



The Researchers'

NEWS BOX

Middle-east war: Israeli's defense minister accepts killing Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh

World Israel's defense minister has confirmed that Hamas assassinated Hamas' top leader last summer and is threatening to take similar action against the leadership of the Houthi rebel group in Yemen.

The comments by Israel Katz appeared to mark the first time that Israel has acknowledged killing Ismail Haniyeh, who died in an explosion in Iran in July.

Israel was widely believed to be behind the blast and leaders have previously hinted at its involvement.

In a speech Monday, Katz said the Houthis would meet a similar fate as the other members of an Iranian-led alliance in the region, including Haniyeh.

He also noted that Israel has killed other leaders of Hamas and Hezbollah, helped topple Syria's Bashar Assad and destroyed Iran's anti-aircraft systems.

"We will strike (the Houthis') strategic infrastructure and cut off the head of the leadership," he said.

"Just like we did to Haniyeh, Sinwar and Nasrallah in Tehran, Gaza and Lebanon, we will do in Hodeida and Sanaa," he said, referring to Hamas and Hezbollah leaders killed in previous Israeli attacks. The Iranian-backed Houthis have launched scores of missiles and drones at Israel throughout the war, including a missile that landed in Tel Aviv on Saturday and wounded at least 16 people.

Israel has carried out three sets of airstrikes in Yemen during the war and vowed to step up the pressure on the rebel group until the missile attacks stop.

Where Does Santa It Is Not Finland, Greenland Or Sweden

Queensland. Sending a letter to Santa can be difficult as no one can agree on where exactly Santa lives. Several countries are competing to claim Santa as one of their citizens. Finland's tourism industry suggests Korvatunturi in Lapland is where Santa keeps his workshop, and the link between Santa and Lapland brings in hundreds of millions of tourist dollars.

Danes say Santa is in Greenland. Sweden suggests Mora is the place, and has built the theme park Santaworld. These places certainly look the part with white snow in winter and reindeer. They're also close to the North Pole.

Not so jolly traditions

They also have old and often quite disturbing folklore about the man in red. Pagan Finns celebrated St Knut's Day in wintry January by having men in furry jackets, the nuuttipukki, go from house to house with a sack of presents. Except the nuuttipukki weren't giving gifts and would likely make children cry. They came demanding gifts and would curse bad luck to any household not handing over a present. The Finnish tradition nuuttipukki, photographed here in 1928, saw men in furry jackets demanding presents. Finnish Heritage Agency, CC BYEventually, the gift grabbing nuuttipukki became the gift giving Joulupukki. Like other northern traditions such as the Yule Lads of Iceland, this visitor gave gifts but only to well behaved children.

By the 19th century, Santa Claus was settled in popular awareness more or less what we think of now: a jolly old man with a beard, a sleigh, reindeer and presents, living somewhere northern and cold. That image built on but sanitised the more grotesque European folklores of elves, gnomes and other supernatural creatures who either brought or demanded gifts. But standardising Santa's appearance did not settle where he actually lived and worked. In the mid-19th century the illustrator Thomas Nast portrayed Santa as a jolly old man in Harper's Weekly, and the illustration and the archetype took off. But Nast just showed Santa in a wintry landscape.

Low Birth Rates, Ageing Population Make South Korea 'Super-Aged Society'

Seoul, South Korea. South Korea has become a "super-aged society", with 20 percent of its population aged 65 or older, official data showed on Tuesday, a gloomy trend driven by an alarmingly low birth rate.

Asia's fourth-largest economy recorded just 0.7 births per woman late last year -- one of the lowest birth rates in the world and far below the replacement rate of 2.1 needed to sustain the current population.

That means South Korea's population is ageing and shrinking rapidly. Those aged 65 and older "account



for 20 percent of the 51.2 million registered population, numbering 10 million", the interior ministry said in a news release on Tuesday, placing South Korea alongside Japan, Germany and France as a "super-aged society". It also means the elderly population has more than doubled since 2008, when it numbered fewer than five million, according to the ministry. Men account for 44 percent of the current 65-and-older group, the data showed. The government has poured billions of dollars into encouraging more births, with Seoul authorities offering subsidies for egg freezing in one recent effort. However, such efforts have failed to deliver the intended results and the population is projected to fall to 39 million by 2067, when the median population age will be 62.

Experts say there are multiple causes for the twin phenomena of low marriage and birth rates, ranging from high child-rearing costs and soaring property prices to a notoriously competitive society that makes securing well-paid jobs difficult.

Explained: Donald Trump's Big Warning Over Panama Canal Amid Rising Chinese Influence

Washington DC. The thought of China is haunting Donald Trump who is troubled over Beijing's growing influence right under US' tail - the Panama Canal - a bridge connecting the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean through strategically located Panama, the country which links North and South America. US President-elect Trump, who is always ready to threaten others with tariffs, is also perturbed by Panama charging "excessive tariffs" for the use of the Panama Canal. So unsettled is he, by the combination of these two factors, that Mr Trump has openly declared that the US might consider taking control of the Panama Canal. Writing about his concerns on his social media platform Truth Social, Donald Trump warned that he would never let the Panama canal fall into the "wrong hands." Reminding the government in Panama that the canal was originally built by the United States more than a century ago, Mr Trump wrote "It was solely for Panama to manage, not China, or anyone else". He further re-posted a video of himself titled "We would and will NEVER let it fall into the wrong hands!"

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PANAMA CANAL

Till the early 20th century the shortest way to reach the Pacific Ocean from the Atlantic Ocean and vice versa was to either sail around Cape Horn located in Chile at the southern tip of South America or to sail through the Strait of Magellan - also at the southern end of South America - in Chile. Both meant sailing around the entire continent of South America and nearly reaching Antarctica before sailing back up either into the Pacific or the Atlantic - this was neither economical, nor efficient. After much thought, research and survey, a narrow, but possible way was discovered cutting across the Isthmus of Panama. However, there was a herculean challenge to be overcome in order to achieve that. The waterway was at different levels and there was no way a ship could either climb or descend where there was a sudden change in topography. For the waterway in the isthmus to be converted into a man-made canal, it would require an engineering marvel - one that was both inconceivable



and unheard of in the early 20th Century. The United States of America was the only nation at the time that had the technical knowledge and expertise to be able to make it happen. And so, in May, 1904 - less than a year after Panama declared Independence from Colombia in November, 1903, the US began the construction of the Panama Canal. A treaty was signed between the United States and Panama under which the canal would be constructed and managed by the US. After 10 years of engineering works round-the-clock, the Panama Canal became a reality in August, 1914 with the

SS Ancon becoming the first ship to pass through the canal. The US continued to control and operate the canal and its surrounding areas until a new agreement was signed between Panama and the US called the Torrijos-Carter Treaty in 1977. This provided for the handover of the canal to Panama after joint operations for nearly two decades. The Panamanian government took full control of the canal in 1999. DONALD TRUMP vs PANAMANIAN PRESIDENT JOSE MULINO Apart from the warning that the US would never allow operations of the Panama Canal to be handed over to another country amid China's growing influence and muscular posturing globally, Donald Trump expressed his displeasure over "very high" tariffs being charged by Panama. Writing on Truth Social, Mr Trump said "The fees being charged by Panama are ridiculous, especially knowing the extraordinary generosity that has been bestowed to Panama by the US."

US NSA Jake Sullivan Urges Bangladesh To Protect Human Rights Amid Hindu Attacks

World Amid rising international concern over large-scale attacks on minority Hindus in Bangladesh, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan spoke with the interim government's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus on Monday. Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to protecting human rights and promoting religious harmony in the troubled South Asian nation. "Both leaders expressed their commitment to respecting and protecting the human rights of all people, regardless of religion," the White House said in a readout of the call. Sullivan thanked Yunus for his leadership during challenging times and reiterated the United States' support for a stable and democratic Bangladesh. "The United States supports a prosperous, stable, and democratic Bangladesh, and offers continued assistance in addressing the challenges it faces," the White House added. This conversation comes less



than a month before President Joe Biden transfers power to Donald Trump, who will be sworn in as the 47th President of the United States on January 20. Indian American Democratic Congressman Shri Thanedar has been vocal about the issue, urging the White House to address the killings of Hindus and destruction of temples in Bangladesh. "The United States has a storied history of championing the oppressed, and this issue should be no different," Thanedar said last week at the US Capitol. He

emphasized the need for Bangladesh to rebuild on principles of equality and justice. Hindu ACTION, an advocacy group, has reported ongoing violence against Hindus in Bangladesh, including temple burnings, killings, and assaults on priests and community leaders. Utsav Chakrabarti, executive director of Hindu ACTION, accused Yunus of failing to control extremist groups like Jamaat-e-Islami, which he claimed are behind the violence. "It is incumbent upon our current administration and the upcoming one to impose sanctions on Bangladesh," Chakrabarti said. He also proposed the creation of autonomous zones for religious minorities, including Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians, to ensure their safety. "We must chart a clear path for the safety of the 15 million Hindus in Bangladesh," he added.

Bangladeshi Traders 'Forced' To Import From Pakistan Amid Growing Maritime Ties: Report

Dhaka. In a concern for India, trade and maritime ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh seem to be getting stronger, with a second cargo vessel from Karachi reaching the Chittagong port this week. The Panama-flagged ship 'MV Yuan Xiang Fa Zhan' entered Bangladesh waters on Sunday afternoon, according to Bangladeshi media reports. The vessel, which travelled via Karachi, Pakistan, and Dubai, United Arab Emirates, is carrying a substantial load of 811 containers of essential industrial materials such as soda ash, dolomite, and marble blocks, along with goods like garments raw materials, sugar, and electronic products, Dhaka Tribune and Daily Observer reported. The development came a day after Bangladesh's interim leader, Professor Muhammad Yunus, met Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Egypt's Cairo, where Dhaka and Islamabad "agreed to strengthen relations."

Concern For India

Quoting sources, The Economic Times reported that traders in Bangladesh are being forced to import goods from Pakistan. It also said that some officials in Bangladesh's shipping ministry are suggesting to review of the India-Bangladesh shipping pact, which gave India access to Chittagong and Mongla ports.

Chittagong Port is a strategically located docking site in the Bay of Bengal. Over the years, India has used its relationship with ousted premier Sheikh Hasina to keep an eye on the activities at Chittagong port, where in 2004, around 1,500 boxes of Chinese ammunition were confiscated.

The consignment, worth an estimated USD 4.5-7 million, was allegedly masterminded by Pakistan's intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). The consignment was allegedly meant to be delivered to banned terrorist outfit ULFA (United Liberation Front of Asom) in India. New Delhi worries a resurgence of Islamist extremism in Bangladesh could target India and support insurgent groups in northeastern states. Adding to India's worries, Bangladesh, in September, removed the clause which required the port authorities to physically inspect cargo from Pakistan on arrival. This makes it easier for Pakistani vessels to use the maritime routes without the physical inspection of cargo. Earlier, the restrictive trade policy under Ms Hasina required cargo from Pakistan to be offloaded in Malaysia, Singapore, or Sri Lanka and then transferred to other vessels that carried them to Bangladesh. Indian officials kept a watchful eye on sea routes that connect Chittagong.

Blogs To Bluesky: How Social Media Changed Our Response To Disasters

Jakarta, Indonesia. The world's deadliest tsunami hit nations around the Indian Ocean two decades ago before social media platforms flourished, but they have since transformed how we understand and respond to disasters -- from finding the missing to swift crowdfunding. hen a 9.1-magnitude quake caused a tsunami that smashed into coastal areas on December 26, 2004, killing more than 220,000 people, broadcasters, newspapers and wire agencies were the main media bringing news of the calamity to the world. Yet in some places, the sheer scale took days to emerge. Survivor Mark Oberle was holidaying in Thailand's Phuket when the giant waves hit Patong beach, and penned a blog post to fend off questions from family, friends and strangers in the days after the disaster. "The first hints of the extent were from European visitors who got text messages from friends back home," said Oberle, adding people initially thought the quake was local and small, when its epicentre was actually near western Indonesia, hundreds of miles away. "I wrote the blog because there were so many



friends and family who wanted to know more. Plus I was getting many queries from strangers. People were desperate for good news tales," said the US-based physician, who helped the injured. The blog included images of cars ploughed into hotels, water-filled roads and locals fleeing on scooters because rumours produced "a stampede from the beach to higher ground". Bloggers were named "People of the Year" by ABC News in 2004 because of the intimacy of first-hand accounts like those published in the days following the tsunami. But today billions can follow major events in real-time on social media, enabling citizen journalism and assistance from afar, despite the real risk of rumour and

misinformation. During Spain's worst floods for decades in October, people voluntarily managed social media accounts to assist relatives trying to locate their missing loved ones. After Turkey's devastating earthquake last year, a 20-year-old student was rescued thanks to a post of his location while buried under the rubble.

'Fast picture'

Two decades ago, the online social media landscape was vastly different. Facebook was launched early in 2004 but was not yet widely used when the tsunami hit. One of YouTube's founders reportedly said an inspiration for the platform's founding in early 2005 was an inability to find footage of the tsunami in its aftermath. Some tsunami images were posted on photo site Flickr. But X, Instagram and Bluesky now allow for instant sharing. Experts are clear that more information saves lives -- hours lapsed between the tremor's epicentre near Indonesia and the giant waves that crashed into Sri Lanka, India and Thailand's coastal areas.

Pakistan May Get 40 5th-Gen Stealth Fighter Jets From China Within 2 Years

World. In a game-changing proposition, China is reportedly in talks with Pakistan for Islamabad to procure 40 advanced stealth fighter jets from Beijing. The J-35A is China's most advanced military aircraft. If the deal is finalised, Pakistan will be the first and only country globally to have a squadron of the stealth J-35A multi-role fighter jets outside of China. It will also mark the first export of China's most advanced military aircraft by Beijing.

The J-35A is China's second fifth-generation stealth fighter jet. After United States, China is the only other country in the world to have two 5th-gen military aircraft. Pakistan is looking to replace its ageing fleet of US-made F-16s and the French Mirage fighters. As per a report in the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post, which further quotes the Pakistani media, China will deliver all 40 stealth fighter jet in less than two years. China's entire defence industry is already set up for mass production as it does not depend on any other country for any part of the aircraft. The report also states that Pakistan's Air Force has already approved the purchase of these

jets. Though there is no confirmation from Beijing, should such a deal materialise, it will provide Pakistan a massive boost to its air defence and has the potential to tilt the regional dynamic as Islamabad will acquire stealth technology.

WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT THE CHINESE J-35A STEALTH AIRCRAFT

The Shenyang J-35A stealth fighter is a twin-engine, single-seater, supersonic, air-superiority, multi-role fighter jet that can carry out missions on land and at sea. The J-35A is the second fifth-generation stealth fighter China has developed after the J-20.

The J-35A's design is similar to the US Lockheed Martin F-35, the only difference is that the former is twin-engine and the latter has a single engine. China is known for copying the design of several US aircraft - The J-20 and the US F-22 Raptor are very similar in design except for canards that are present in J-20. The Chengdu J-10, also known as the "Vigorous Dragon", is yet another Chinese aircraft which seems to be a copy of the US F-16 fighter jet. According to a report by the Global Times, the



mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party, "J-35A functions within both stealth and counter-stealth combat frameworks. Its mission focuses on gaining and maintaining air superiority, eliminating hostile fourth/fifth generation fighter jets and ground/surface air defence forces, as well as intercepting aerial hostile targets including fighters, bombers and cruise missiles." The article was published the day China unveiled the jet for the first time last month. China plans to induct the aircraft into the Air Force and the Navy, exactly the way the F-35 is used by the United States,

having three variants - The F-35A for the Air Force, F-35B for the Marine Corps and F-35C for the US Navy.

PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC CRISIS

Despite a severe economic crisis in the country, Pakistan, which is surviving on bailout packages by the IMF and World Bank, is reportedly going ahead with the deal. It is not clear though, how such a massive deal will get financed. According to defence experts, it won't come as a surprise should China decide to extend another loan which Pakistan won't be able to pay back. Pakistan has already accumulated so much debt from Beijing that it is not financially possible for Islamabad to pay it back. Many experts believe that at some point Pakistan will have to sell national assets and maybe even parts of the country to be able to settle the debt. Though the buzz is ripe in Islamabad, Beijing has not confirmed the sale of its stealth fighter jet in any official communication. Neither has it mentioned it in the passing. When the J-35A stealth fighter was first displayed publicly by China at the annual air show at Zhuhai city.

Delhi Police bust Bangladeshi immigration racket, 11 arrested

New Delhi: Delhi Police have arrested 11 individuals, including four Bangladeshi nationals, for their alleged involvement in a network facilitating illegal immigration and the production of forged documents. The arrests were made following an investigation into the murder of Sentu Seikh, alias Raja, in the Sangam Vihar area of Delhi on October 21.



The probe revealed that the four Bangladeshi nationals—Midul Miyan alias Akash Ahmed, Fardeen Ahmed alias Abhi Ahmed, and their wives—had illegally entered India and been residing in Sangam Vihar for several years. Authorities found them in possession of counterfeit Bangladeshi documents, including National ID cards and birth certificates. In addition to the fake Bangladeshi IDs, the police recovered 21 Aadhaar cards, four voter ID cards, and eight PAN cards from the victim's residence. Further investigation

uncovered the involvement of the suspects in helping other Bangladeshi nationals illegally immigrate by providing them with forged documents. A special investigation team, led by Inspectors Umesh Yadav and Umesh Sharma and overseen by ACPs Abhinendra Jain and Niraj Tokas, was formed to delve deeper into the case. During the investigation, Sahil Sehgal, 26, who ran a computer center in Rohini, was arrested for creating fake Aadhaar cards and other documents via a fraudulent website, 'Jantaprints.site.'

Sehgal's associate, Ranjit, and Afroz, an employee at Karnataka Bank in Rohini, were also arrested for their roles in the creation of fake Aadhaar cards using forged birth certificates. Further inquiries led to the arrest of Mohammad Chand, 28, from Uttam Nagar, who admitted to receiving commissions for processing the payments for these illegal documents. Additionally, Saddam Hussain, 33, from Uttam Nagar, was apprehended for his involvement in running the fraudulent

website. His associate, Deepak Mishra, 34, was arrested in Ambala after being interrogated. Mishra revealed that his brother-in-law, Sonu Kumar, was the mastermind behind the website. Sonu Kumar, 31, from Noida, was arrested after admitting that he had learned to create fraudulent websites through online tutorials. He also operated two other fraudulent websites, 'Portalwale.com' and 'Portalwale.online,' which were used to produce fake documents.

The group primarily targeted individuals seeking fraudulent documentation for illegal immigration. They offered a range of forged certificates, including birth certificates, educational certificates, caste certificates, COVID certificates, and income certificates, with prices starting as low as Rs 7. The authorities are continuing to investigate the wider network involved in the scam.

Five Soldiers Killed, Several Injured as Army Truck Falls into Gorge in Poonch



Srinagar: Five soldiers were killed, and several others were injured when an Army truck plunged into a 300-foot gorge in the Poonch sector of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, officials reported. Rescue operations are ongoing, with teams from the Army and Jammu and Kashmir Police working at the accident site. Their efforts are fo-

cused on rescuing the injured and providing timely medical assistance. According to the White Knight Corps, the injured soldiers are being treated and provided necessary care. The incident has sparked a rapid response to ensure the safety and well-being of the affected personnel.

Thesis Writing
NO PROBLEM!
(Any possible Subject/Topic)
Research Paper writing / Publication

Raghuvar Das Resigns as Odisha Governor, Possible Return to Active Politics



New Delhi: Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghuvar Das has resigned from his post as the Governor of Odisha, with his resignation officially accepted by the President. Following his departure, Mizoram Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati has been appointed as the new Governor of Odisha.

Sources suggest that Das may rejoin active politics, potentially revitalizing the Jharkhand BJP, which has faced challenges following its poor performance in the recent assembly elections.

Das, who served as the 26th Governor of Odisha, had previously been the Chief Minister of Jharkhand from 2014 to 2019. He also served two terms as the President of the Jharkhand BJP. A former Tata Steel employee, Das made the shift from labor politics to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), eventually becoming a key figure in state politics. Elected five times as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), Das represented Jamshedpur East from 1995 to 2019. He also held prominent roles, including Deputy Chief Minister and Urban Development Minister in the BJP-led government. Notably, he is the first Chief Minister of Jharkhand to complete a full term in office.

DPS Bokaro Celebrates Christmas with Joy



Bokaro: DPS Bokaro marked the Christmas season with vibrant celebrations, embracing the spirit of joy, togetherness, and universal brotherhood. As the year-end festivities approached, the school hosted a series of activities and performances that captured the essence of the holiday season. Students participated in a heartfelt program of prayer and carol singing, while many dressed as Santa Claus, decorated Christmas trees, and crafted cards to exchange warm wishes. A speech on Christmas highlighted the messages of love, compassion, and the importance of fostering peace and harmony across the world.

The event featured a lively cultural program, with music and dance performances that added to the festive atmosphere. The campus was beautifully decorated with Christmas trees, bells, stars, and wreaths, creating a magical ambience that uplifted everyone's spirits. The celebration concluded with a sense of unity, leaving everyone with cherished memories of a joyful occasion.

Principal Dr. A.S. Gangwar emphasized the true essence of Christmas, stressing the importance of compassion, gratitude, and selfless service. He encouraged students to embody the spirit of the season by helping those in need and spreading positivity. "Every festival teaches us the values of universal brotherhood and love," he said, urging students to respect and celebrate all cultures and traditions.

Christmas Celebrated with Joy at Kidden Playgroup, Sector 4F



Bokaro: Christmas was celebrated with enthusiasm at Kidden Playgroup in Sector 4F on Tuesday. The children, dressed as Santa Claus, brought festive cheer by dancing to Christmas carols, spreading joy throughout the event.

Madhulika, founder of Kidden Playgroup, highlighted the significance of Christmas as a festival of love and brotherhood. The children thoroughly enjoyed the songs and dances, making it a memorable celebration for all.

Science Exhibition Held at Mithila Academy Public School

Bokaro: Mithila Academy Public School in Sector 4 hosted a science exhibition on Tuesday, showcasing the innovative projects of its students. The exhibition was inaugurated by Educationist Dr. Ashok Singh, recipient of the National Teacher Award, along with school chairman and BSL Chief General Manager (HR) Harimohan Jha, school secretary Pramod Kumar Jha, and Principal Ashok Kumar Pathak. Students presented a variety of functional and non-functional models, impressing the guests with their creativity. The exhibits included models on the universe, Tesla tower, Faraday cage, WiFi robot, automatic irrigation, waste water treatment, home security system, fire detector, and more.

Dr. Singh praised the scientific thinking behind the models, stating that such learning would benefit students in the future. Secretary Pramod Kumar Jha highlighted the limitless imagination of the children, while Principal Pathak applauded their creative skills and innovative ideas.

Prof. S.P. Singh Stresses Education & Natural Resources for India's Development

Ranchi: An expert talk titled "viksitbharat@2047: Transforming India" was organized by the Mining Engineering Department of Jharkhand Rai University on Tuesday, December 24, 2024. The keynote speaker, Prof. (Dr.) Suresh Prasad Singh, former Vice Chancellor of Veer Kunwar Singh University, Arrah, emphasized the critical role of natural resources and education in India's development.

Prof. Singh highlighted key initiatives like Digital India, Digital Literacy, and E-Governance, while stressing that a Green and Clean India is essential for progress. He also discussed the importance of forests and coral reefs as natural oxygen sources and urged students to focus on research and education.

Dr. K.V. Vidyandandan Explores Hydrogen's Impact on Power and Transport Sectors



Dhanbad: Dr. K.V. Vidyandandan, Professor of Practice at NIT Calicut, delivered a compelling lecture on hydrogen's emerging role in the power and transport sectors at IIT (ISM) Dhanbad.

The lecture, titled "Emerging Roles of Hydrogen in Power and Transport Sectors," was attended by faculty, research scholars, and students, with Professor Sukumar Mishra, Director of IIT (ISM), and Professor Sukanta Das, Head of the Electrical Engineering Department, present.

Dr. Vidyandandan outlined hydrogen's potential as a sustainable energy carrier, highlighting advancements in hydrogen technology for power generation and transportation. He also discussed the challenges of integrating hydrogen into existing systems and provided a global perspective on its role in the energy transition.

With a distinguished 38-year career in the energy sector, including roles at NTPC and as General Manager at PMI Noida, Dr. Vidyandandan is a leading expert in renewable energy. His research interests include wind and solar PV systems, energy storage, electric vehicles, and hydrogen fuel cells.

He has authored 23 research papers and five manuals on thermal power plant simulators, and his work has been widely cited.

Dr. Vidyandandan's insights reaffirmed his expertise and the transformative potential of hydrogen in the future of energy and transport.

Governors of Five States Changed

New Delhi: In a late-night move, the central government made significant changes in the governance of five states by appointing new governors. Governor Raghuvar Das of Odisha was asked to resign, and his resignation was promptly accepted. Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati, the current Governor of Mizoram, has been appointed as the new Governor of Odisha.

Additionally, Ajay Kumar Bhalla has been appointed as the Governor of Manipur, taking over from the outgoing governor. Meanwhile, Vijay Kumar Singh has been appointed as the new Governor of Mizoram, replacing Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati.

The central government also announced changes in the governors of Bihar and Kerala. Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, the current Governor of Bihar, will now serve as the Governor of Kerala, while Kerala's Governor, Arif Mohammad Khan, has been reassigned to Bihar.

Reimagine Your Heaven

We turn dreams into reality.

+91 99391 09311 | 79039 57387
8th Lane, Netaji Nagar, Kanitapoli, Ranchi

Dr. Rita Shukla Honoured with 'CCL Rajbhasha Bhaskar Samman' in Ranchi

Ranchi: Renowned litterateur Dr. Rita Shukla was awarded the prestigious 'CCL Rajbhasha Bhaskar Samman' during a special ceremony held at the CCL auditorium in Darbhanga House, Ranchi, on Tuesday. In her speech, Dr. Shukla praised CCL's efforts to promote Hindi and suggested that the organization organize workshops focused on Hindi literature. She also emphasized the importance of incorporating Hindi into daily life and office work as part of the ongoing effort to promote the language.



The event also recognized the winners of various competitions held during the quarterly meeting of the Official Language Fortnight, including essay writing, note writing, poem recitation,

and typing tests. The award ceremony was part of the quarterly meeting of the Official Language Implementation Committee. The meeting, chaired by

CCL Director (Personnel) Harsh Nath Mishra, was attended by key officials, including General Manager (EE/Official Language) Sanjay Kumar Thakur, Heads of various departments, Official Language Nodal Officers, and representatives from CCL.

Mishra highlighted the importance of official language implementation and encouraged all departments to adopt a proactive approach in promoting Hindi. He also assured support for departments facing difficulties in using the language.

Chinmaya Vidyalaya Celebrates Alumni Meet, Silver Jubilee of 1999 Batch

Bokaro: The 15th annual Chinmaya Alumni Meet of Chinmaya Vidyalaya Bokaro concluded in grand fashion, organized by the Chinmaya Alumni Association Bokaro Chapter. This year, the event also celebrated the Silver Jubilee of the 1999 batch. Alumni from across India and abroad were welcomed at the school's entrance with a recitation from the Bhagavad Gita, followed by a procession to the Chinmaya Saptarishi Bhawan.



elected MLA of Bokaro, Shweta Singh. A welcome song by current students set the tone for the event. Principal Suraj Sharma addressed the gathering, highlighting the school's remarkable achievements, including becoming Jharkhand's first NABET-certified school. He acknowledged the alumni's success, noting the school's role in shaping their careers and its growing prominence in education. He also highlighted initiatives by the Chinmaya Alumni Association, such as the

Chinmaya Smile Back and Pratibha Poshan programs, which support underprivileged students. The 1999 batch was honored with mementos and certificates. Alumni shared heartfelt memories of their school days, reflecting on the school's role in their success. The event featured cultural performances, and the alumni were impressed by the school's continued progress. Distinguished guests, including former principals and other key figures, were honored during the celebration.

The competition saw outstanding performances across all categories. In the Class II-V segment, Tanvi and Binod Kumar were crowned the Best Athletes. In the Class VI-VIII category, Anmol Kumar and Kritika Krishan emerged as champions, while Soumadeep Choudhury and Akshara Kumari excelled in the Class IX-XII category. The event was attended by Pro-Vice Chairman N.

'Spardha 2024': DPS Chas Hosts 5th Annual Sports Day

Bokaro: DPS Chas, Bokaro, celebrated its 5th Annual Sports Day, 'Spardha 2024', on Tuesday, with a vibrant display of athleticism, teamwork, and school spirit. The event was inaugurated by Chief Mentor Dr. Hemlata S. Mohan, who emphasized the importance of sports as integral to holistic education.



The competition saw outstanding performances across all categories. In the Class II-V segment, Tanvi and Binod Kumar were crowned the Best Athletes. In the Class VI-VIII category, Anmol Kumar and Kritika Krishan emerged as champions, while Soumadeep Choudhury and Akshara Kumari excelled in the Class IX-XII category. The event was attended by Pro-Vice Chairman N.

Muralidharan, DS Memorial Society Secretary Suresh Agarwal, Director Dr. Manisha Tiwari, and other dignitaries. Winners were awarded medals and certificates, recognizing their dedication and skill. The day featured a variety of activities, including a march-past, mass drills, and athletics, with students showcasing both physical prowess and sportsmanship. The event also included a dance performance by senior students and a lively Musical Chair

contest involving teachers. Dr. Hemlata S. Mohan highlighted sports as key to developing well-rounded individuals, while N. Muralidharan underscored sports' role in fostering physical health and career opportunities. Dr. Manisha Tiwari noted that the day celebrated not only physical achievement but also mental discipline. The event concluded with the felicitation of winners, marking a successful celebration of sportsmanship and student excellence.

PM Modi attends Catholic Bishops' Christmas event, calls for unity and harmony

The teachings of Lord Christ celebrate love, harmony and brotherhood and it is important for all to work to make this spirit stronger. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at the Christmas celebrations hosted by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India.



► **PM Modi highlights love, harmony central to Lord Christ's teachings**
 ► **Congratulates Cardinal George Koovakad for being appointed a Cardinal**
 ► **First Indian PM to attend Catholic Bishops' Conference of India headquarters event**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that the significance of love, harmony, and brotherhood are central to the teachings of Lord Christ. He also urged people to strengthen these values. Speaking at the Christmas celebrations hosted by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI), Modi expressed sorrow over violence and societal disruptions, highlighting the need for a human-centric approach to tackling global challenges. Referencing past tragedies, including the Christmas market attack in Germany and the 2019 Easter bombings in Sri Lanka, Modi underscored the necessity of collective action to

combat such threats. This marks the first time an Indian Prime Minister has attended a programme at the CBCI headquarters. "It was a very satisfactory moment for me when we safely brought Father Alexis Prem Kumar from war-torn Afghanistan a decade back. He was stuck there for eight months and was in hostage... For us, all these missions are not mere diplomatic missions but an emotional commitment to bringing back family members," PM Modi said as quoted by news agency. He reaffirmed India's dedication to protecting its citizens, noting its efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. India provided medicines

to over 150 nations and vaccines to several countries, demonstrating its commitment to global welfare.

"Some nations, despite championing human rights, hesitated to help poor countries during the pandemic. India, however, went beyond its capabilities to assist," Modi said. "Our youth have given us confidence that dream of a Viksit Bharat will surely be fulfilled," he said. PM Modi congratulated His Eminence George Koovakad on being appointed a Cardinal by Pope Francis, calling it a proud moment for the nation.

Founded in 1944, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India works closely with the Catholic community across the country, fostering unity and service.

Punjab MP Sukhjinder Randhawa calls for NIA probe after border bomb blasts

Gurdaspur MP Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa has called for an NIA probe into recent Punjab border bomb blasts, as three suspected Khalistani terrorists were killed in a police encounter amid rising concerns over cross-border terrorism.

Punjab. Gurdaspur MP Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa has urged Union Home Minister Amit Shah to initiate a National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe into the recent spate of bomb blasts in Punjab's border districts.

In a letter to Shah, Randhawa highlighted the growing security concerns among border residents, referencing the December 12 explosion at the Ghanian-Ke-Bangar police station in Batala. The blast, which shattered windowpanes and caused significant property damage, was claimed by Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) on social media, along with a warning of future attacks on police establishments.

Randhawa stressed the importance of the NIA's expertise in addressing these threats. "It is recommended that the Ministry of Home Affairs issue a directive for the NIA to take over the investigation. This will ensure a coordinated and comprehensive approach to the security threats posed by these incidents," he stated.

He further stated that the NIA's proactive involvement is vital to countering the escalating security risks. "Their intervention will reinforce our commitment to maintaining national security and upholding the rule of law, which seems to have collapsed in Punjab,"

Randhawa said in a statement.

Three suspected Khalistani terrorists linked to the grenade attack in Gurdaspur were killed during a police encounter in Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh, on Monday. The operation was a joint effort by the Punjab and Uttar Pradesh police. Punjab Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav described the encounter as a significant breakthrough against a Pakistan-sponsored terror module. The shootout occurred in the Purnapur area of Pilibhit after three members of the Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF) opened fire on law enforcement. The breakthrough follows a series of three bomb blasts reported in various districts of Punjab this month, heightening concerns over cross-border terrorism.

CID to probe BJP leader's alleged derogatory remarks against Karnataka Minister

The Karnataka Home Ministry has handed over the case involving BJP MLC CT Ravi and Karnataka Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). The CID will now examine the audio and visual evidence related to allegations that Ravi used derogatory and unparliamentary words against Hebbalkar during a recent legislative session.

The incident in question occurred on December 19 in the Karnataka Legislative Council, where Hebbalkar accused Ravi of using a derogatory term during an altercation. She alleged that the BJP leader called her a "prostitute". Ravi was arrested later that evening at Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi based on Hebbalkar's complaint. He was later released on an interim order by the High Court. The department will review all available evidence, including media clips and recordings from the legislative session.

Speaking to reporters, Hebbalkar expressed shock and dismay, saying, "For two days, I had gone into silence because I was shocked. I had never heard such a thing from anybody. I have struggled for 26 years and come to this level, fighting injustice." Hebbalkar also criticised the BJP leaders,

including state BJP president BY Vijayendra and Leader of Opposition R Ashoka, for supporting Ravi. "I feel pity for the leaders of my Panchamasali Lingayat community, Basangouda Patil Yatnal and Arvind Bellad, for backing a person who made a woman feel disgusted. For the sake of politics and their party, they are doing this." She accused Ravi of parading across the state, being garlanded and glorified despite his alleged misconduct. "If he has any conscience, he should tell women in his family that he is feeling guilty," she demanded.

Ravi, on the other hand, has accused the police of mistreatment during his arrest, alleging that he was taken to multiple locations without food or rest. These claims have been dismissed by Hebbalkar as attempts to politicise the issue.

Stolen Maggi packets worth Rs 11 lakh recovered in Bhopal, 3 arrested

Police recover 1,411 cartons of Maggi noodles, 250 sold to retailers
Truck driver sells noodle consignment for Rs 10 lakh
A third person buys consignment for Rs 11 lakh, keeps it in depositories

Bhopal. Bhopal police have cracked a Rs 11 lakh Maggi noodles theft case, recovering the stolen consignment, and have also arrested three people in connection to the heist. The police have been on the lookout for robbers since December 9, when a transport businessman named Shabbir lodged a complaint and alleged that the 1,661 boxes of the processed noodle brand that he loaded on a truck had been stolen. The theft took place on December 4 when the vehicle was en route from Sanand in Gujarat to Cuttack in Odisha. As per the complaint, Shabbir called the driver of the truck, Raees Mian, on his mobile phone when the vehicle's toll amount was deducted from his account through Fastag (an electronic toll collection system) in Bhopal. This alerted Shabbir as he

suspected some wrongdoing. However, when he tried the driver's number, the call continuously dropped. Later that day, Raees called Shabbir and told him



that someone had got him drunk and fled with the loaded truck. Shabbir further alleged that later, the CCTV footage from the cameras installed at the 11 Meel bypass toll plaza in Bhopal showed Shabbir's truck,

which the police took under its custody. However, the Maggi noodle consignment was missing from the vehicle. Following this, the police registered a case against driver Raees, and launched an investigation into the matter. The local police also announced a reward of Rs 10,000 for the person who could provide information about the consignment. During investigation and search operations, the police found that the noodle consignment had been kept at three depositories in the Bairagarh area. Police then detained a man named Hitesh Moinani and questioned him. Hitesh confessed to the crime and gave the police the location of the depositories, from where a total of 1,411 cartons of Maggi noodles were recovered, while 250 boxes had been sold off to local retailers.

Sri Lankan Navy detains 17 Tamil Nadu fishermen for border crossing, seizes boats

The Sri Lankan Navy arrested 17 Tamil Nadu fishermen near Talaimannar for allegedly crossing the international maritime border. This incident adds to the escalating tensions over fishing rights in disputed waters.

Chennai. Seventeen fishermen from Tamil Nadu were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on charges of crossing the international maritime border. Along with the arrests, two fishing boats were seized during the operation.

The fishermen, who had set out from the Rameswaram fishing port, were reportedly fishing in the waters between Dhanushkodi and Talaimannar when they were surrounded by a Sri Lankan Navy patrol boat and taken into custody.

Following their apprehension, the fishermen were transported to the Talaimannar Naval Camp for questioning. Officials stated that, after the inquiry, they would be handed over to the Mannar Fisheries Department authorities for further proceedings. The arrest of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy, especially from districts like



Pudukkottai, Nagapattinam, Thanjavur, and Ramanathapuram, has been a recurring issue for decades. The fishermen often cross the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) into Sri Lankan waters in pursuit of better fish

catches. Recently, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin had called on Union Minister of External Affairs Dr S Jaishankar to take urgent diplomatic measures to address the escalating arrests of Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan authorities.

The Chief Minister expressed concern over the increasing frequency of such incidents, noting that the year 2024 has witnessed the highest number of arrests of Tamil Nadu fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy in seven years.

The Tamil Nadu government has consistently raised this issue, advocating for the protection of the state's fishing community, whose members often venture into disputed waters in search of livelihood.

Flawed selection process: Congress on appointment of human rights panel chief

► **Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge said the selection process of the NHRC chief was "flawed" and showed the "dismissive approach of the government".**

New Delhi. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and party chief Mallikarjun Kharge have recorded their dissent over the selection of the chairperson and members of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on the grounds that the process adopted was "flawed" and a "pre-determined" exercise that ignored mutual consultation and consensus. Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Kharge, the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, had proposed the names of Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman and Justice Kuttiyil Mathew Joseph for the position of NHRC chairperson. However, former Supreme Court judge V Ramasubramanian was appointed as the chief of the human rights panel.

In a dissent note, the Congress leaders said the balance of region, religion and caste was not kept in mind while appointing the NHRC chairperson. They alleged that such a selection process showed the "dismissive approach of the government". Gandhi and Kharge recommended the names of Justice S Muralidhar and Justice Akil Abdulhamid

Qureshi for the position of NHRC members and said both had "exemplary track records in upholding human rights".



"Their inclusion would contribute to the NHRC's effectiveness and its commitment to diversity," the dissent note said. Before Justice (retd) Ramasubramanian's appointment, the post of NHRC chairperson had been lying vacant since Justice (retd) Arun Kumar Mishra completed his tenure on June 1. After Mishra's retirement, Vijaya Bharathi Sayani became the acting chairperson of the human rights panel.

On December 18, a high-powered committee led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting to select the next chairperson of the NHRC. Gandhi and Kharge attended the meeting.

According to the law governing NHRC, while the committee which selects the NHRC chief is headed by the prime minister, it has the Lok Sabha Speaker, home minister, leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha, leader of the opposition in Rajya Sabha and deputy chairperson of Rajya Sabha as its members.

A former Chief Justice of India or a retired judge of the Supreme Court is appointed as NHRC chairperson by the president on the recommendation of the selection committee.

The NHRC tweeted on Monday, "The President of India appoints Justice V Ramasubramanian (retd) as the chairperson, and Priyank Kanoongo and Dr Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi (retd.) as the members of the NHRC, India." Kanoongo earlier served as a chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).

► **Former Supreme Court judge V Ramasubramanian appointed NHRC chief**
 ► **Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge dissented on NHRC chief's appointment**
 ► **They said selection process lacked regional, religious and diversity balance**

Touchstones: Rewriting new histories

Anyone who has watched the shenanigans over the past few days inside and outside our Parliament will agree that the time has come to stand up and publicly shame our political parties and their representatives. What their strategists and leaders hope to achieve by opting to shout down their opponents rather than debating in a mature and civil way is something only they can enlighten us about. As viewers who tuned in each afternoon to hear a tribute to our Constitution and the outstanding men and women who spent long hours drafting it, the sight of sloganeering and crude insults was a betrayal of the mandate they were given by the citizens of India, that is Bharat.

A commentator wisely observed that we did not need Nehru explained by the ruling party or Savarkar by the Opposition. We wanted an acknowledgement of their contribution to the making of this nation. As for the fistcuffs exchanged over Ambedkar, the less said the better. Any respect for the founding fathers or the perfect roadmap they had placed before a new nation was the least of their concerns. 'My Daddy strongest' is what their understanding of history is all about. From pre-historic myths to lies and falsehoods about the present, these ill-educated representatives betrayed their essential idiocy and arrogance. As an Indian voter who was born the year India received its Constitution, I regard with utter disgust those who were handed it. 'Bandar ke haath nariyal,' as my mother would say: a coconut placed in the hands of a monkey. The outcome is so predictable that it does not need any explanation. However, I have come to the conclusion that this is the result of the Indian attitude to history in general. In a country that grew out of an oral tradition, myths, mythology, religious and superstitious beliefs often constitute a version of 'history' that is widely regarded as Truth. I remember an old article that the late Sharada Prasad (Indira Gandhi's long-time press adviser) had written as an aside in an obituary for a distinguished colleague. He wondered how we can recall the risi we have descended from (our gotra), but cannot trace the ancestry of our family beyond three generations. Is this because civilisations that cremate their dead raise no graves or memorials, or do not have a parish church (as Christians do) with records of births and deaths that go back many generations? Or is it because our belief in rebirth never really regards death as a final end. The soul is simply born in another home and family. The rigour of research and documentary evidence is less important in such cultures than the store of memories preserved in lore and epics. That a man can be a complex personality of many attributes and that preserving just one aspect of his character while deliberately suppressing the uncomfortable truths that must also be accepted, is not in our national character. Added to this is the fact that history teaching, as also literature and other liberal arts, no longer enjoys the importance it did in an earlier generation. Economics, commerce, mathematics and management studies are the stars alongside engineering and computer science. A certain side of the brain is largely underdeveloped. Education is now more attuned to these rising areas that encourage learning by axioms and laws. The spaces for questioning and debating have been steadily receding. In a country that has a large and growing population under 18, even Rajiv Gandhi's time appears to some as ancient history. William Dalrymple has correctly observed that our academic historians are more concerned with polemical debates among themselves, often written in such abstruse and dense jargon that people prefer the simple (often naive or mischievous) history offered by WhatsApp university. I must say he has a strong point. History itself is now written from narrow specialisations divided among gender, caste, economics, human rights, or even climate issues. I want to turn now to remember the great Zakir Hussain, tabla maestro, great human being and a performer who took his audience to rapturous heights. I was fortunate to spend some time with him when he came to Chandigarh as a Spic Macay guest; his sessions with the students were truly memorable. Each time he shook his curly head, the girls swooned. He was a young, handsome man and had a strong sense of appeal across generations.

Consumers Beware! Ensure safe use of portable generators

The biggest lesson from tragedies such as in Georgia is that generators should never be kept indoors

The tragic death of 11 Indian nationals working at a restaurant in a ski resort in Gudauri, Georgia, from generator exhaust fumes is a grim reminder of the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning from portable generators. What is most heartbreaking about these tragedies, whether in Georgia or in India, is that they can be easily prevented with consumer education, proper warning labels and a mandatory safety feature that automatically shuts off the appliance when the carbon monoxide (CO) concentration in the air goes beyond the permissible levels. The incident in Georgia grabbed wide media attention in India, but many such avoidable tragedies caused by portable generators in different parts of the country go mostly unreported. So much so that we do not have proper statistical data. However, even what little gets reported should cause concern.

In March this year, a wedding celebration in the picturesque Ramban, Jammu and Kashmir, took a tragic turn when five persons had to be rushed to the hospital with acute CO poisoning from the generator kept running inside the building. While an 18-year-old boy was declared dead, the other four were said to be in critical condition. In February last year, three persons in a village in Gajapati district of Odisha were affected by the lethal emission from the generator. Here, too, of the three people who went to sleep with the generator running close-by, two were found dead in the morning and one had to be admitted to hospital. In most cases, the tragedies happen when the victims are sleeping — the nature of CO is such that they may not become aware of the danger to their lives. Even when the victims are awake, the gas causes confusion, lethargy and loss of control of limbs, making it difficult to escape to safety. In higher concentrations, it leads to loss of consciousness, long-term heart and brain damage, and death. The



biggest lesson that needs to be learnt from these tragedies is that generators should never be kept indoors. Even outside, these must not be kept close to open windows or doors; in fact, these must be placed in such a way that the emissions are directed away from occupied structures. Bold, eye-catching labels, warning consumers against keeping the generator in enclosed spaces, are critical.

Manufacturers should also equip the generator with an automatic cut-off switch that shuts down the machine when the CO concentration reaches the predetermined threshold limit. These steps, along with consumer education, would go a long way in safeguarding the interests of consumers.

Another appliance used extensively during the cold winter months that has been responsible for CO-induced deaths in the country is the non-electric,

portable, unvented room heater. Whether they work on LPG or natural gas, kerosene or diesel, wood or coal, without adequate ventilation, they all pose the risk of fatal CO poisoning.

In the last week of January this year, two members of a family, including a three-month-old baby, died while a third member was hospitalised in Noida. The culprit was the LPG-fired room heater operated in a closed bedroom without any ventilation. In January last year, the lives of four members of a family were suddenly cut short in Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh. Here again, the family had kept the gas heater switched on in a room without any ventilation.

Given the popularity of these appliances in the cold winter months and the avoidable deaths caused by them, we must have stringent safety and quality standards for them. The standard should also provide for an automatic safety switch that cuts off fuel supply to the heater and shuts it down in case the CO level in the room goes beyond the safe limit. And the standard should be made mandatory.

I must also remind manufacturers that they have a responsibility not only to ensure the safety of their products, but also to educate consumers on their safe use. Under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, failure to provide adequate instructions on the correct usage can invite product liability action.

I would also recommend popularisation of carbon monoxide alarms and subsidies to make them available at low prices, so that they become affordable. In my article, 'Bring fuel burning room heaters under the ambit of safety norms', published in these columns on January 7, I explained why CO levels go up to alarming levels when these fuel-based heaters are used in an unventilated room and the effects of the toxic gas on those inhaling them. So, I will not go into those details here. But I will, once again, warn consumers about the risk of CO poisoning from appliances that run on fossil fuels operated in enclosed spaces, including coal braziers or angeethis. I would also advise consumers to always turn off the heater (even electric ones) before going to bed.

Confront doping

Hisar revelation a blot on Indian sport

IN January, a 10-year global study of positive doping cases by minors named India as the second worst country, after Russia. Some months later, a report by the World Anti-Doping Agency concluded that India recorded the highest number of drug cheats in 2022. An expose by The Tribune highlights why the dubious distinction is no aberration. Used syringes and empty vials were found stuffed in a washroom during a state boxing championship held in Hisar. That the telltale signs of rampant doping came to light in Haryana, a state that is considered a shining example of nurturing excellence in sport, makes it even more disturbing. Such blatant malpractices point to an environment of complicity. It's a blot on Indian sport and reflects unwillingness to confront the malaise.

The lack of awareness among sportspersons and coaches as well as the neglect in conducting anti-doping campaigns



are major structural flaws. What must not be ignored is the widely held notion among athletes of losing out in terms of

record has been dismal. A culture founded on fraud defeats the very purpose of sport.

A silent plea from peregrine falcon, nature's fastest flier

The bird is capable of reaching speeds of over 300 km per hour, with the highest recorded speed of 389 km per hour.

The landscape stretched like an infinite canvas as we gazed across the desolate expanse of Sambhar Lake on a hazy winter morning. Sambhar is India's largest inland saltwater lake, nestled in the arid environs of Rajasthan and surrounded by the Aravalli hills, boasting a healthy population of both local and migrant avifauna. Leaving the waterbirds for the afternoon once the fog had lifted, we ventured into the lake's drier reaches, drawn by the promise of raptors, who would be stirring up from their roost and getting ready to hunt.

It wasn't long before our patience was rewarded. Two swift silhouettes streaked across our field of vision, darting with remarkable speed toward the horizon. Thrilled by the unfolding drama of a hunt yet striving to maintain restraint lest we frighten the birds, we slowly drove towards their landing. It turned out to be a peregrine falcon, the speed merchant of the avian kingdom, that had laid a pigeon to rest.

The peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) is known to be the fastest flying bird, capable of reaching speeds of over 300 km per hour, with the highest recorded speed of 389 km per hour. A medium-sized raptor, peregrine falcons are avivores, specialising in hunting other birds, especially pigeons, ducks and doves. A sharp eyesight, believed to be eight times stronger than humans, helps them spot prey from a height, from where they execute high-speed dives, or hunting stoops, aided by an aerodynamic body profile, and powerful wings and muscles. Armed with powerful talons and beak, they catch and kill their prey in mid-air. As apex predators, they help control the populations of their prey, which includes a variety of bird species, ensuring that the populations do not exceed the carrying capacity of the ecosystem, thereby contributing to its overall health and stability. Peregrine falcons are found on every continent



except Antarctica, showcasing their incredible adaptability to various environments, from urban landscapes to the wilderness. In India, they are found as both residents as well as migrants from colder regions during winter, inhabiting diverse habitats such as high mountains, hills, stony semi-deserts, coastal regions and open wetlands near cliffs. The species faced a severe decline in the mid-20th century due to the widespread use of DDT, which caused the thinning of their eggshells. Conservation efforts, including banning of the pesticide in the 1970s, combined with captive breeding programmes, have successfully revived their

numbers. Historically, falconry, the art of training birds of prey to hunt, was practised by royalty and nobility, and the peregrine falcon, with its speed and agility, was particularly prized for its hunting skills. Despite an overall decline in this practice, falconry still remains vibrant in many countries. Many countries in Central Asia and the Middle East celebrate it as part of their cultural heritage, highlighting the enduring bond between humans and birds of prey.

Recognised by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage, modern falconry attempts to blend tradition with sustainable practices. Captive breeding ensures

they are not caught from the wild. It is also made sure that the species they hunt are not endangered.

Peregrine falcons are revered symbolically across indigenous cultures worldwide, portrayed as symbols of endurance, agility and loyalty by the Bedouins, revered as symbols of resilience and freedom by native Americans, and venerated as messengers of the spirit world by the Inuits. In India, there are some references to them in Rajasthani and Gujarati folklore, and they were highly prized and celebrated by the Islamic dynasties of medieval India, who brought with them the art of falconry into the subcontinent. Despite their successful recovery from the brink of extinction, peregrine falcons still face numerous threats. Urbanisation, deforestation and infrastructure projects have reduced their natural nesting sites, particularly cliffs and rocky outcrops. Persistent use of harmful pesticides and industrial pollutants also pose a significant risk, as these toxins accumulate in their prey. Shifts in weather patterns due to climate change affect prey availability and migration routes. Demand in the falconry trade leads to increased poaching and illegal trafficking. In Sambhar, we also witnessed the negative fallout of unsustainable tourism, as over-zealous visitors raised a dusty ruckus driving fast across the otherwise placid landscape, eager to flaunt their off-road vehicles, brazenly disturbing the bird's natural habitat and behaviour. We were fortunate to follow our bird for nearly four hours, as it devoured the last bits of its kill and then settled down on a rock for a quick nap. As it departed for another perch after giving us a generous sighting, its flight seemed to carry a silent plea: to tread lightly, to honour the wild, and to preserve the fragile harmony of nature.

क्रिसमस एक त्यौहार शांति दूत के नाम



कैसे हुई सांता क्लॉज की प्रसिद्धि...

सांता क्लॉज को भले ही आधुनिक बाजारवाद का प्रतीक माना जाए लेकिन इस किंवदंती की उत्पत्ति सदियों पुरानी है। माना जाता है कि तीसरी सदी में तुर्की में जन्मे संत निकोलस का ही आधुनिक रूप है सांता क्लॉज। अपने धर्मालु और दयालु स्वभाव के कारण वे जर्दस्त लोकप्रिय थे। उन्होंने अपनी तमाम पुश्तैनी धन-दौलत दान कर दी थी और दूर-दूर तक सफर करके वे गरीबों की मदद किया करते थे। उनकी प्रसिद्धि के साथ-साथ उनसे जुड़ी किंवदंतियां भी फैलती गईं। बच्चों के प्रति उनके स्नेह की कथाएं विशेष रूप से प्रचलित हुईं। 6 दिसंबर को उनकी पुण्यतिथि बड़े पैमाने पर मनाई जाने लगी। माना जाता है कि सेंट (संत) निकोलस का नाम ही बिनाइकर पहले सितर क्लॉस और फिर सांता क्लॉज हो गया। योरोप में खूब फैलने के बाद सांता क्लॉज की प्रसिद्धि 18वीं सदी में अमेरिका पहुंची। 1773-74 में न्यूयॉर्क में बसे हॉलैंड मूल के परिवारों ने सामूहिक रूप से सितर क्लॉस की पुण्यतिथि मनाई। फिर 1804 में न्यूयॉर्क हिस्टोरिकल सोसायटी की वार्षिक सभा में उसके एक सदस्य जॉन पिटर्ड ने संत निकोलस के लकड़ी के कटआउट बंदवाए। इनमें संत की छवि काफी कुछ वैसी ही थी जैसी आज सांता की छवि हमारे सामने है। तब तक संत निकोलस/सितर क्लॉस/सांता क्लॉज का क्रिसमस के साथ कोई सीधा संबंध नहीं था। फिर 1822 में वलेमेट क्लॉज मूर ने अपनी तीन बेटियों के लिए एक लंबी कविता लिखी एन अकाउंट ऑफ ए थिजिट फॉर्म सेंट निकोलस। इसमें सेंट निकोलस को एक गोल्डमटेल, हंसमुख बुजुर्ग बताया गया, जो क्रिसमस की पूर्व रात्रि में रेनेडियर वाली गाड़ी में उड़ते हुए आते हैं और विमनी केरास्टे घरों में प्रवेश कर घर में टंगी जुवाबों में बच्चों के लिए उपहार छेड़ जाते हैं। यह कविता जब प्रकाशित हुई तो अमेरिका भर में सेंट निकोलस/सांता क्लॉज लोकप्रिय हो गए। जर्मन मूल के अमेरिकी कार्टूनिस्ट थॉमस नेस्ट 1863 से प्रति वर्ष सांता की नई छवि गढ़ने लगे। 1880 के दशक तक सांता की छवि वह रूप ले चुकी थी, जिससे आज हम सब परिचित हैं।

क्रिसमस टी, स्टार, गिफ्ट्स आदि और हां, कई लोग मानते हैं क्रिसमस के दिन सांता क्लॉज बच्चों को उपहार देता है। सांता क्लॉज को याद करने का चलन 4वीं शताब्दी से आरंभ हुआ था और वे संत निकोलस थे जो तुर्किस्तान के मीरा नामक शहर के बिशप थे, सांता क्लॉज लाल व सफेद ड्रेस पहने हुए, एक चूड़ मीठा पीराणिक चरित्र है, जो रेडियर पर सवार होता है तथा समारोहों में, विशेष कर बच्चों के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाता है, क्रिसमस उम्मीदों और खुशियों का त्यौहार है, ईसा मसीह का जीवन और उनके उपदेश आज भी इसलिए प्रासंगिक है, क्योंकि आज भी अमीरी-गरीबी, जातिवाद और सामाजिक विभक्तियां समाज में मौजूद हैं, जब हम अपने आपसापस नजर डालेंगे और गरीब व लाचार लोगों के दुख-दर्द को समझेंगे और ईसा मसीह की तरह अपनी कोशिशों से उनके चेहरे पर थोड़ी-सी मुस्कान लाएंगे, तभी हमें क्रिसमस की वास्तविक खुशियां मिलेंगी।

स्वर्गदूतों ने दिया था यीशु जन्म का संदेश

ऐसी मान्यता है कि यीशु के जन्म के अवसर पर स्वर्गदूतों ने सर्वाच्च गगन में परमेश्वर को महिमा और पृथ्वी पर उसके कृपापत्रों को शांति यह संदेश कुछ चरवाहों को दिया था। गत हजारों वर्ष से ख्रीस्त जयंती की मंगलमय बेला में करोड़ों कठों से इस संदेश की प्रतिध्वनि गुंजती आ रही है। इस संदेश की सुंदरता इसमें है कि यीशु के जन्म के साथ उदित होने वाली नई विश्वव्यवस्था की झलक इसमें निहित है। पृथ्वी पर मानवों के शांतिपूर्ण जीवन में ईश्वर की स्वर्गीय महिमा प्रतिबिंबित है। मनुष्य में ईश्वर महिमान्वित होता है। यीशु ईश्वर और मनुष्य के बीच की सजीव कड़ी है। सच्ची शांति अच्छे मन का अनुभव है। ऐसी शांति तभी संभव है जबकि हृदय भय और मृत्यु से, दर्द और पीड़ा से मुक्त हो। लेकिन हम एक भ्रष्ट और दमनकारी संसार में जीते हैं जहां भय राज करता है और शांति की जड़ कमजोर है। यह अस्वाभाविक भी नहीं है क्योंकि यहां सच्चे दिलवालों की संख्या निराशाजनक रूप से कम है। जहां धन और बल मनुष्य के भविष्य में नियंता हों, जहां ईमानदारी और नैतिकता को कमजोरी के लक्षण माना जाता हो, वहां शांति और सच्चाई का बना रहना असंभव है। आज संसार में जो शांति दिखाई पड़ती है, वह हृदय की सच्चाई से नहीं बल्कि हथियारों के समझौते से निकली है। शायद यीशु की विश्वव्यवस्था की सबसे चौकाने वाली बात यह है कि हर मानव किसी भी जाति-वर्ग-वर्ण भेद के बिना ईश्वर की संतान बन सकता है। ईश्वर का जो रूप यीशु ने लोगों को बताया वह वास्तव में मन को छूने वाला है। ईश्वर इतना उदार है कि वह भले और बुरे, दोनों पर अपना सूर्य उगाता तथा धर्मी और अधर्मी दोनों पर पानी बरसाता है। ईश्वर सबको प्यार करता है, सबका ख्याल रखता है और पश्चातापी पापी को क्षमा करता है। मनुष्य को विधाता पर भरोसा रखना चाहिए। इस परम पिता की योग्य संतान बनने के लिए मनुष्य को दूसरों को प्रेम करना, दूसरों की सेवा करना तथा उनकी गलतियों को क्षमा करना है। इस नई व्यवस्था की मूल आज्ञा बिना शर्त प्रेम है और इसका स्वर्णिम नियम है—दूसरों से अपने प्रति जैसा व्यवहार चाहते हो, तुम भी उनके प्रति वैसा ही किया करो।

क्रिसमस टी सजाने की परंपरा

क्रिसमस टी सजाने की परंपरा जर्मनी में दसवीं शताब्दी के बीच शुरू हुई और इसकी शुरुआत करने वाला पहला व्यक्ति बोनिफेस टूयो नामक एक अंगरेज धर्मप्रचारक था। इसके बाद अमेरिका के एक आठ साल के बीमार बच्चे ने क्रिसमस पेड़ को अपने पिता से सजावाया तब से क्रिसमस टी को रंग-बिरंगी बतियों, फूलों और कांच के टुकड़ों से सजाया जाने लगा। इंग्लैंड में 1841 में राजकुमार पिटो एलबर्ट ने विंजर कासल में क्रिसमस टी को सजावाया था। उसने पेड़ के ऊपर एक देवता की दोनों भुजाएं फैलाए हुए मूर्ति भी लगावाई, जिसे काफी सराहा गया। क्रिसमस टी पर प्रतिमा लगाने की शुरुआत तभी से हुई। पिटो एलबर्ट के बाद क्रिसमस टी को घर-घर पहुंचाने में मार्टिन लूथर का भी काफी हाथ रहा। क्रिसमस के दिन लूथर ने अपने घर वापस आते हुए आसमान को गौर से देखा तो पाया कि वृक्षों के ऊपर टिमटिमाते हुए तारे बड़े मनमोहक लग रहे हैं। मार्टिन लूथर को तारों का वह दृश्य ऐसा भाया कि उस दृश्य को साकार करने के लिए वह पेड़ की डाल तोड़ कर घर ले आया। घर ले जाकर उसने उस डाल को रंगबिरंगी पत्रियों, कांच एवं अन्य धातु के टुकड़ों, मोमबतियों आदि से खूब सजा कर घर के सदस्यों से तारों और वृक्षों के लुभावने प्राकृतिक दृश्य का वर्णन किया। वह सजा हुआ वृक्ष घर सदस्यों को इतना पसंद आया कि घर में हर क्रिसमस पर वृक्ष सजाने की परंपरा चल पड़ी। 1920 की बात है, सान फ्रांसिस्को शहर में पांच साल की बालिका की हालत गंभीर थी। उसके पिता सैंडी ने कुछ बड़े-बड़े मिट्टी के हड्डों पर चित्रकारी की और उन्हें घर से सड़क की दूसरी तरफ रस्सी पर लटका कर दिखाया। वे इतने सुंदर लगे कि काफी लोग उन्हें देखने को इच्छुक हो गए। सौभाग्य की बात थी कि नए साल तक बालिका भी ठीक हो गई। इस घटना से सैंडी बड़ा चकित हुआ। अब वह लोगों को क्रिसमस वृक्ष सजाने के अलावा लगाने के लिए भी कहता। उसने कैलिफोर्निया में एक संस्था बनाई, जो पेड़ लगाने के उत्सुक लोगों को रेडवुड वृक्ष के पौधे मुफ्त भेजती थी। सैंडी ने 20 साल तक रेडवुड, समाचार-पत्रों आदि में लेख और व्याख्यान देकर लोगों को पेड़ लगाने के लिए उत्साहित किया।

क्रिसमस टी की कथा है कि जब महापुरुष ईसा का जन्म हुआ तो उनके माता-पिता को बधाई देने आए देवताओं ने एक सदाबहार फर को सितारों से सजाया। कहा जाता है कि उसी दिन से हर साल सदाबहार फर के पेड़ को क्रिसमस टी प्रतीक के रूप में सजाया जाता है।

विदेशों में कैसे सजाया जाता है क्रिसमस टी

- योरोपीय मुल्कों में क्रिसमस की पूर्व संंध्या को क्रिसमस टी दुल्हन की तरह सजाया जाता है। इस पर बिजली के रंगबिरंगे बल्ब जगमगाते रहते हैं। देश-विदेश के महकते फूल भी इसकी शोभा में चार चांद लगाते हैं। हीरे-मोती से जड़े कंगन इसकी पतली-पतली टहनियों में बड़ी तरकीब से पिरोए जाते हैं। ये कंगन अपनी बहुरंगी आभा से क्रिसमस टी को और भी ज्यादा रोशन करने लगते हैं।
- अमेरिका के अरबपति तो क्रिसमस टी की विशेष सज्जा के लिए कुछ खास किस्म के कीमती आभूषणों का प्रयोग करते हैं। ये आभूषण हवा के साथ-साथ तरह-तरह की खुशबू से महकने भी लगते हैं। बाद में इन आभूषणों को गरीबों में बांट दिया जाता है।
- स्विस् वैज्ञानिकों का कहना है कि क्रिसमस के पेड़ में आनुवांशिक परिवर्तन कर उन्हें स्वयं ही प्रदीप्त होने वाला बनाया जा सकता है। इतना ही नहीं, आनुवांशिक परिवर्तन वाले पेड़ विद्युत सर्पमर्मी की तरह आवाज भी निकाल सकेंगे।
- इस संदर्भ में ज्यूरिख के वैज्ञानिक डॉ. बर्नार्ड का कहना है क्रिसमस टी में जैविक परिवर्तन कर प्रकाश संश्लेषण के जरिए विद्युत उत्पादन किया जा सकता है। हां, आनुवांशिक परिवर्तन के उपरांत इन पेड़ों को कहीं भी लगाया जा सकता है।
- इंग्लैंड के निवासी जन्मदिन, विवाह एवं मृत्यु पर क्रिसमस टी जमीन में रोपते हैं, ताकि धरती सदा हरियाली से झूमती रहे।

गो कैरोलिंग दिवस

दुनिया को शांति और अहिंसा का पाठ पढ़ाने वाले प्रभु यीशु मसीह के जन्मदिन क्रिसमस से ठीक पहले उनके संदेशों को भजनों (केरल) के माध्यम से घर-घर तक पहुंचाने की प्रथा को विश्व के विभिन्न हिस्सों में 'गो कैरोलिंग दिवस' के रूप में मनाया जाता है। दिल्ली स्थित रोमन कैथोलिक चर्च के प्रवक्ता फादर डोमेनिक इमेनुअल के अनुसार क्रिसमस से ठीक पहले कैरोलिंग दिवस के दिन ईसाई धर्मावलंबी रंगबिरंगे कपड़े पहनकर एक-दूसरे के घर जाते हैं और भजनों के माध्यम से प्रभु के संदेश का प्रचार-प्रसार करते हैं। उन्होंने कहा, 'प्रभु की भक्ति में डूबे श्रद्धालुओं के समूह में भजन गायन का यह सिलसिला क्रिसमस के बाद भी कई दिनों तक जारी रहता है। केरल एक तरह का भजन होता है जिसके बोल क्रिसमस या शीत ऋतु पर आधारित होते हैं। ये केरल क्रिसमस से पहले गाए जाते हैं।' डोमेनिक ने कहा, 'ईसाई मान्यता के अनुसार केरल गाने की शुरुआत यीशु मसीह के जन्म के समय से हुई। प्रभु का जन्म जैसे ही गोशाला में हुआ वैसे ही स्वर्ग से आए दूतों ने उनके सम्मान में केरल गाना शुरू कर दिया और तभी से ईसाई धर्मावलंबी क्रिसमस के पहले ही केरल गाना शुरू करते हैं।' फादर डोमेनिक ने कहा कि गो कैरोलिंग दिवस एक ऐसा मौका होता है जब लोग बड़े धूमधाम से प्रभु यीशु की महिमा, उनके जन्म की परिस्थितियों, उनके संदेशों, मां मरियम द्वारा सहे गए कथों के बारे में भजन गाते हैं। डोमेनिक ने बताया कि प्रभु यीशु मसीह का जन्म बहुत कष्टमय परिस्थितियों में हुआ। उनकी मां मरियम और उनके पालक पिता जोसफ जनगणना में नाम दर्ज कराने के लिए जा रहे थे। उन्होंने कहा कि इसी दौरान मां मरियम को प्रसव पीड़ा हुई लेकिन किसी ने उन्हें रुकने के लिए अपने मकान में जगह नहीं दी। अतः एक दंपति ने उन्हें अपनी गोशाला में शरण दी जहां प्रभु यीशु मसीह का जन्म हुआ। फादर डोमेनिक ने बताया कि भारत में भी यह दिन बहुत ही धूमधाम से मनाया जाता है। नागालैंड, मिजोरम, मणिपुर समेत समूचे पूर्वोत्तर भारत में लोग विशेषकर युवा बेहद उत्साह के साथ टोलियों में निकलते हैं और रात भर घर-घर जाकर केरल गाते हैं।

उपहारों का आदान-प्रदान

लीजिए, क्रिसमस आ गया! प्रेम, करुणा, क्षमा और सद्भावना का संदेश देने वाले ईसा मसीह का जन्मदिन। यूं तो यह विश्व की एक तिहाई आबादी यानी ईसाइयों का त्यौहार है, लेकिन क्रिसमस का तिलस्म ईसाइयों तक सीमित नहीं है और क्यों नहीं, आखिर ईसा का संदेश देश, काल, समुदाय, संस्कृति की सीमाओं से परे है। यही कारण है कि क्रिसमस की धूम किसी न किसी रूप में दुनिया भर में मची रहती है। क्रिसमस सिर्फ ईसा के शाश्वत संदेश को याद करने व उनके जन्म की खुशियां ममाने के पर्व तक सीमित नहीं है। विश्व के कई देशों में यह वर्षभर का सबसे बड़ा आर्थिक उत्पीड़क भी है। इनमें विश्व अर्थव्यवस्था का नेतृत्व करने वाले अमेरिका, योरोप के साथ-साथ अन्य कई देश



NEWS BOX

No pressure on Rishabh Pant, judging him after 3 Tests is not right: Rohit Sharma

New Delhi. India captain Rohit Sharma played down concerns over the form of Rishabh Pant in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, saying the wicketkeeper-batter knows what is expected of him and that he has been working hard in the nets. Rohit backed Pant, highlighting his success with the bat in the recent past and on the previous tours to Australia when he addressed the press ahead of the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne. Rishabh Pant, who was India's hero in the 2020-21 tour, has struggled to live up to expectations, managing just 96 runs in three Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy so far. Pant has been targeted with short deliveries and Australia captain Pat Cummins's ploy has worked against him. "There is no pressure. He has played just three Tests here. He has scored runs in India. He has been in good form. If two or three Tests go up and down, too much of judgement is not right. He knows what he has to do," Rohit said. See, as I told you, all these youngsters - Rishabh, Gill, Jaiswal, all these youngsters are in the same boat. We don't want to complicate what they are doing. They know what they are expected to



do. Border-Gavaskar Trophy: Full Coverage "Our job here is to keep talking them about small, small things like match awareness. I don't think we need to tell them more and complicate stuff." Rishabh Pant knows what he has to do. He himself has a lot of expectations from him. He is working hard. I hope he clicks in the last two matches," Pant added. India's young guns in the batting unit have flattered to deceive so far in the series. While Yashasvi Jaiswal began the series with a second innings hundred in Perth, the opening batter has struggled for consistency. Shubman Gill has managed to get starts, but has not managed to convert them.

INDIA'S YOUNG IN BGT 2024-25

Yashasvi Jaiswal - 193 in 3 Tests at 38.60
Rishabh Pant - 96 in 3 Tests at 19.20
Shubman Gill - 60 in 2 Tests at 20.00

Rohit Sharma, however, backed the youngsters, saying the team management has been keen on not putting pressure on the likes of Pant, Gill and Jaiswal and letting them play freely in the remainder of the series.

Amir Jangoo earns maiden Test call-up as West Indies name squad for Pakistan tour

New Delhi Batter Amir Jangoo has received his first call-up to the West Indies Test squad for the two-match series against Pakistan, set to begin on January 16 in Karachi. Meanwhile, left-arm spinner Gudakesh Motie makes his return to the squad after missing the home series against Bangladesh last month.

Shamar Joseph is sidelined with shin splints, which also caused him to miss the ODI series against Bangladesh earlier this month, while Alzarri Joseph is unavailable due to "other engagements," according to Cricket West Indies (CWI).

Batter Amir Jangoo has received his first call-up to the West Indies Test squad for the two-match series against Pakistan, set to begin on January 16 in Karachi. Meanwhile, left-arm spinner Gudakesh Motie makes his return to



the squad after missing the home series against Bangladesh last month.

Shamar Joseph is sidelined with shin splints, which also caused him to miss the ODI series against Bangladesh earlier this month, while Alzarri Joseph is unavailable due to "other engagements," according to Cricket West Indies (CWI).

Motie rejoins the squad to strengthen the spin attack, while Jangoo's selection is a reflection of his consistent performances across formats in regional cricket and his strong ability to handle spin bowling." West Indies head coach Andre Coley said. "For the Test series against Pakistan in January 2025, our focus is on building upon our strengths and converting the lessons from 2024 into tangible success." The rest of the squad is largely unchanged. Kraigg Brathwaite will captain the side, with wicketkeeper-batter Joshua Da Silva serving as his deputy. Mikyle Louis, Alick Athanaze, Keacy Carty, and Justin Greaves form the backbone of the batting lineup

ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup 2025: Niki Prasad to lead India's 15-member squad

Niki Prasad will lead India's strong 15-member squad for the ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup, scheduled in Malaysia from January 18 to February 2, 2025. Niki led India to a title win at the inaugural ACC U19 Women's Asia Cup in Kuala Lumpur.



New Delhi. India has announced a strong 15-member squad for the ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup, scheduled to take place in Malaysia from January 18 to February 2, 2025. Niki Prasad, who recently captained India to victory at the inaugural ACC U19 Women's Asia Cup in Kuala Lumpur, will lead the side. The squad retains 14 players from the Asia Cup-winning team, with Sanika Chalka appointed as the vice captain. The only change sees fast bowler Vaishnavi S replacing Nandhana S, who has been

named on the standby list alongside Ira J and Anadi T. India, the defending champions, have been placed in Group A alongside hosts Malaysia, the West Indies, and Sri Lanka. They will kick off their campaign against the West Indies on January 19 at the Bayuemas Oval in Kuala Lumpur. The 16-team competition features four groups of four teams each. The top three teams from each group will advance to the Super Six stage, where they will carry forward points, wins, and Net Run Rate (NRR) from their matches against fellow qualifiers.

The Super Six stage will further split the teams into two groups of six: Group 1: Top three teams from Groups A and D Group 2: Top three teams from Groups B and C Each team will play two matches against teams that qualify from the opposite group. The top two teams from each Super Six group will advance to the semifinals, set for January 31, with the final scheduled on February 2. India is joined by traditional powerhouses Australia, England, South Africa, and New Zealand, alongside Bangladesh, Ireland, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, all of whom qualified based on their participation in the 2023 edition. Malaysia earned automatic qualification as hosts, while Nepal, Nigeria, Samoa, Scotland, and the United States secured their spots through regional tournaments. India's Group Stage Fixtures January 19: India vs. West Indies January 22: India vs. Sri Lanka January 25: India vs. Malaysia

As the reigning champions and with a blend of talent and experience, India will aim to defend their title and further cement their dominance in U19 women's cricket.

Manchester United boss Amorim questions Rashford camp over new challenge comments

New Delhi. Manchester United manager Ruben Amorim has publicly questioned the decision-making of individuals advising Marcus Rashford, following the forward's comments about being "ready for a new challenge." Rashford's remarks have fuelled speculation about his future at Old Trafford after being dropped for several key matches.

Marcus Rashford, who has scored 138 goals in 426 appearances since debuting for United in 2016, has struggled to maintain



Rashford, 27, made the statement two days after being excluded from United's 2-1 derby win against Manchester City on December 15. The England international has since missed the Carabao Cup quarterfinal defeat to Tottenham and United's 3-0 Premier League loss to Bournemouth, intensifying rumours of a January departure. Speaking to Sky Sports, Amorim expressed his concerns about external influences on the player. "It is a hard situation," Amorim said. "These players have a lot of people around them, making choices that are not always the player's first idea. The interview decision wasn't just

consistency in recent seasons. Although he netted 30 goals during the 2022-23 campaign, his form has dipped, drawing criticism from fans and pundits alike. Despite the controversy, Amorim emphasised his commitment to helping Rashford regain form. "I am focused on improving Marcus," he said. "We need a

talented guy like him. I forget the interview now and concentrate on what I see on the pitch." Rashford has three goals since Amorim took over last month, but he was substituted in the 56th minute of their 2-1 Europa League win over Viktoria Plzen on December 12, with fans booing the striker as he departed the pitch.

The Portuguese manager acknowledged the complexity of the situation but stressed that decisions about Rashford's future would be addressed internally. "For now, it's better for me and the club to deal with that when the time comes," he added. United's loss to Bournemouth left them in 13th place heading into Christmas, their lowest position at this stage since 1986. Amorim's side faces a challenging festive schedule, with a Boxing Day trip to Wolves followed by a home match against Newcastle on December 30. The club's precarious position has only heightened the spotlight on Rashford's form and future, with Amorim keen to balance player management and squad performance amid mounting pressure.

No regrets about not captaining India, but would have enjoyed it: R Ashwin

New Delhi Recently retired, R Ashwin stated that he has no regrets about his career, including missing the opportunity to captain the senior men's national team. However, the off-spinner added that he believed he was capable of leading the side and would have enjoyed the responsibility if given the chance. Ashwin captained his state team in age-group cricket and at the first-class level. He also led Punjab Kings in the Indian Premier League (IPL) for two seasons—2018 and 2019. However, the spin-bowling great never had the opportunity to lead India in Test cricket. He was not even recognised with the vice-captaincy role in the longest format of the game. "It's interesting. I am smart enough to know what works for me and what doesn't for another person. When I started my career, I got first-class captaincy very early. I have won a few tournaments for my team. I believe I had it in me. But I did not have any regret that I didn't go on to lead my country because these are not things that I can control," Ashwin told Sky Sports Podcast. "I have realised

somebody needs to feel that I am good enough to lead the team, I need to get another 15-20 people to come along with me for me to be able to lead the team. It wasn't meant for me in this particular chapter of my



life. "I don't think this office or corporate felt I was good enough to lead the team. That doesn't mean I am not good enough for leadership. Leadership, you don't need a title to do that because, within me, I was a great leader in that group to be able to contribute to other

people's success. I looked out for zones of contribution. I did it to the best of my ability," he added. I do not have regrets, but I do think it would have been something I would have enjoyed," he added. Ashwin also captained in the Tamil Nadu Premier League and led the Dindigul Dragons to a title as recently as the 2024 season. While Ashwin has retired from international cricket, the off-spinner will feature for the Chennai Super Kings in IPL 2025. Ashwin was bought for Rs 9.75 crore by the Super Kings at the IPL mega auction in November. The off-spinner is expected to play a key role on his homecoming to the Chennai-based franchise.

Ashwin surprised many by announcing his retirement midway through the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. The off-spinner made the announcement after the third Test of the series in Brisbane on 18 December. Ashwin opted not to stay with the team for the remainder of the series and returned home



However, he later missed four Tests in the autumn after sustaining an injury during The Hundred. Stokes' fitness remains a major talking point ahead of the next Ashes, especially with fast-bowling duo Jofra Archer and Mark Wood also battling long-term injuries as they aim to secure spots in Brendon McCullum's red-ball squad. The ECB provided an update on Stokes' condition: "England Men's Test captain Ben Stokes has been ruled out of all cricket for at least three months after further assessments confirmed he has torn his left hamstring. The Durham all-rounder will undergo surgery in January. The injury occurred during the third Test in Hamilton, during England's recent 2-1 Test series victory in New Zealand." The injury forced Stokes to relinquish the captaincy to Ollie Pope during the match after bowling a grueling 37 overs and experiencing discomfort.

3 losses in 14 years: Breaking down Australia's recent record at the MCG

New Delhi. Pat Cummins-led Australia would be raring to go in the Boxing Day Test match against India. Set to be played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the Australian team would like to dish out another strong performance after their dominance in Adelaide and Brisbane. Things will not be easy though, as India have time and again come back from adversities. Take the Brisbane Test for example. After nearly conceding follow-on on Day 4, India hit back with a tremendous bowling performance reducing Australia down to 89/7 in the second innings. India once again showed, even when down they cannot be counted out. And the fiery build-up to the Boxing Day Test match has mimicked that attitude. While Australian players have been shifting between national team and family duties, the Indian stars have been hounded by the home media. Pat Cummins-led Australia would be raring to go in the Boxing Day Test match against India.

Set to be played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the Australian team would like to dish out another strong performance after their dominance in Adelaide and Brisbane. Things will not be easy though, as India have time and again come back from adversities. Take the Brisbane Test for example. After nearly conceding follow-on on Day 4, India hit back with a tremendous bowling performance reducing Australia down to 89/7 in the second innings. India once again showed, even when down they cannot be counted out. And the fiery build-up to the Boxing Day Test match has mimicked that attitude. While Australian players have been shifting between national team and family duties, the Indian stars have been hounded by the home media. So, what is Australia's record at the MCG? Australia have played a total of 116 Test matches on the venue, with the first Test



match being played in 1877. The hosts have won 67 matches out of the 116, lost 32 and drawn 17. In more recent times, since 2010, Australia have played 14 matches, out of which they have won 9, lost 3 and drawn 2 Test matches. And here's where things get a little interesting. In the last 14 years, where they have played one Test match a year, Australia have lost only 3 Test matches. Out of the three, Australia have

lost two games against India - once in 2018, and the other in 2020. Their one loss before that came way back in 2010, when they lost to England by an innings and 157 runs. INDIA'S MOST RECENT PERFORMANCES AT THE MCG BGT 2014-15 The only drawn MCG Test match in India's last three tours. Bowling first in the game, India was put in trouble by a prolific Steve Smith, who scored 192 runs in the first innings. India replied with twin centuries from Virat Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane, who helped India score 465 runs in response to Australia's 530. After Australia declared for 318/9, India saw Australia off despite panicking early. Kohli and Rahane once again stabilised the Indian innings, after which Pujara, Dhoni, and Ashwin saw India off to a draw.

Triptii Dimri

Shares Picture From Her 'Last Workday Of The Year'

2024 is undoubtedly the star year for Triptii Dimri. Following her impressive appearances in *Bad Newz*, *Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video*, and *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*, Dimri will shine with a slew of upcoming exciting projects under her belt. She will be next seen alongside Siddhant Chaturvedi in the highly anticipated *Dhadak 2*. This movie is a sequel to the 2018 original, which starred Janhvi Kapoor and Ishaan Khatter in lead roles. In line with this, the Qala actress has been tirelessly filming until a few hours ago, when she joyfully announced that today marks her final working day on the set year. Taking to her Instagram stories, Triptii Dimri shared a collage of two mirror selfies, reportedly from her makeup room. She was seen posing for candid clicks with her makeup artist, Nikita Kapoor, hair stylist, Hrishikesh Naskar, and two other members of her team, Aanchal Talreja and Utkantha Lokhande. Looking effortlessly stunning, the actress showcased her beautiful no-makeup look with her hair pulled back in a stylish ponytail, all while wearing a chic black outfit. Above the picture, she sweetly shared, "Last workday of the year...see y'all in 2025!"

In her recent Instagram stories, the actress flashed a cheerful thumbs-up. Further, when we looked closely at the blurred background, we caught a glimpse of some ropes, hinting at the intense stunts she'd been working hard to master.

A month back, a picture featuring Triptii and Siddhant went viral on social media. This was a subtle confirmation that the two actors had started shooting for the highly anticipated film in Mumbai. The picture circulating on social media was from Somaiya Vidyavihar University. In the snap, Triptii wore a casual outfit, while Siddhant sported a dishevelled look.

Dimri will also reportedly star in another upcoming yet-untitled film. This will also star Shahid Kapoor, Nana Patekar, and Randeep Hooda in key roles. The action thriller will be directed by Vishal Bhardwaj and has been sealed for a theatrical release on December 5, 2025. Sajid Nadiadwala, on behalf of Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment, took to his X handle and shared that the filming will begin on January 6, 2025. "#SajidNadiadwala presents a @VishalBhardwaj film! A spectacular cinematic journey begins on 6th Jan 2025 Film releasing on 5th December 2025 @shahidkapoor @tripti_dimri23 @nanagpatekar @RandeepHooda @WardaNadiadwala," the tweet on Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment's X handle read.

Malaika Arora's

Cryptic Post Talks About Self-Worth: 'Invest Your Energy In Those...'

Ever since Arjun Kapoor confirmed his breakup with Malaika Arora, all eyes have been on her. While the *Singham Again* actor revealed his single status at a Diwali party, Malaika has maintained her silence on the matter and has not spoken about it in public. However, her cryptic social media posts since her breakup have often garnered the attention of her fans and followers. On Thursday, December 19, Malaika shared another such cryptic post on her Instagram Stories.

The picture featured a red heart made with fingerprints and discussed the importance of realising one's worth, self-respect and setting boundaries. It read: "Invest your energy in those who truly value your time and presence."

Malaika Arora and Arjun Kapoor started dating in 2018 soon after the *Chaiyya Chaiyya* star parted ways with her ex-husband, Arbaaz Khan. Nearly six years later, they decided to call it quits. In other news, the 49-year-old actress is gearing up for Christmas already. She shared a video on her Instagram account, showcasing her preparation for the festive season. The actress was dressed in a classic white mini bodycon dress. She paired

the full-sleeved dress with golden heels and a cute red bow to add a pop of colour. In the caption of the post, Malaika wrote, "Santa hasn't even started packing, and I'm already in full Christmas mode. Bring on the hot cocoa, holiday movies, and all the sparkle!"

Malaika recently took a train trip to an undisclosed location. While she shared the first part of her journey



back in November, she released the second part of her train journey just days ago. In the video, she recreated Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge's iconic train scene but with the roles reversed. As the reel began, Malaika was seen standing at the gate of the coach dressed in a white comfy co-ord set, helping her co-passengers run to catch her hand to get on the train.

On the work front, Malaika is currently judging the first season of the dance reality show *India's Best Dancer vs Super Dancer: Champions ka Tashan* alongside Remo D'souza and Geeta Kapur.

Rana Daggubati's Birthday Wish For Wife Miheeka Bajaj Is Love



Rana Daggubati's wife Miheeka Bajaj is celebrating her birthday today, and the actor made sure to make the day memorable with a special wish. Rana shared a throwback photo from their wedding celebration on Instagram. In the photo, suggestively from their haldi celebrations, Miheeka is dressed in yellow attire whereas the actor chose an all-white look. The couple can be happily posing for the photo while embracing each other. Rana wrote, "Happiest to you", followed by heart emoticons.

Rana Daggubati also shared a recent selfie with Miheeka where the duo were all smiles for the camera. The actor was dressed in a white sweatshirt while the birthday girl was seen in a bright red dress. Miheeka's birthday comes days after the actor turned 40. Sharing her birthday wishes, Miheeka dropped a series of candid pictures of Rana. "The man with the ever-changing looks and personalities that go hand in hand. There isn't a moment of dullness with you around. The constants in life have been entertainment and an unending supply of love. May you shine bright and don a lot of looks and personalities in the coming years. This year as you turn 40 my only wish is for you to remain forever 14! It never ceases to amaze me how you've managed to maintain the vigour, excitement, thoughts and passion of a kid who's just starting off on their journey. May you always be excited, inquisitive, passionate and ambitious," Miheeka wrote in a long caption accompanying the post.

On the work front, Rana Daggubati is currently busy with his chat show, *The Rana Daggubati Show* on Prime Video. Last month, the show premiered at the 55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI). The launch featured the first episode, starring Nani, Teja Sajja, and Priyanka Arulmohan. The eight-part Telugu Original chat show will feature Dulquer Salmaan, Naga Chaitanya Akkineni, S.S. Rajamouli, Ram Gopal Varma, Rishab Shetty, Siddhu Jonnalagadda, Sreeleela, and others as gets.

Nana Patekar Recalls Visiting Irrfan Khan's Madh Home: 'He Loved Jasmine Plants'



Nana Patekar, widely acclaimed for his versatile acting, recently shared touching memories of the late Irrfan Khan, celebrating the actor's profound impact. He revealed Irrfan's love for night-blooming jasmine plants and how the actor had expressed a desire to have them. Nana also reminisced about an early conversation with Sutapa, Irrfan's wife, where he assured her of Irrfan's bright future in the film industry. Reflecting on a visit to Irrfan's home in Madh, Nana shared how deeply connected he feels to Irrfan's memory. In a heartfelt conversation with Vishal Bhardwaj for Zee Studios, Nana Patekar described Irrfan as a remarkable individual and shared how Sutapa, who worked as a screenwriter for *Khamoshi*, encouraged him to recommend Irrfan for roles. Nana, however, was confident in Irrfan's talent and future, telling Sutapa, "He will suggest our name in the future. He is a very big actor, don't worry."

Nana also recalled Irrfan's humility despite his success. He shared a poignant memory of visiting Irrfan's house in Madh, where Irrfan spoke about his love for night-blooming jasmine plants. The actor had asked Nana to plant one for him, a request that left a lasting impression on Nana, deepening his connection to Irrfan's legacy.

In another conversation with Anil Kapoor, Nana revealed his initial hesitation to watch the film *Animal*, starring Ranbir Kapoor. However, upon being persuaded by friends, he praised Anil's restrained and balanced performance, contrasting it with the more exaggerated portrayals of other cast members. This admiration showcased the respect between the two actors, further exciting fans about their dynamic after their iconic roles in the *Welcome* series. Currently, Nana Patekar is preparing for the release of his upcoming movie, *Vanvaas*.

Directed by Gadar filmmaker Anil Sharma, the movie also stars Utkarsh Sharma and Simrat Kaur. With its focus on family, honor, and self-acceptance, *Vanvaas* offers an emotional narrative that redefines the concept of familial bonds. Ahead of its release, the makers of *Vanvaas* have arranged a special screening for Aamir Khan in Mumbai. A source revealed, "Nana and Aamir Khan share a great bond, the team of *Vanvaas* has already arranged a special screening for the actor in Bombay. Aamir will be watching the film on 20th December." The trailer, released earlier this month, teases a story of resilience and belonging, adding to the anticipation for its release under the Anil Sharma Productions banner.