettu*, in 1958. All of 24 then, MT, as he is known, depicted the crumbling joint family system that thrived in complex architecture in the novel, and ended it with the protagonist telling his mother, a victim of the very same system, that they should demolish the old structure and build a small one that will have "light and wind".

MT went on to become one of the most celebrated, awarded and translated Malayalam writers, editors, filmmakers and script-writers and impacted the lives of at least four generations of Malayalees through his creative contributions. As a writer and as the editor of the most popular Malayalam literary weekly *Mathrubhumi*, he shaped and nurtured their sensibilities and sensitivities. That he still is one of the most read by the young generation points to his ability to connect with human lives, irrespective of the times they live in. The Jnanpith and Padma Bhushan awards, among the countless many awards he received, are just a pointer to the Colossus-like presence he has had in the Indian literary scene.

MT's contribution to the then nascent Malayalam film industry must not go unnoticed. He directed 36 movies, all of which got critical and mass acclaim; his directorial debut *Nirmalyam* won the national award for best feature film in 1974 and its lead actor P.J. Antony bagged the state award. He scripted the story and screenplays for more than 60 films, several of them got him state and national awards. The characters he penned also got several leading actors, including Mammootty and Mohanlal, awards at the national and state levels.

MT, as he started, remained a staunch supporter and promoter of the liberal and progressive values in society and abhorred the traction communal forces have gained in the nation's polity as time went by.

Though a man of few words, MT missed no occasion to warn against the new-found change. He did not mince his words while talking to people in power even if they belonged to the same ideological spectrum as his, as he remained irreverent to power till he breathed his last. In his passing, the country has lost a proponent of the values the Constitution upholds at a time when they are increasingly being undermined.

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KAUSHIK MITTER
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K. SUBHAKAR
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DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256
Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284.
Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285
Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208
Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904
Karimnagar: H. No. 1-21-12/1, Cheralabhutkur Road, Mugudhumpur Village, Karimnagar-505186, PH. NO. 9121181123.
Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chemmudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580
Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/48/50/51; Adv: Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325
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Subhani



An 'A to Z' guide to India's
politics in the year gone by



Sunil Gatade

In the year gone by, "A" definitely stands for Gautam Adani, the controversial businessman who was in the news, national and international, for all the wrong reasons. No other A, including the Ambanis, could replace that.

A is also for Dr B.R. Ambedkar. As the year rings out, there was a huge controversy over a remark by Amit Shah on the architect of the Constitution.

"B" is for the BJP, which remained its aggressive best despite failing to get a Lok Sabha majority, damaging Brand Modi. Its Haryana and Maharashtra victories, which left its opponents perplexed, brought it back into the political game with a bang.

"C" stands for the Congress. It was a roller-coaster ride for the party and its leader, Rahul Gandhi, who nearly made a century in the Lok Sabha polls, becoming Leader of the Opposition. By the year-end, it was a different story as allies started questioning his leadership after he lost crucial states.

"D" undoubtedly stands for Jagdeep Dhankhar, Rajya Sabha Chairman, who the Opposition felt was the main "disruptor". He has the dubious distinction of being the first vice-president against whom a no-trust motion was initiated.

"E" is for the Election Commission, which failed to cover itself with glory in the Lok Sabha and some state polls. EVMs were sought to be made the manipulated machine by the Opposition.

"F" stands for Fadnavis. The fall and rise of the BJP leader as the new Maharashtra CM surprised friends and foes alike and could have repercussions far beyond.

"G" is for George Soros and his alleged links with the Congress, who was targeted by the BJP, which

was facing flak over the Adani issue.

"H" is for Haryana, where the Assembly election changed the mood in the ruling BJP after an unexpected hat-trick in power.

"I" is for the I.N.D.I.A. bloc. From the "United We Stand" position before the Lok Sabha polls, the I.N.D.I.A. bloc looked rudderless by the year-end, with Mamata Banerjee pitching herself for the alliance leadership.

"J" — Former CJI D.Y. Chandrachud, whose tenure ended recently, was the most controversial of judges in the year gone by for his actions and inactions. Jagan Mohan Reddy lost power in Andhra Pradesh.

"K" is for Arvind Kejriwal, the former Delhi CM jailed over the alleged excise scam, who faces the most ticklish Assembly poll in the New Year.

"L" is for lieutenant-governors (Delhi and J&K). New rules give them more powers ahead of Assembly elections, including over key appointments and services, which the Opposition says won't be good for democracy. In J&K, the BJP, which made a huge issue over Article 370's scrapping, failed to get a single seat in the Kashmir Valley.

"M" is undoubtedly for (Narendra) Modi. After the Lok Sabha setback, the PM looked off colour. But the Maharashtra and Haryana verdicts saw him back as the "monarch of all I survey".

M is also for Manipur, which was on the boil for a second year. The PM faced attacks for not visiting the northeastern state.

M is for Madhavi Puri Buch, too, the controversial Sebi chief who faced attacks for allegedly shielding Gautam Adani.

"N" is for Nitish Kumar and N. Chandrababu Naidu, who became the

'A' definitely stands for Gautam Adani, the controversial businessman who was in the news, national and international, for all the wrong reasons. No other A, including the Ambanis, could claim that distinction.

PM's obedient crutches after he failed to get a majority. They dashed the hopes of Modi detractors as they seemed to be chanting: "Dal roti khao, Prabhu ke gun gao".

"O" is for Om Birla, the controversial Lok Sabha Speaker, who was hand-picked by Modi to continue running the Lower House. The Opposition's no-confidence motion against the Rajya Sabha Chairman seems to have unnerved him a bit.

O is also for Odisha: Navin Patnaik, in power for 25-odd years in the state, lost power to the BJP, mainly because he depended upon a controversial bureaucrat.

"P" for (Sharad) Pawar meant power, but this Maratha strongman was upstaged by estranged nephew Ajit Pawar on his home turf of Maharashtra, backed by the BJP, which made mincemeat of the Opposition.

"Q" — The way the powers that be defended Adani was a reminder of the kid-glove treatment meted out to controversial Italian businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi by the Congress four decades ago.

"R" — Rajasthan saw the end of the Ashok Gehlot era in 2024 as the Congress was defeated at the end of 2023. The BJP made green-horn Bhajan Lal Sharma the Chief Minister, sidelining veteran leader Vasundhara Raje.

"S" Sambhal in UP became the latest flash-point in politics over the "digging" of masjids in a state that had seen the demolition of the Babri Masjid way back in December 1992.

S also stands for Eknath Shinde, the brand created by the BJP to pull down Uddhav Thackeray in

Maharashtra. The year saw the CM becoming deputy CM to Devendra Fadnavis, who was his deputy earlier.

S could also be remembered for Samvidhan as the Lok Sabha polls saw the Opposition make capital of the BJP's slogan "Ab ki baar, 400 paar", contending that it meant the rulers wanted to dump the Constitution.

"T" is for Telangana, which saw the exit of the ambitious K. Chandrashekar Rao of BRS from power with the emergence of the Congress under A. Revanth Reddy. Politics in the southern state is becoming a Congress versus BJP affair.

"U" is for Udhayanidhi Stalin, the Tamil Nadu minister and son of DMK chief M.K. Stalin, who was made the state's deputy CM, ending days of speculation over the move.

"V" is for Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, with growing talk in Opposition circles that the V-P was targeting them as he wanted to become the next President, with that election over two years away.

"W" is for Kerala's Wayanad, which elected Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to the Lok Sabha in the seat vacated by her brother.

"X" — The owner of X (formerly Twitter), Elon Musk, the world's richest entrepreneur and also Tesla chief, was to visit India during the year and have discussions with the PM. He cancelled the visit at the 11th hour, that was seen in economic circles as a setback to Modi.

"Y" is for Yogi Adityanath, UP's Chief Minister, who showed his nuisance power in the Lok Sabha polls to the BJP top brass. His controversial "Batenge to Katenge" slogan turned out to be the political hit of the year gone by.

"Z" is the zigzag way the year saw. The BJP fell short of a Lok Sabha majority, raising Opposition's hopes. But the Haryana and Maharashtra electoral verdicts sprang a surprise on them. The New Year will have Assembly polls in Delhi and later in Bihar.

The writer is a journalist based in New Delhi

LETTERS

MANMOHAN SINGH

Former prime minister, the late Manmohan Singh, was very calm and quiet by nature, but underneath that quietude he possessed a bubbling desire to give the maximum (*Manmohan cremated with full state honours, Dec. 29*). He generally kept a low profile.

P.L. Krishna
Secunderabad

Dr Manmohan Singh was the most sincere leader of the country. He did his best for the uplift of the economy. Singh stood like a rock during the assassinations of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

Syed Mushtaq Zainulabideen
Hyderabad

The Congress is in the Opposition. It is the NDA government which has to take the decision regarding the memorial for Dr Manmohan Singh. To gain brownie points, the Congress wishes to politicise the issue, which is not necessary now.

Kamala Menon Cochran
Hyderabad

REDDY TO SOAR

Super proud to see one of our own, Nitish Kumar Reddy, shining in the international arena (*Gutsy Reddy's maiden ton keeps India afloat*). What a find. What a talent. Incredible maiden century and remarkable innings from Reddy.

Pranay Kumar Narlagiri
Kazipet

After a long time a Telugu cricketer stood apart with his century knock versus Australia in the Test match at Melbourne. He played well where seniors failed and ensured that India avoided a follow-on.

T.V.V. Subrahmanyam
Hyderabad

Hearty congratulations to Nitish Kumar Reddy for his brilliant performance. Congratulations as well to the national selectors. In case India wins this Test I am sure the contribution of Nitish will be same as of Rishab Pant a few years ago.

Dilip Kumar Jagtap
Hyderabad

HYDRAA PLANS

What the previous government did is being nullified by the present government (*HYDRAA has major plans for 2025, Dec. 29*). HYDRAA is a tool to target citizens invested in the GO 111 area, leading to a drastic drop in land prices in Moinsabad and other areas.

Mohammed Hamza
Hyderabad

Email your letters to
info@deccanmail.com,
editor@deccanmail.com.

Mahir Ali



Genocide in Gaza:
Is peace a realistic
goal for Christmas
in coming years?

Just before sitting down to write this column, I was listening to a History Extra podcast about the 'history behind the headlines' of 2024. It was a conversation between Oxford and Harvard academics Hannah Skoda and Rana Mitter, who spoke for 45 minutes without even a passing reference to the genocide in Gaza or its antecedents.

What kind of oblivion do such intellectuals reside in, where they can reference the Nuremberg-adjacent Tokyo trials while ignoring this year's Israel-focused proceedings at The Hague? And how can Christmas be celebrated today without any recognition of the daily atrocities taking place in the land where so many of the traditions on which the Abrahamic faiths are based originated?

And then there are the children, supposedly the chief beneficiaries of Yuletide, who are being robbed of their futures. Both the dead and the living. Earlier this month, a War Child Alliance-sponsored NGO concluded that 96 per cent of the surviving children in the besieged territory consider death to be imminent, and half of them would welcome that outcome. If only a fraction of the folk carving their stuffed turkey or ham roast would consider the starvation in Gaza that is part of the genocidal intent, it might give

them cause for a pause. A token minute of silence, perhaps, followed by a determination to back the kind of boycott, divestment and sanctions that helped to demolish a previous apartheid regime.

Israel's raids on Gaza, resulting in dozens of deaths each day, continued even as it pursued a similar strategy in Lebanon, before going on to destroy the military capabilities of post-Assad Syria, a country that hadn't posed any serious threat to Israel for half a century, notwithstanding its notorious role in Lebanon and serving as a conduit for weapons and other supplies to Hezbollah. Israel routinely attacked some of these Iranian-affiliated conduits, but Bashar al-Assad's military facilities were rarely targeted while he was in power.

Although it has been suggested that the Qatar-sponsored ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas are 90pc complete, there is cause for scepticism given similar previous pronouncements, mostly emanating from the US, which bears as much responsibility for the genocide as Israel. No one can say to what extent Kamala Harris's presidential prospects would have been improved by at least pretending to have a spine. Still, those who understandably withheld their votes from the Democratic candidate on this basis

and gave them to her Republican rival will find cause for self-flagellation once Donald Trump re-enters the White House.

There are, of course, plenty of supplementary causes around the world to reconsider the traditional Yuletide model of 'joy unto the world' — from the massacres in Sudan and the Congo to the continuing death and destruction in Ukraine and the terrorist attack in Magdeburg that has left German authorities struggling to figure out why an evidently Islamophobic and pro-Zionist psychiatrist who came to the country as a Saudi refugee would decide to plough through a Christmas market in his vehicle, killing five women and a child, and injuring more than 230 others. Taleb al-Abdulmohsen abandoned his faith and sought to support potential exiles who wished to escape the Gulf region's version of religious injunctions. At the same time, though, he railed against Middle Eastern immigration to Europe, and absurdly considered the likes of Angela Merkel to be promoting the Islamisation of the continent.

Even the secular-minded Gulf emigres he contacted — especially women — were alarmed by his bullying tactics. Perhaps understandably, the German authorities paid little heed to wa-arnings from Riyadh about

his extremism. It is not inconceivable, though, that his horrific, deadly act was guided by the notion of helping his favourite party, the neo-Nazi Alternative for Germany (AfD), to reinforce its case against immigration. The AfD — unreservedly backed by Elon Musk, seen by some as effectively the next president of the US — has lost little time in capitalising on the obscenity of its kindred spirit's murderous spree. It wouldn't be surprising if that had been Abdulmohsen's intention all along.

Meanwhile, as for a peace deal with a Saudi component, it's worth recalling that the US Republicans thwarted a Vietnam settlement in 1968 to benefit Richard Nixon, and delayed the release of American hostages in Iran a decade later to boost Ronald Reagan. That pattern might be repeated ahead of the Trump presidency, eagerly awaited by idiots and fellow proto-fascists around the world.

Be that as it may, the relentless genocide in Gaza and its reflections in the region and beyond provide sufficient cause to wonder whether the worthy notion of pacem in terris will remain a realistic aspiration during Christmases to come.

— By arrangement with Dawn

SHORT TAKES

NAVI AIRPORT TO BE OPERATIONAL BY APRIL 17

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, DEC. 29

The upcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport, which is also referred as Mumbai's second and the country's largest airport, is likely to be functional by April 17, 2025.

An IndiGo A320 passenger aircraft on Sunday landed successfully at runway 08/26 of the under-construction airport. This has paved the way for obtaining an aerodrome licence to commence commercial operations, officials said.

The commercial operations are likely to be begun in mid of May 2025, said Arun Bansal, Chief Executive Officer, Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL). The aircraft was welcomed with the traditional water salute by two Crash Fire Tenders (CFT) of Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA), which is the largest airport of the country with a capacity to cater nine crore passengers. Senior officials of the DGCA, Airports Authority of India, Customs, Immigration, CISF, CIDCO, IMD, BCAS, as well as AAHL also witnessed the moment.

10-YR-OLD, PULLED OUT OF WELL AFTER 12 HOURS, DEAD

DC CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, DEC. 29

A 10-year-old boy was pulled out of an open borewell in a village in Guna district in Madhya Pradesh in a 16-hour rescue operation on Sunday morning, but could not be saved. Sumeet Meena fell into the borewell in the village of Pipaliya on Saturday afternoon while flying a kite.

His family members started searching for him when he was found missing for a long time and later spotted him inside the borewell. They soon alerted the police. The boy got trapped at the depth of 39 ft in the 140 ft-deep borewell. "Sumit fell into the borewell at around 3.30 pm on Saturday. The rescue operation to pull him out began around two and half hours later at six pm. He was taken out of the borewell at around 9.30 am on Sunday", Guna district additional SP Man Singh Thakur said.

DAWOOD PROPERTY REGISTERED AFTER 23 YEARS OF FIGHT

PRASAD PATIL | DC
MUMBAI, DEC. 29

Hemant Jain, who had bought a Dawood Ibrahim property in an auction conducted by the Income Tax department in 2001, has managed to register the property after a long struggle of 23 years. Now, he has another task to get the possession of the property, which has already been encroached upon. Jain, now a resident of Delhi, along with his elder brother Piyush had courageously purchased a 144 square-foot property belonging to underworld don Dawood Ibrahim for Rs two lakh way back on September 20, 2001. "I had decided to buy the property because I had read in the newspapers that nobody was willing to buy the properties being auctioned by the IT department out of fear. But after buying it, I had to run from pillar to post to get it transferred in my name," Jain said.

FARMER LEADERS SAY CENTRE CAN EVICT DALLEWAL

Chandigarh, Dec. 29: With Jagjit Singh Dallewal's indefinite hunger strike entering its 34th day on Sunday, farmer leaders at Khanauri said they have been following the Gandhian way to continue their protest and it is up to the government to decide whether it wants to use force to evict their senior leader. Dallewal has so far refused medical treatment.

On Sunday, farmer leader Abhimanyu Kohar at the Khanauri border protest said, "We want to make it clear that the Centre, right from day one, has been trying to defame and suppress our agitation."

A narrative is being built that farmers are stubborn, whereas it is the Centre that is adopting such an attitude, he said. "We are continuing our agitation by adopting Gandhian principles. Our agitations have proven, that despite enduring so much due to the government's oppression, we have continued to protest in a Gandhian manner," he added.

Sikh rituals followed to immerse Singh's ashes

Former PM's family to conduct 'Akhand Path' at residence

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 29

In a solemn ceremony on Sunday, the ashes of former prime minister Manmohan Singh were immersed in the Yamuna River near the Majnu ka Tila Gurdwara by his family members, adhering to Sikh rituals.

The ashes were collected from Nigambodh Ghat early Sunday morning by his family and subsequently taken to Asth Ghat on the Yamuna riverbank near the Gurdwara for immersion. Present at the site were Singh's wife, Gursharan Kaur, their three daughters — Upinder Singh, Daman Singh, and Amrit Singh — and other close relatives.

As part of the Sikh mourning traditions, the family is set to conduct an 'Akhand Path' at their official residence on 3,



Former prime minister Manmohan Singh's ashes being immersed at the Asth Ghat, Majnu ka Tila in New Delhi on Sunday. — PTI

Motilal Nehru Marg on January 1. Additionally, a 'Bhog' ceremony, 'Antim Ardas,' and 'Kirtan' will be held on January 3 at the Rakab Ganj Gurdwara near the Parliament complex.

"We will always remember Manmohan Singh Ji's

service to the nation, his dedication, and his simplicity," the Congress stated on its official X (formerly Twitter) handle, sharing images of the immersion ceremony.

However, BJP leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa expressed disappointment

over the absence of representatives from the Gandhi family and the Congress at the immersion. "It's a sad moment for all of us. However, it's true that no one was there from the Gandhi family today during the immersion of Singh's ashes... Today, when there was no camera, there was no one from Congress. This is a sad thing. Manmohan Singh is highly respected," Sirsa remarked.

Manmohan Singh passed away at AIIMS Delhi on December 26 at the age of 92 due to age-related medical complications. The former prime minister, renowned for ushering in an era of economic liberalisation in the 1990s, was honoured with a state funeral at Nigambodh Ghat on Saturday. President Droupadi Murmu led the nation in paying her final respects to Singh.

India can't ignore enemies at borders, says Rajnath

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 29

Defence minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday that India must continuously address challenges along its northern and western borders and cannot afford to show reluctance in such circumstances.

The minister also pointed out that the nation faces internal security challenges.

"In such a situation, we cannot be reluctant at all. Our enemies, whether external or internal, are always active. Therefore, we must closely monitor their activities and take timely, effective measures against them," Singh remarked at the Army War College (AWC).



Defence minister Rajnath Singh at 'Vijay Shooting Range' in Mhow, of Indore district in MP. — PTI

During his visit to the three premier training institutions of the Indian Army — the Army War College (AWC), Infantry School, and Military College of Telecommunication & Engineering (MCTE) in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh — Singh praised the Indian Army's training institutions.

He was accompanied by Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi and other senior Army officers. Singh was briefed by the Officiating Commandant on the establishment of the Advanced Incubation and Research Centre and various Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) aimed at facilitating the absorption and transformation of technologies.

He also visited the Army Marksmanship Unit to observe their contributions to national sports and toured the Infantry Museum, where he learned about the Infantry's history and the integration of modernised equipment.

Snow time in J&K



Tourists enjoy after fresh snowfall, at Patnitop hill station in Udhampur district, Jammu & Kashmir on Sunday. — PTI

Arunachal to frame rules to stop conversions

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, DEC. 29

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has announced that his government was framing rules to implement the Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, which would prohibit reli-

gious conversion by use of force or inducement or by fraudulent means.

It is significant that the Act was passed by the state Assembly and got the President's assent in 1978 amid debates on the effects of missionary activities in foothill areas on the state's tribes and

"indigenous religions" of the region. The Act remained dormant since then as the state had failed to frame rules. Khandu made this announcement recently in a programme organised by the Indigenous Faith and Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh (IFC-



An aerial view of Sangam, the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati rivers, area ahead of the Mahakumbh 2025, in Prayagraj, Sunday. — PTI

Modi remembers ANR, hails Bastar Olympics

FROM PAGE 1

Remembering four icons of Indian cinema — Raj Kapoor, Mohammed Rafi, Akkineni Nageswara Rao (ANR), and Tapan Sinha

Modi paid tribute to their centenary years.

He lauded Raj Kapoor for introducing India's soft power through films, Mohammed Rafi for his timeless voice, ANR for elevating Telugu cinema, and Tapan Sinha for his socially con-

scious films. "Their lives are an inspiration for our entire film industry," Modi noted.

Concluding his broadcast, Modi spoke about the innovative 'Bastar Olympics' in Bastar, a region formerly affected by Maoist violence.

He described it as a revolutionary event merging development and sports, where youth are honing their talents and contributing to building a new Bharat.

"Bastar Olympics is a platform where development and sports are merging together, building a new Bharat," he added.

Prime Minister Modi's address underscored the themes of constitutional pride, unity, technological integration in religious events, and the promotion of India's creative and sporting initiatives, reflecting his vision for a progressive and unified nation.

Operation Lotus active: Kejriwal

SANJAY KAW | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 29

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener Arvind Kejriwal accused the BJP of orchestrating "Operation Lotus" to manipulate electoral rolls in the New Delhi Assembly constituency.

Kejriwal claimed that the BJP has been deleting over 5,000 names from the voters' list since December 15 in an attempt to influence the upcoming state assembly elections, where he is a candidate.

Speaking at a press conference held at the party's headquarters, alongside Chief Minister Atishi and Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha, Kejriwal stated, "BJP is trying to win this election by any means. They neither have a credible Chief Minister candidate nor strong candidates. Previously, they tried to remove 11,000 voters from another constituency, where we won by 5,000 votes. Had they succeeded, we would have lost the election. The election office staff even began the deletion process, but the Chief Election Commissioner intervened to stop it."

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh echoed



Arvind Kejriwal

these claims, alleging that the BJP submitted applications to delete the name of his wife, Anita, from the voters' list in the New Delhi Assembly seat.

Kejriwal presented data indicating that nearly 5,000 voters' deletion applications and 7,500 additions have been submitted in the New Delhi constituency over the past 15 days.

"This manipulation affects 12 per cent of the votes. Such activities undermine the integrity of polls. Similar tactics were used in Haryana and Maharashtra, but we will prevent them in Delhi," he asserted.

"Operation Lotus has now reached my constituency. They are attempting to manipulate the electoral rolls to alter the election outcome," he added.

W. BENGAL DGP BLAMES BSF FOR INFILTRATION

RAJIB CHOWDHURY | DC
KOLKATA, DEC. 29

West Bengal Police chief Rajeev Kumar indirectly pointed fingers at the Border Security Force (BSF) on Sunday over "lapses" in tackling infiltration from Bangladesh in wake of the unrest in the neighbouring country.

He said, "Bengal is the only state having international borders with three countries. Border management is done by BSF. In spite of that, there have been a lot of lapses. People have crossed over here. Whenever we get information about it, we share it with BSF." Kumar added, "We sensitise them and will continue to do that. In spite of that, some cross over. Our specialised teams have been very effective in neutralizing, arresting and sending them where they deserve to be. We are staying alert." He also took credit for the recent arrest of a suspected member of a Jammu and Kashmir-based terror group from Canning in South 24 Parganas where he had been hiding.

TIGRESS ZEENAT TRANQUILISED, TO BE SHIFTED

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, DEC. 29

A major wildlife operation reached a successful conclusion on Sunday afternoon when Zeenat, the tigress that had strayed from Odisha's Simlipal Tiger Reserve into West Bengal, was finally tranquilised in Bankura after several attempts to sedate her. Prem Kumar Jha, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), confirmed the successful capture.

Currently housed in a cage, the tigress will be transported to Alipore Zoo in Kolkata for a thorough health examination. Once her medical evaluation is completed, Zeenat will be returned to Simlipal, said Jha.

"The tigress is safe and under control. We are now moving her to Alipore Zoo for a health check-up. After the examination, she will be brought back to Simlipal. We are hopeful the formalities will be completed by this evening, and we expect Zeenat to be back in Simlipal by Monday morning," Jha said.



Workers deployed for the collection of toxic waste for disposal from the Bhopal's Union Carbide factory at the Pithampur Industrial Waste Management Facility on Sunday. — PTI

GAS | MISHAP Leak of methyl isocyanate from Union Carbide plant killed over 15,000, hurt 1 L

40 yrs after Bhopal tragedy, toxic waste shifted

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, DEC. 29

Forty years and 26 days after the Bhopal gas tragedy, officials began shifting 337 tonnes of toxic waste from the Union Carbide factory premises — the site of the deadly gas leak — to an incineration facility in Pithapuram, Dhar district, Madhya Pradesh, on Sunday.

The leak of methyl isocyanate from the Union Carbide plant on the night of December 2-3, 1984, resulted in the deaths of around 15,000 people and injuries to approximately one lakh others. The haz-

ardous waste, stored at the factory premises, which was closed around two decades ago, has been packed and loaded into a dozen GPS-enabled trucks with specially reinforced containers since Sunday morning. The transportation to the Pithapuram industrial waste management plant is being conducted through a 'Green Corridor' created specifically for this purpose.

Swatantra Kumar Singh, director of Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief and Rehabilitation, told this newspaper that workers trained in handling toxic substances have been assigned the task of pack-

ing and loading the hazardous waste into the containers. They have been provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits. A team of doctors has been deployed at the Union Carbide site to provide medical treatment to workers in case any of them are exposed to the toxic substances during the operation. Incineration experts and officials from Central and State Pollution Control Boards were present to monitor the packing and loading process of the toxic waste into the containers.

"We are ensuring a proper and foolproof method of packing and loading the

toxic waste, which meets international standards," Singh said. The move to shift the toxic waste from the Union Carbide plant site to the incineration facility at Pithapuram follows a recent directive by the MP High Court to complete the process by January 6.

According to Singh, it may take nine months to incinerate the waste at the Pithapuram facility. In 2015, 10 tonnes of toxic waste were incinerated at the Pithapuram facility on a trial basis. In a related development, Congress staged a protest at Pithapuram opposing the disposal of waste there.

DMK-Left unity goes beyond poll ties: Stalin

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, DEC. 29

Chief Minister and DMK president M.K. Stalin on Sunday said the electoral ties between the Dravidian and Communist movements could have broken on a few occasions but the ideological friendship between them would continue under any circumstance.

Speaking at the 100th birth centenary of freedom fighter and veteran Communist leader R. Nallakannu in Chennai, Mr Stalin recalled that it was Dravidian movement's founder E.V. Ramasami, who translated the Communist Manifesto authored by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels into Tamil.

M. Singaravelar, one of the pioneers of the Communist movement in India supported Periyar when the latter formed the self-respect movement, he said.

P. Jeevanandham, who later became a tall leader of the CPI was a member of Periyar's self-respect movement, the DMK leader said.

The DMK leader also recalled that former chief minister M. Karunanidhi had stated that he would

have been a member of the Communist party if he did not meet Periyar.

The Chief Minister also pointed out that he is named after Russian Communist leader Joseph Stalin.

The democratic forces unitedly fighting against casteism, communalism, majoritarianism, and autocracy would be the best gift to the Communist leader for his birthday, Stalin said.

The Chief Minister also praised World Tamil Forum leader P. Nedumaran for organising the function and said the movements of Communism, Tamil nationalism and Dravidian had joined together in the function.

Nedumaran was close to the DMK founder C.N. Annadurai (before quitting the party with E.V.K. Sampath, one of the founder leaders of the DMK in 1962).

Nedumaran was also close to former Congress leader K. Kamaraj, Karunanidhi and former prime minister Indira Gandhi, the Chief Minister recalled.

Nedumaran had been fighting for the rights of Sri Lankan Tamils for a long time, Stalin said.

ISRO AIMS TO GET ROCKS, SOIL FROM THE MOON

FROM PAGE 1

The exploration include getting rocks and soil from the moon on Earth, the proposed Bharatiya Antariksha Station and landing an astronaut on the lunar surface.

"This mission will mark India's entry into the exclusive league of nations capable of mastering space docking," Union science minister Jitendra Singh said.

"The primary objective of the SpaDeX mission is to develop and demonstrate the technology needed for rendezvous, docking, and undocking of two small spacecraft in a low-Earth circular orbit," an Isro official said. The secondary objective of the mission includes demonstration of the transfer of electric power between the docked spacecraft, which is essential for future applications such as in-space robotics; composite spacecraft control and payload operations after undocking.

"This capability is vital for India's lunar and interplanetary missions. Docking technology enables multi-launch missions and supports future human spaceflight," Singh said. After the demonstration of docking and undocking experiments, the satellites will continue to orbit the Earth for standalone missions for two years. SDX01 is equipped with a high resolution camera (HRC) and SDX02 has two payloads — a miniature multispectral (MMX) payload and radiation monitor (RadMon).



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11.15,2.30PM(235/- 175/- 150/-)

OAMB AMB-10.20,1.15,4.00PM
TICKET PRICE: 350/- 250/-

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10.25,1.10,7.25,10.25
TICKET PRICE: 275/- 225/-

PRASAD'S-12.30,11.00PM
TICKET:200/-

INDRA/NAGENDRA70 11.15,6.15PM
SVC SRILAKSHMI 2.30PM

MAHALAKSHMI70 11.30,2.30PM
TALLURI70MM 11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15PM

ASIAN SWAPNA70 11.00,2.00PM
SENSATION COM 11.15AM

ASIAN JYOTHI70MM 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM
ANJALI70MM 11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15PM

VIJETHA70MM 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00
SRIRAMANA35MM 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00

SAMPOORNA70MM 11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15PM
RANGA70MM 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00

AARADHANA70MM 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00
SRIKRISHNAALIYABAD 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00

LAKSHMI70MM SHAMSHABAD 11.30,2.30,6.00,9.00
VENKATESWARA70 GUMMADIDHALA 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00

LAKSHMIKALA MANDIR 11.30,2.30,6.30,9.30
RAGHAVENDRA70 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00

VENKATASAI70 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM
SIVAGANGA-11.00,9.00PM

SHA-11.30,2.30PM
RADHIKA-10.15,4.30,10.25PM

CINEPLANET-10.30,1.20,10.40PM
MCUBE MALL-10.25,4.30,10.40PM

CINESQUARE-10.25,4.25,7.30,10.35PM
MJR SQUARE-10.30,7.25,10.30PM

KUKATPALLY 4.45PM
TIVOLI 11.15,4.30,10.55PM

MOVIE MAX 10.00,12.45,6.15,9.00PM
MULTIPLEX 11.00,4.00,10.40PM

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ASIAN CINEMAS
CINEMART-10.30,1.25,7.20,10.40
JP MALL-10.20,4.25,7.30,10.35PM

INOX
GVK MALL-11.00,2.00,7.40PM
MP MALL-11.00,4.50,7.45PM

GSM MALL-11.45,7.50,10.40PM
ASHOKA-10.40,1.30,8.00PM
SATTVA NECKLACE-10.40,4.00,10.30PM

MOVIE TIME
GACHIBOWLI-9.30,3.30,8.00,11.00
AMEERPET-10.30,12.50,4.55,11.00
SKY MALL-11.00AM,10.15PM

MIRAJ CINEMAS
CHANDANAGAR-11.10,5.00,10.00PM
SHALINI-11.10,5.00,10.00PM
MALKAJGIRI-11.00,7.50,10.50PM
BALANAGAR-11.10,5.00,10.00PM
MIYAPUR-11.00,7.50,10.50PM

Cinepolis
LULU MALL-5.10,8.10PM
DSL MALL-1.15,11.20PM
MANTRA MALL-12.45,11.00PM
CCPL-4.40,7.45PM | TNR-1.00,7.30PM
SUDHA-11.00,4.55PM

PVR
FORUM-10.10,1.05,8.05,10.40PM
INORBIT MALL-10.30,4.45,11.00PM
CENTRAL MALL-11.25,5.30,11.00PM
RK MALL-11.00,1.00,8.00PM
HITECH MALL-12.40,4.10,11.05PM
L&T METRO MALL-10.35,4.20,7.45,11.00PM
IRRUMMANZIL-4.35PM | PRESTONE-10.05,5.00,11.05
MUSARAMBAGH-10.35,1.30,7.35PM
ATRIUM MALL-2.10,5.05,8.00PM

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KANNADA VERSION
OAMB AMB MALL-10.50PM

PRASAD-11.00,3.45,8.30

INOX
GSM MALL-4.05PM

PVR
IRRUMMANZIL-1.40,11.10PM
FORUM MALL-4.25PM

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AMR MALL-3.30PM

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MAHALAXMI COMPLEX-9.45PM

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SATTVA-7.35PM

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SUDHA-1.20,3.15,5.00,8.15,11.15PM

TIVOLI
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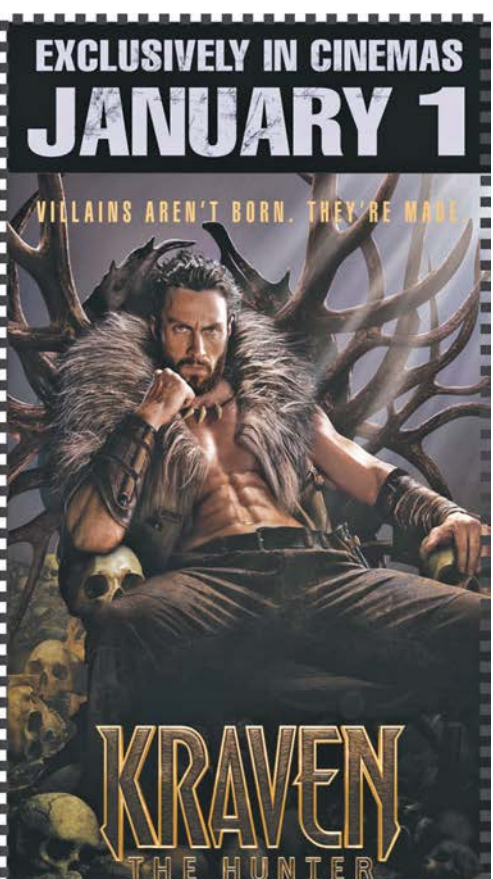
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EXCLUSIVELY IN CINEMAS
JANUARY 1
VILLAINS AREN'T BORN. THEY'RE MADE
KRAVEN
THE HUNTER
EXCLUSIVELY IN CINEMAS

OAMB AMB MALL-GACHIBOWLI
PRASAD'S AAA MALL

Cinepolis CCPL MALL | SUDHA | MANTRA MALL
LULU MALL | DSL MALL | TNR NORTH CITY

PVR FORUM MALL | INORBIT MALL | CENTRAL | RK MALL
MUSARAMBAGH | GALLERIA | IRRUMMANZIL
ATRIUM MALL | IOCN HITECH | PRESTONE MALL

INOX GVK MALL | MP MALL | ASHOKA ONE
GSM MALL | NECKLACE MALL | PRISM MALL

MIRAJ BALANAGAR | CHANDANAGAR | SHALINI
MIYAPUR | MALKAJGIRI

MOVIE TIME AMEERPET | SKY MALL | GACHIBOWLI

ASIAN CINEMAS CINESQUARE | MCUBE MALL | MJR SQUARE
JP MALL | CINEPLANET | CINEMART

MOVIE MAX AMR MALL
GPR GPR MALL

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Enjoy
Coffee Break
EVERYDAY IN
HYDERABAD CHRONICLE



SHANTHI70MM
11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM

BRAMARAMBA70MM-2.45,9.45

MYTHRI MEGHA70-11.30,10.00

SRIKRISHNA-UPPAL 11.30,2.30,6.30,9.30
TALLURI70-ECIL 11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15PM

INDRA/NAGENDRA70-9.15PM

OAMB 10.20,1.05,3.50,10.30PM
AAA 10.30,7.05,10.10PM

PRASAD'S 1.40,4.05,11.10PM

NEO APARNA MALL-4.25PM

ASIAN CINEMAS
CINEMART-7.15,10.20PM
CINEPLANET-7.25,10.35PM
CINESQUARE-12.40,10.15PM

MCUBE MALL-4.15,10.45PM | RADHIKA-7.25PM
SHA-9.45PM | SIVAGANGA-9.00PM
<

SHORT TAKES

KAVELASHVILI INAUGURATED AS GEORGIA PREZ

Tbilisi, Dec. 29: Former soccer player Mikheil Kavelashvili was formally inaugurated as President of Georgia on Sunday, cementing the ruling party's grip in what the opposition calls a blow to the country's EU aspirations and a victory for former imperial ruler Russia. Outgoing pro-Western Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili said on Sunday that she would vacate her residence at the Orbeliani Palace in Tbilisi, but insisted she was still the legitimate office holder. "I will come out of here, come out to you and be with you."

SUICIDE BOMBER KILLS POLICE OFFICER IN IRAN

Tehran, Dec. 29: A suicide bomber killed a local police officer and wounded another in a southern Iranian port city, home to a large Sunni Muslim community, local media said on Sunday. The hard-line *Javan Daily*, a newspaper close to the country's powerful Revolutionary Guard, said the attacker stopped Capt. Mojtaba Shahid's car on Saturday evening in Bandar Lengeh in the province of Hormozgan before detonating his vest. Shahid's deputy, who was also in the car, has been hospitalised in critical condition, the paper reported.

3 MIGRANTS DIE TRYING TO CROSS ENGLISH CHANNEL

Paris, Dec. 29: At least three migrants died on Sunday while attempting to cross the English Channel to Britain from northern France, authorities said. The deaths were confirmed after an early morning rescue operation involving French emergency services and the navy's "Dauphin" helicopter. The prefecture described the attempted crossing as "difficult," with around 50 people stranded in the water and on the beach near Sangatte at around 6 am. Rescuers assisted 45 individuals, including four who were transported to hospitals.

CHARLES DOLAN, HBO FOUNDER, DIES AT 98

Washington, Dec. 29: Charles Dolan, who founded some of the most prominent US media companies including Home Box Office Inc and Cablevision Systems Corp., has died at age 98, according to a news report. A statement issued on Saturday by his family said Dolan died of natural causes, *Newsday* reported late on Saturday. "It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of our beloved father and patriarch, Charles Dolan, the visionary founder of HBO and Cablevision," the statement said on Saturday.

BURY 'MUJIBIST' CONSTITUTION: B'DESH STUDENTS

Dhaka, Dec. 29: The Anti-Discrimination Students Movement on Sunday announced to issue a belated Proclamation of July Uprising that seeks to "bury" Bangladesh's 1972 Constitution calling it a "Mujibist" charter that had paved way for "India's aggression." The interim government of Muhammad Yunus visibly distanced itself from the "Proclamation" while ex-PM Khaleda Zia's party said it was disappointed and added, if there is anything bad in the Constitution, it can be amended. The platform's convener Hasnat Abdullah told a press conference here, "The Mujibist '72 Constitution will be buried (in the new proclamation) in the very place where the one-point declaration was made during the July uprising." He said it would be made at Central Shaheed Minar premises on December 31 in the afternoon. Weeks of protests led by the students' movement over a controversial quota system in government jobs had escalated into a nationwide campaign calling for the end of the 16-year regime of Sheikh Hasina, 77, resulting in her ouster on August 5. "The Indian aggression was initiated through the principles of the 1972 Constitution (and) the proclamation will make it clear how the Mujibist Constitution destroyed the aspirations of the people and exactly how we want to replace it," Abdullah said.

Experts suspect bird hit as crash cause

Jeju Air says investigation is underway; dy transport min. says runway length not contributing factor

Seoul, Dec. 29: Uncertainties surround the deadliest crash on South Korean soil, experts said on Sunday, questioning initial suggestions that a bird strike might have brought down the Jeju Air flight. The apparent absence of landing gear, the timing of the twin-engine Boeing belly-landing at Muan International Airport and the reports of a possible bird strike all raised questions that could not yet be answered. The single-aisle aircraft was seen in video broadcast on local media skidding down the runway with no visible landing gear before slamming into a wall in an explosion of flame and debris.

"Why didn't fire tenders lay foam on the runway? Why weren't they in attendance when the plane touched down? And why did the aircraft touch down so far down the runway? And why was there a brick wall at the end of the runway?" said *Airline News* editor Geoffrey Thomas.

South Korean officials said they were investigating the cause of the crash of Jeju Air Flight 7C2216, including a possible bird strike. The crash killed 179 of the 181 people on board. A spokesperson for Jeju Air was not immediately available for comments. Jeju Air declined to comment on the cause of the accident during news conferences, saying an investigation is under way. Under global aviation rules, South Korea will lead a civil investigation into the crash and automatically involve the National Transportation Safety Board in the US where the plane was designed and built. The flight data recorder



Firefighters and rescue team members work near the wreckage of a passenger plane at Muan International Airport in Muan, South Korea, on Sunday.



Firefighters and rescue team members work near the wreckage of a passenger plane at Muan International Airport in Muan, South Korea, on Sunday.

was found at 11:30 am (0230 GMT), about two and a half hours after the crash, and the cockpit voice recorder was found at 2:24 pm., according to South Korea's transport ministry. "That gives you all the parameters of all the systems of the plane. The heartbeat of the airplane is on the flight data recorder," Thomas said. "The voice recorder will

probably provide the most interesting analysis of what went on on this tragic crash." Experts caution that air accidents are usually caused by a cocktail of factors and it can take months to piece together the sequence of events in and outside the plane. In the space of a few minutes, the control tower issued a bird strike warning.

REACTIONS

“Regarding the black boxes, both the cockpit voice recorder and the flight data recorder have now been retrieve.” — JOO JONG-WAN SK dy transport min.

“The entire government is working closely together to manage the aftermath of the accident, dedicating all available resources, while making every effort to ensure thorough support for the bereaved families.” — CHOI SANG-MOK SK's acting President

“My thoughts are with the many families in South Korea who are mourning today following the dramatic plane crash. I join in prayer for the survivors and the dead.” — POPE FRANCIS

Plane shot from Russia: Azerbaijan

Baku, Moscow, Dec. 29: Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said on Sunday that a passenger plane that crashed last week, killing 38 people, had been damaged by shooting from the ground in Russia, and he said some in Russia had lied about the cause of the disaster. Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday apologised to Aliyev for Wednesday's "tragic incident" in Russian airspace involving the plane after Russian air defences engaged Ukrainian attack

drones. A Kremlin statement did not say Russia had shot down the plane, only noting a criminal case had been opened. "Our plane was shot down by accident," Aliyev told state television on Sunday, adding that the plane had come under some sort of electronic jamming and had then been shot at while it was approaching the southern Russian city of Grozny.



Our plane was shot down by accident. Unfortunately, in the first three days we heard only absurd versions from Russia. We witnessed clear attempts to cover up the matter. — Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan's President

"Unfortunately, in the first three days we heard only absurd versions from Russia," Aliyev said, citing statements in Russia that attributed the crash to birds or the explosion of some sort of gas cylinder. "We witnessed clear attempts to cover up the matter," said the Azerbaijani leader, who has

close ties to Russia and was educated at one of Moscow's top universities. Aliyev said he wanted Russia to accept it was guilty of downing the plane and to punish those responsible for fatally damaging the aircraft. Putin and Aliyev held another telephone call on Sunday.



Israelis protest against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government and call for the release of hostages held in the Gaza Strip by the Hamas militant group, in Tel Aviv.

New evacuations in N. Gaza town

Cairo, Dec. 29: Israeli forces carrying out a weeks-long offensive in northern Gaza ordered any residents remaining in Beit Hanoun to leave the town on Sunday, citing Palestinian militant rocket fire from the area, residents said. The instruction to leave has caused a new wave of displacement, although it was not immediately clear how many people were affected, residents said. Israel says its almost three-month-old campaign in northern Gaza is aimed at Hamas militants and preventing them from regrouping. Its instructions to civilians to evacuate are meant to keep them out of harm's way, the military says. Palestinian and UN officials say no place is safe in Gaza and that evacuations worsen the humanitarian conditions. Much of the area around the northern towns of Beit Hanoun, Jabalia and Beit Lahia has been cleared of people.

HOSTAGES FACED TORTURE, SAYS ISRAELI REPORT

Jerusalem, Dec. 29: Hostages held in Gaza were subjected to torture, including sexual and psychological abuse, starvation, burns and medical neglect, according to a new report by the Israeli health ministry that will be submitted to the United Nations this week. The report is based on interviews with the medical and welfare teams which treated more than 100 Israeli and foreign hostages, most of whom were released in late November 2023, in a brief truce between Israel and Hamas. Eight hostages were rescued. The hostages include more than 30 children and teenagers, a few of whom were found to have been bound, beaten or branded with a heated object.

Russia to abandon missile moratorium, says Lavrov

Moscow, Dec. 29: Russia will scrap a moratorium on the deployment of intermediate and shorter range nuclear-capable missiles because the United States has deployed such weapons in various regions around the world, Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov said on Sunday. Russia's move, long signalled, will kill off all that remains from one of the most significant arms control treaties of the Cold War, amid fears that the world's two biggest nuclear powers could be entering a new arms race together with China.

Russia and the United States, who both admit their relations are worse than at any time since the depths of the Cold War, have both expressed regret about the disintegration of the arms control



Relatives and friends of Ukrainian prisoners of war from the Azov Brigade and other units take part in a rally to call for their exchange with Russian prisoners at St Sophia Square in Kyiv, on Sunday.

tion of the tangle of arms control treaties which sought to slow the arms race and reduce the risk of

UNDER | THREAT

Ninth telecom co. in list of entities compromised by hackers

Dallas, Dec. 28: The Chinese-linked Salt Typhoon cyberespionage operation targeted AT&T T.Nand Verizon's systems, but the wireless carriers' US networks are now secure as they work with law enforcement and government officials, the companies said on Saturday in their first acknowledgment of the attacks. "We detect no activity by nation-state actors in our networks at this time. Based on our current investigation of this attack, the People's Republic of China targeted a small number of individuals of foreign intelligence interest."

We detect no activity by nation-state actors in our networks at this time. Based on our current investigation of this attack, the People's Republic of China targeted a small number of individuals of foreign intelligence interest. — AT&T spokesperson

incident, we can report that Verizon has contained the activities associated with this particular incident," Verizon's chief

Air Canada plane part catches fire



Ottawa, Dec. 29: An Air Canada flight coming from St John's City on Newfoundland Island had a rough landing at the Halifax airport in Goffs in Nova Scotia province that saw the aircraft skid down the runway and part of it catching fire.

A statement issued by the airport said the incident involved Air Canada Flight 2259, which was operated by PAL Airlines, *CBC News* reported. The incident happened around 9:30 pm local time. The statement does not say how many people were on the plane. The people on board were evacuated, and then taken to a hangar to be checked out by paramedics, *CBC News* said. Due to the incident, the Halifax airport was temporarily closed on Saturday night. A passenger told *CBC News* that one of the plane's tyres did not deploy properly upon landing. "The plane started to sit at about a 20-degree angle to the left and, as that happened, we heard a pretty loud — what almost sounded like a crash sound — as the wing of the plane started to skid along the pavement, along with what I presume was the engine," she said. The passenger said the plane then skidded down the runway for a "decent" distance as the pilots worked to stop the plane. "The plane shook quite a bit and we started seeing fire on the left side of the plane and smoke started coming in the windows," she said. The airport said one of its runways has since reopened.

Copter's emergency landing in Nepal

Kathmandu, Dec. 29: A helicopter en route to Kathmandu carrying five United States nationals made an emergency landing at Banepa, 50 km east of Kathmandu after a bird strike mid-flight. The 9N-AKG chopper, belonging to the private Heli Everest airlines, was coming from Lukla, gateway to Mt Everest, when it was struck by the bird at 11 am on Sunday, news agency PTI quoted an official. The pilot managed to land the aircraft safely, the official added, thereby avoiding any injuries to the passengers or crew. According to the airline, the helicopter was carrying one Nepali pilot. Although the helicopter did not suffer any damage, it would go through a technical test before it becomes ready for another flight, the report added. Authorities and the airline praised the quick response of the pilot, who managed to land the aircraft without further complications, ensuring the safety of all onboard. Earlier in August, a helicopter had crashed in the mountains northwest region of Kathmandu, killing five people, including four Chinese tourists. The Nepal-based Air Dynasty helicopter, 9N-AJD, was en route to Rasuwa from Kathmandu when it crashed. The helicopter departed from Kathmandu at 1:54 p.m. and was en route to Syaprubensi when it crashed on August 7.

An Amsterdambound flight veered off the runway at Oslo Torp Sandefjord Airport in Norway after an emergency landing, according to reports. "The incident occurred on Saturday after the KLM Royal Dutch Airlines flight experienced a hydraulic failure shortly after take off from Oslo Airport," said officials, adding that the crew responded to the situation and diverted it to Sandefjord Airport. According to officials, the Boeing 737-800 jet managed a safe touchdown at the Sandefjord Airport but lost control during the rollout, skidding off to the open grass field, reported *Aviation24.de*. Officials stated that the aircraft veered off runway 18 and came to a halt in soft grass.



China unveiled an updated model of its high-speed bullet train, on Sunday.

At 450 kmph, China unveils fastest train

Beijing, Dec. 29: China on Sunday unveiled an updated model of its high-speed bullet train which its manufacturer claims reached speeds of 450 kmph during the test runs, making it the world's fastest high-speed train. According to the China State Railway Group Co (China Railway), the new model, known as the CR450 prototype, will further shorten travel time and improve connectivity, making travel more convenient and efficient for the passengers.

The CR450 prototype reached a test speed of 450 kmph, with key performance indicators — operational speed, energy consumption, interior noise, and braking distance — setting a new international benchmark, official media here reported. It is significantly faster than the CR400 Fuxing high-speed rail (HSR) currently in service, which operates at speeds of 350 kmph, a report by state-run Xinhua said. China Railway will arrange a series of line tests.



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	78,699.07	0.29
Nifty 50	23,813.40	0.27
S&P 500*	5,970.84	-1.11
Dollar (₹)	85.02	0.08
Pound Sterling (₹)	106.22	1.38
Euro (₹)	88.24	0.38
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	76,536*8	-0.01
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	74.00	-0.23
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.787	0.004
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.631	0.052

* As of 8:30 PM IST

JSW to buy clean energy projects for \$1.5 billion

JSW Energy Limited has agreed to buy clean energy projects from O2 Power Pooling Pte for about \$1.5 billion in an all-cash deal. The acquisition will allow JSW, controlled by steel-to-cement tycoon Sajjan Jindal, to add a portfolio of 4.7 gigawatts of renewable power projects, the company said. O2 Power, formed in 2020, is a joint venture between Singapore's Temasek Holdings Pte and Sweden's EQT Infrastructure.

Auction of 11 critical mineral blocks cancelled

The government has cancelled the auction of 11 critical mineral blocks in the fourth round due to poor response. While no bids were received for four blocks, the remaining seven mines got less than three technically qualified bidders, according to the annulment notice. The four blocks which include tungsten and glaucinite, are located in the states of Chhattisgarh and Arunachal Pradesh.



Liquor cos want fresh standard for single malts

Indian liquor makers are mulling approaching food and beverages regulator FSSAI for a separate standard for the Indian single malt whisky that is rapidly scaling with the ongoing trend of premiumisation. This will help maintain the sanctity and reputation of Indian single malt whisky which is now exported to 60 countries, according to Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies.

Economy to grow at 6.5-6.8%, says Deloitte

Indian economy is likely to grow at 6.5-6.8 per cent this fiscal and slightly higher between 6.7-7.3 per cent in FY2026, boosted by domestic consumption, Deloitte said on Sunday. Deloitte India economist Rumki Majumdar said the growth in the first half of the fiscal year 2025 turned out to be slower than estimated as election uncertainties followed by disruptions in activity due to heavy rainfall.

Industry calls for excise cut to fuel consumption

Reduction in marginal tax for personal income needed, says CII

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, DEC. 29

Leading industry body Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on Sunday urged the government for lowering the excise duty on fuel to boost consumption in the forthcoming budget for 2025-26, especially at the lower income level, arguing that fuel prices significantly drive inflation.

The industry chamber also called for reducing marginal tax rates for personal income up to ₹20 lakh per annum, saying that this would help trigger the virtuous cycle of consumption, higher growth and higher tax revenue as inflation has reduced the buying power of lower and middle-income earners.

“The central excise duty alone accounts for approximately 21 per cent of the retail price for petrol and 18 per cent for diesel. Since May 2022, these duties have not been adjusted in line with the approximately 40 per cent decrease in global crude prices. Lowering excise duty on fuel would help reduce overall inflation and increase disposable incomes,” the industry body said.

“Domestic consumption has been critical to India's growth story, but inflationary pressures have somewhat eroded the purchasing power of consumers. The government's interventions could focus on enhancing disposable incomes and stimulating spending to sustain economic momentum.”



MARKETS TO TRACK
MACRO DATA, FIIs, GLOBAL TRENDS

New Delhi, Dec. 29: Macroeconomic data announcements, trading activity of foreign investors and global trends will guide equity market movement this week, which would also mark the beginning of the new calendar year and month, analysts said.

Movement of rupee, which registered the steepest fall in almost two years to hit its lifetime intra-day low on Friday, will also be tracked by investors.

“Persistent FIIs (Foreign Institutional Investors) selling has been a source of pressure on Indian markets, and their stance in the new year could shape near-term trends. Meanwhile, monthly auto sales data will also be closely watched. As the Q3 earnings season approaches, corporate quarterly updates will begin trickling in, setting the stage for market expectations,” Santosh Meena from Swastika Investmart Ltd, said. Manufacturing data from China and the US, along with US jobless claims, will play a crucial role, Meena said. — PTI

FOCUS ON growth

● CII calls for a cut in marginal tax rates for personal income tax which will trigger virtuous cycle of consumption and lead to higher growth.

● It said IoT, AI, machine learning robotics, and automation are reshaping the manufacturing landscape, driving innovation, and global competitiveness.

Domestic consumption has been critical to India's growth story, but inflationary pressures have somewhat eroded the purchasing power of consumers. The government's interventions could focus on enhancing disposable incomes and stimulating spending to sustain economic momentum.

— Chandrajit Banerjee, CII director-general

economic momentum. Persistent food inflationary pressures also impinge upon low-income rural households who allocate a larger share to food in their consumption basket,” CII director general Chandrajit Banerjee, said. Banerjee further said that while recent quarters have shown promising signs of recovery in rural consumption, targeted government interventions, such as increasing per unit benefit under its key schemes like MGNREGS, PM-KISAN and PMAY, and providing consumption vouchers to low-income

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD FOCUS ON ENHANCING PEOPLE'S INCOME, SAYS CII



households, can further enhance the rural recovery. In its pre-budget proposals, the CII has also recommended an increase in the daily minimum wage under the MGNREGS from ₹267 to ₹375 as suggested by the ‘Expert Committee on fixing national minimum wage’ in 2017, with the industry body estimating that this will entail an additional expenditure of ₹42,000 crore. “The government should raise the annual payout under the PM-KISAN scheme from ₹8,000. This will entail an additional expenditure of Rs 20,000 crore,” it said.

Farm sector eyes 4% growth in 2025 with good rain predicted

New Delhi, Dec. 29: India is poised to achieve new heights in foodgrain production in 2025, driven by favourable monsoon, though significant challenges persist in pulses and oilseeds production as the country's agricultural sector shows signs of robust recovery.

The agriculture ministry's initial projections paint an optimistic picture, with kharif (summer) foodgrain production estimated at a record 164.7 million tonnes for the 2024-25 crop year ending June 2025.

Winter crop planting has maintained steady progress, with wheat sown across 29.31 million hectares as of mid-December 2024, while total rabi (winter) crops cover



55.88 million hectares. “We had a good kharif crop because of normal rainfall,” Agriculture Secretary Devesh Chaturvedi told PTI.

“Overall, the crop prospect for the whole year looks promising,” he added, though cautioning against potential heat waves in February-March that could affect the winter wheat harvest.

The agricultural sector is projected to bounce back strongly, with growth

DIGITAL INFRA INVESTMENTS HIT HISTORIC HIGH

New Delhi, Dec. 29: Continuous investment in digital infrastructure, including data centres and high-speed internet, along with policy support, has propelled India's services exports to a “historic” milestone of \$34.31 billion in October, a commerce ministry official said.

The official said India has established itself as a global leader in digitally delivered services exports, leveraging its robust IT sector and skilled workforce.

Services traded through computer networks, such as the internet, apps, emails, and digital intermediation platforms, have grown exponentially.

“India's services sector reached a historic milestone in October 2024, recording an all-time high in monthly exports of \$34.31 billion, a 22.3 per cent increase compared to October 2023,” the official added. The key enabling factors that are helping the sector's growth included continuous investment in digital infrastructure, such as data centres and high-speed internet connectivity; initiatives like Digital India that have fostered a conducive environment for IT and digitally delivered services and partnerships. — PTI

Rupee withstood storms in '24, relief likely in '25

Mumbai, Dec. 29: The Indian rupee tumbled 3 per cent in 2024 as concerns over slower economic growth and the greenback's global strength weighed, but it was among the least volatile currencies in the world and the headwinds may be less intense in the coming year. Rupee settled at new lows as the year closed as dollar's resurgence weighed on emerging-market currencies.

The action-packed 2024 continued to impact the rupee's exchange rate against major currencies throughout, with a series of geopolitical events ranging from the Russia-Ukraine war and crisis in the Middle East to trade disruptions in the Red Sea and elections across several major economies.

Global factors, including measures taken by major central banks, have hit not only the rupee-dollar dynamics but also disrupted the exchange rates of currencies across all emerging economies. In fact, the rupee's fall



FREE FALL
REASONS FOR WEAKENED RUPEE IN 2024

- Wars in Ukraine and Middle East.
- Trade disruptions in the Red Sea.
- Elections in several major economies.
- Dependence on crude oil imports.
- Widened trade deficit
- The outlook for the Indian currency next year is relatively stable and projected to range between 82 and 87 against dollar.

with respect to the dollar has been less than its depreciation in terms of other currencies. And it has ended up with gains compared to euro and the Japanese yen.

Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) ex-governor Shaktikanta Das also said in the central bank's December bi-monthly monetary policy that the Indian rupee has remained less volatile compared to its peers in emerging markets.

Yet, the RBI has been more active in its efforts towards stabilising the

rupee-dollar rate, thanks to increased demand for the greenback due to India's dependence on oil imports and the widening trade deficit. “RBI was also seen intervening actively in NDF (non-deliverable forward) markets to prevent sharp depreciation of the rupee,” said Naveen Mathur, director Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers. This was evident in foreign exchange reserves, which declined from the record high of \$704.89 billion in late September.

CAD ends up flat in Q2 after revision

New Delhi, Dec. 29: India's current account deficit stayed largely flat in the July-September period from the previous quarter's number, which was revised up sharply.

The shortfall in the broadest measure of trade in goods and services was \$11.2 billion in the quarter, or 1.2 per cent of gross domestic product, the Reserve Bank of India said in a statement on Friday. This compares with a gap of \$11.3 billion in the April-June period, which was revised up from a deficit of \$9.7 billion reported earlier.

Median estimate in a Bloomberg survey of 14 economists was for a deficit of \$15.3 billion for the July-September period. Strong domestic demand, particularly for gold, drove the South Asian nation's import bill up during the quarter, which typically sees a jump in spending as Indians prepare for the Diwali festival season. The country's trade deficit had widened unexpectedly in August as a weakness in global



demand slowed exports, while gold imports saw a sharp spike after the government slashed the duty on the metal to 6 per cent from 15 per cent in July.

The current account is likely to widen substantially in the October-December period after India's trade deficit ballooned to a record high in November, driven by a fourfold jump in gold imports. However, there are concerns that officials may have over estimated shipments of the precious metal for the month, and attempts are underway to reconcile the data. The latest numbers could bring some relief for the rupee, which fell to all-time low of 85.8150 against the dollar Friday. — Bloomberg

RBI flags high staff attrition in pvt banks

New Delhi, Dec. 29: Employee attrition in private sector banks has witnessed an increase to about 25 per cent and this high turnover rate poses significant operational risk, according to the latest Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2023-24.

Employee attrition rates are high across select private sector banks and small finance banks (SFBs), the report, which was released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said.

The total number of employees of private banks surpassed that of public sector banks

(PSBs) during 2023-24, but their attrition has increased sharply over the last three years, with average attrition rate of around 25 per cent, the report said.

“High attrition and employee turnover rate pose significant operational risks, including disruption in customer services, besides leading to loss of institutional knowledge and increased recruitment costs. In various interactions with banks, the Reserve Bank has stressed that reducing attrition is not just a human resource function but a strategic imperative,” it said. — PTI

Indian exports to Australia rises 64%

FC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 29

India's exports to its trade agreement partner Australia rose 64.4 per cent year-on-year to \$643.7 million in November on account of healthy growth in sectors such as textiles, chemicals and agricultural products. However, the country's merchandise exports recorded a decline of 5.21 per cent year-on-year to \$5.56 billion during April-November 2024-25,

according to the commerce ministry data.

India and Australia implemented an interim trade pact — Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) — on December 29, 2022 and are now in negotiations to widen the scope of the pact and make it a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). On the completion of two years of ECTA, commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal

said the agreement has brought with it increased market access for Indian exporters, expanded opportunities for MSMEs and farmers, and generated several employment avenues.

Goyal also said that it has also enabled growth in exports by 14 per cent in 2023-24; notable boost in IT/ITeS, business and travel services; and port-study work and work holiday visas. “The expanding trade and investment ties

between the two countries under the agreement reflect the growing business-to-business and people-to-people engagements. We are committed to building on the momentum that the Ind-Aus ECTA has generated and achieve the 100 billion Australian dollar trade target by 2030,” Goyal said. The ministry also said the key sectors like textiles, chemicals, and agriculture have shown substantial growth.

DIALING | IN Global satellite players, led by Elon Musk's Starlink, eyeing a chunk of telecom business in India

Subscriber loss, tariff war to hurt telcos in 2025

New Delhi, Dec. 29: Private telecom operators face twin challenges on investment recovery in the New Year as subscribers leaving their network after tariff hikes and satellite players mainly Elon Musk's Starlink eyeing a chunk of their bread and butter data business.

Private operators have invested around ₹70,000 crore in telecom infrastructure and radiowave assets this year to expand

the coverage of next-generation 5G services which is one of the main highlights of 2024 for the sector. To recover investments and protect margins, private telcos resorted to tariff hikes in mid-year but that move backfired.

Around 2 crore subscribers dropped their connections. Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea jointly lost 2.6 crore customers due to



● DESPITE SUBSCRIBER LOSS, private players need to recover investment and invest more in 5G to offer new-age services to drive future growth.

a 10-26 per cent price hike. Around 68 customers switched to state-run player BSNL which refrained from price hike. The loss-making PSU still offers

generation-old 3G service and is on the path of rolling out 4G network across the country.

Despite subscriber loss, private players need to

recover investment and invest more in 5G to offer new-age services to drive future growth.

According to EY India Markets and Telecom leader Prashant Singhal, the cumulative investment of Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea was around ₹70,200 crore in 2024.

Digital Infrastructure Providers Association (DIPA) Director General Manoj Kumar Singh says

the telecom infrastructure sector looks at a cumulative investment of ₹92,100 crore to ₹1.41 lakh crore in 2022-2027 to support the 5G ecosystem.

Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia also backed telecom operators on the tariff hike issue citing investments made by companies in the network.

The rollout of 5G services in 2024 has paved the way for the adoption of emerging technologies

like artificial intelligence which offers huge growth potential. “5G deployment has been a game-changer. We've witnessed a significant surge in 5G base transceiver stations, rising from 412,214 in December 2023 to 462,854 by November 2024, says DIPA.

A new threat from satellite broadband service providers is staring at private telcos in the New Year. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

Arshdeep, Smriti in ICC awards list

Dubai: Indian pacer Arshdeep Singh has been nominated for the ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year award following a stellar season in which he emerged as the joint highest wicket-taker and played a pivotal role in India's T20 World Cup triumph. The 25-year-old will compete for the prestigious honour alongside Pakistan's Babar Azam, Australia's Travis Head, and Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza, all of whom are among the standout performers this year.

Stylish Indian opener Smriti Mandhana too will be vying for an ICC award after being nominated for ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year for her standout performance in international cricket. Laura Wolvaardt (South Africa), Chamari Athapaththu (Sri Lanka) and Annabel Sutherland (Australia) are the other experienced cricketers competing for the award. — PTI

West Bengal storm into Santosh final

Hyderabad: West Bengal edged past defending champions Services 4-2 to enter the final of the 78th National Football Championship for the Santosh Trophy here on Sunday. The winners led 3-0 at half-time. The win marked West Bengal's 47th appearance in the tournament's final, which they have won a record 32 times. The match saw West Bengal asserting their authority early on. Manotos Maji and Naro Hari Shrestha each scored a goal, while Robi Hansda, the tournament's leading scorer with 11 goals, added a brace to his tally to bag the Player-of-the-Match award.

Services, on the back foot for much of the first half, managed to score through Bikash Thapa and an own goal by West Bengal, which added some suspense to the proceedings in the second half. West Bengal unleashed well-coordinated attacks in the first half. Their organisation in defence also stood out, stifling the Services forwards from making any significant impact. — PTI

Ashi wins maiden 3P national title

Bhopal: Local shooter Ashi Chouksey overcame a strong field, that had the likes of Olympians Anjum Moudgil and Shriyanka Sadangi, to clinch her maiden national title in the 50m rifle 3-positions event here on Sunday. Ashi shot a superb 466.7, a full 3.1 points clear of two-time Olympian Anjum at her home range, the MP State Academy, during the 67th National Shooting Championship. Upcoming shooter Sakshi Sunil Padekar of Maharashtra won the bronze with an effort of 451.3.

Ashi, who has been in great form over the past two years and was also a part of the Paris Olympic Games trials, extended her run of good form with a solid 590 in qualifications, to get into the eight-woman match-up in third place. In the final, however, Ashi was in a different league altogether opening up a 2.3 points gap over Anjum at the end of the first 'Kneeling' position round. She maintained the lead after the 15 shots in the second 'Prone' position also. The lead increased to 2.9 after 10-shots of the last 'Standing' position and despite a few high 9s after that, the result was never in doubt. — PTI

Lakshya finishes third at King Cup

Shenzhen, China: India's Lakshya Sen delivered a dominant performance, outplaying rising French star Alex Lanier in straight games to finish third at the inaugural King Cup International Badminton Open here on Sunday. The 23-year-old defeated Lanier 21-17, 21-11, securing a handsome prize purse of around ₹36 lakh. Lakshya had earlier lost in the semifinals to reigning world junior champion Hu Zhe'an of China, going down 19-21, 19-21 in a closely-contested match. In the third place play-off, Lakshya started strong, taking a 6-1 lead, but Lanier fought back to level the score at 10-10, eventually gaining a one-point advantage at the interval. However, Lakshya regained control to move ahead 18-15 and grabbed three game points before sealing the opening game when Lanier went wide. After the break, Lakshya continued with the momentum, establishing an 8-6 lead and quickly extending it to 15-8. He gained nine match points and wrapped up the victory when Lanier sent a shot long. — PTI

BUMHURRAH!

Jasprit stars in India's fight before Oz tail wags

Melbourne, Dec. 29: Jasprit Bumrah left the hosts in a daze with a dream spell but the courageous Australian lower order steered the side to a commanding 333-run lead on Sunday, setting up the Boxing Day Test for an intriguing last-day finish.

Australia finished the fourth day at 228 for 9, leaving India skipper Rohit Sharma a bit irritated as the home team was in a spot at 156 for 8 at one stage.

Australia's number 8, 10 and 11 batters saw off nearly 35 overs and it could prove decisive if India doesn't bat exceedingly well on a track which has remained true in all four days.

Bumrah (4/53 in 17 overs) was an artist at work in the first two sessions and found his ally in Mohammed Siraj (3/66 in 22 overs) as momentum suddenly swung in India's favour.

Bumrah was unplayable for the better part of the second innings and completed 200 Test wickets on the day at an incredible average of 19.56.

But as luck would have it, he couldn't complete his five-for as he overstepped when he had Nathan Lyon caught in the slips by K. L. Rahul. Insult to the injury was the last-ball boundary hit by Lyon.

With immaculate length, awkward bounce and late movement, Bumrah had the Australian line-up in complete tangle but India let slip the advantageous position in the final session.

Pat Cummins (41 off 90 balls), Lyon (41 batting, 54 balls) and Scott Boland (10 batting, 65 balls) beefed up the second innings total, leaving a jittery Indian top-order with a mountain to climb on the final day.

A victory isn't impossible but for it to happen India would need something freakish from Rishabh Pant and at least a couple of senior batters need to shrug off the rust. The pitch has no demons but Indian batters need to clear the cobwebs in their minds.

Marnus Labuschagne played his grittiest knock of the series with a 70 but Yashasvi Jaiswal's three dropped catches could cost India dear despite another day of heavy-lifting by the peerless Bumrah.

Labuschagne fought doggedly but could have been dismissed for 47 if Jaiswal held onto a regulation catch in third slip off Akash Deep.

For the first time since the Perth Test, Bumrah had meaningful support from the other end as Australia lost three wickets in a space of 10 deliveries. The pacer's effort helped India regain a good bit of control despite conceding a 105-run first innings lead even after Nitish Reddy's brilliant 114. — PTI

Reddy family meets Gavaskar

Melbourne, Dec. 29: Mutyalu Reddy, the father of India's newest cricketing hero Nitish, was overwhelmed when he touched the feet of his childhood hero Sunil Gavaskar after being escorted to the official broadcaster's box. Gavaskar met the Reddy family, a day after 21-year-old Nitish conjured up his maiden Test hundred. The legendary batter, who is now a revered analyst and commentator, acknowledged the sacrifices made by the Reddy family and told them that Indian cricket has got a 'gem' because of their efforts.

Even the 'little master' seemed gripped by a wave of emotions and gave his blessings to the family.

The video of the meeting went viral on social media. Mutyalu shared how tense the family was when Nitish was batting on 99 and the ninth wicket



India's Jasprit Bumrah (centre) celebrates the wicket of Australia batter Sam Konstas on the fourth day of their fourth Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in Melbourne on Sunday.

— BCCI

Wanted to prove critics, naysayers wrong: Nitish

Melbourne, Dec. 29: Nitish Reddy wanted to confute his critics and the naysayers who doubted his ability to excel in Test format, and the gritty century at the iconic MCG was his way of conveying that he belongs to highest level of cricket. A few former players, including a former chairman of selectors, were sceptical about Reddy's elevation as a Test player but with 293 runs in six innings and a batting average of 58-plus, he has answered them back in a befitting manner.

Reddy's 114 formed the cornerstone of India's first innings score of 369. Did you ever feel that you will be highest scorer in this team?

"Some people doubted me, like a youngster who played IPL, can't perform in such a big series. I know a lot of people did talk like that," Reddy said, sharing his frustration after the end of fourth day's play.

"I just want to make them feel wrong about what they have said about me and that's what I am doing. I want people to know that I am here to

SCORECARD	
Australia 1st Innings 474	
India 1st Innings (overnight 358/9): Yashasvi Jaiswal run out (Cummins/ Carey) 82, Rohit Sharma c Boland b Cummins 3, K. L. Rahul b Cummins 24, Virat Kohli c Carey b Boland 36, Akash Deep c Lyon b Boland 0, Rishabh Pant c Lyon b Boland 28, Ravindra Jadeja lbw b Lyon 17, Nitish Kumar Reddy c Starc b Lyon 114, Washington Sundar c Smith b Lyon 50, Jasprit Bumrah c Khawaja b Cummins 0, Mohammed Siraj not out 4. Extras (lb-2, nb-4, w-5) 11. Total (all out in 119.5 overs) 369.	
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-51, 3-153, 4-154, 5-159, 6-191, 7-221, 8-348, 9-350.	
Bowling: Mitchell Starc 25-2-86-0, Pat Cummins 29-6-89-3, Scott Boland 27-7-57-3, Nathan Lyon 28.3-4-96-3, Mitchell Marsh 7-1-28-0, Travis Head 3-0-11-0.	
Australia 2nd Innings: Sam Konstas b Bumrah 8, Usman Khawaja b Siraj 21, Marnus Labuschagne lbw Siraj 70, Steve Smith c Pant b Siraj 15, Travis Head c Reddy b Bumrah 1, Mitchell Marsh c Pant b Bumrah 0, Alex Carey b Bumrah 2, Pat Cummins c Rohit b Jadeja 41, Mitchell Starc run out (Reddy/Pant) 5, Nathan Lyon batting 41, Scott Boland batting 10. Extras (lb-9, nb-6, w-1) 16. Total (for 9 wickets in 82 overs) 228.	
Fall of wickets: 1-20, 2-43, 3-80, 4-85, 5-85, 6-91, 7-148, 8-156, 9-173.	
Bowling: Jasprit Bumrah 24-7-56-4, Akash Deep 17-4-53-0, Mohammed Siraj 22-4-66-3, Ravindra Jadeja 14-2-33-1, Nitish Reddy 1-0-4-0, Washington Sundar 4-0-7-0.	

give my 100 per cent for Indian team," the 21-year-old said and his plain speaking was as aggressive as his purposeful batting.

Asked how he looks at the past one month during which his life changed, he was quick to reply: "I guess for you guys, it is like one or two months. For me, it's like, I can see

my my past two to three years. How hard I've been working on my batting and bowling."

A lot of people don't know that Reddy had hired side-arm throw-down experts before the start of 2024 IPL and practised against them with speed of deliveries cranking up to 145 clicks from around 18 yards. — PTI

BUMRAH IS FIRST BOWLER WITH SUB-20 AVERAGE

Melbourne, Dec. 29: Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah on Sunday became the second fastest Indian along with Ravindra Jadeja to complete 200 Test wickets and the first bowler ever to reach that milestone with a sub-20 average during the fourth day's play of the fourth Test against Australia here.

Bumrah dismissed Travis Head (1) for his 200th victim in the post-lunch session, joining Jadeja in the list of bowlers who are fastest to 200 wickets in Tests.

He is also the fastest Indian pace bowler to achieve the feat, going past legendary Kapil Dev who went past the mark in 50 matches.

Both Bumrah and Jadeja achieved the feat in their 44th Test, and overall he is 12th Indian bowler in the format to complete the landmark. — PTI

INCONSISTENT BOUNCE 'TRICKY' FOR AUSTRALIA

sMelbourne, Dec. 29: India might be in for a very difficult chase on a track which is offering inconsistent bounce with deliveries bowled from back of length coming at stump height, Australia's top scorer Marnus Labuschagne said on Sunday.

Asked how the pitch would behave on Day 5, Labuschagne said, "I think from the first innings, there was some movement, obviously. It was hard work in that first probably, especially the first 40 to 50 overs. But as the game's gone on, the bounce has got less and more inconsistent. So we're just getting more balls hitting the stumps. More balls are skidding through." He feels the degree of lateral movement is still the same but the difference in height could become a factor.

"The seam movement's probably been the same. But just the amount of bounce is significantly lower," he added. — PTI



Koneru Humpy after winning the FIDE World Rapid Chess Championship 2024 in women category in New York on Sunday.

— PTI

Humpy grabs 2nd World Rapid title

New York, Dec. 29: Grandmaster Koneru Humpy capped a wonderful year for Indian chess, defeating Irene Sukandar of Indonesia to emerge the FIDE Women's World Rapid Chess champion here on Sunday.

Humpy had won the event back in 2019 at Georgia and the Indian No. 1 is only the second player after China's Ju Wenjun to clinch the title more than once.

Humpy's achievement laced a sensational year for the chess fraternity after D. Gukesh defeated China's Ding Liren to emerge champion in the classical format World Championship recently in Singapore.

In September, India had also won its first-ever gold medals in Open and Women's categories in the Chess Olympiad in Budapest.

The Indian, who started the tournament here with a first-round defeat, was the lone winner in the 11th and final round, helping her to top the tables with 8.5 points, half a point clear of six others including compatriot D. Harika.

"I'm very excited and happy. In fact, I expected it to be a very tough day, like some sort of tie-break. But when I finished the game, the arbitrator told me (about winning), and it was a tense moment for me," said Humpy, who began with black pieces, after her victory.

● Humpy had won the event back in 2019 at Georgia and the Indian No. 1 is only the second player after China's Ju Wenjun to clinch the title more than once.

"So, this is quite unexpected because the whole year I have been struggling and I had very bad tournaments where I just ended up in last place. So, this came as a surprise," she added.

Ju Wenjun of China finished second as the tie-break was resolved while Kateryna Lagno of Russia ended third. Harika, who had eight points, had to be content with a fifth-place finish.

Humpy credited her family for the success.

"I think it was possible because of the support from my family. My husband and my parents — they support me a lot. My parents look after my daughter when I travel.

"It's not easy to become a World Champion at 37. It's quite difficult when you get older to keep that motivation and stay sharp when required. I'm glad that I made it," she said.

The seasoned player said she was motivated to do well after her first round defeat, which saw her eventually slipping to 2.5 points after four rounds.

— PTI



Manchester City's Erling Haaland (right) celebrates with Savinho after scoring against Leicester City during their English Premier League match at the King Power Stadium in Leicester, England, on Sunday. — AP

MAN CITY STOP THE ROT WITH WIN AT LEICESTER

Leicester (United Kingdom), Dec. 29: Manchester City provided Pep Guardiola some relief with a 2-0 victory at Leicester to secure just a second win in 14 games for the crisis-hit English champions on Sunday.

Savinho and Erling Haaland struck either side of half-time as City ended a run of eight away games without a win. The performance was still far from the standards that Guardiola's side have set in winning an unprecedented four consecutive English top-flight titles. But the effusive celebrations of Haaland's header 16 minutes from time showed that three points was all that mattered for the visitors to at least temporarily halt their remarkable slump.

Victory lifts City up to fifth but they are still 11 points behind leaders Liverpool, who have two games in hand. Defeat leaves Leicester still rooted in the bottom three.

Guardiola made just one change from the 1-1 Boxing Day draw against Everton as Kevin De Bruyne replaced his Belgian international colleague Jeremy Doku. De Bruyne's fitness struggles have played a part in City's slump and he immediately showed what Guardiola's men have been missing for most of the season.

— AFP

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