

French President Emmanuel Macron is set to be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations on January 26 next year, news agency PTI reported on Friday.



State-run oil marketing companies have reduced the prices of 19 kg commercial LPG cylinders by Rs 39.50 per cylinder, effective from December 22.



Fog enveloped the national capital as the mercury dipped further. The Met Office has predicted light showers in several parts of north India.



After a long wait, 'Salaar: Part 1-Cease-fire' released in theatres today, December 22. The movie directed by Prashanth Neel featuring Prabhas.



A woman in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda was given triple talaq by her husband through WhatsApp after she donated a kidney....
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The World Health Organization (WHO) on Tuesday classified the JN.1 coronavirus strain as a "variant of interest" but said it did not pose much threat to public health.....
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India has pushed back against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after the organisation suggested that the Reserve Bank.....
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In a revelation that has caught the attention of many, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan disclosed in the Lok Sabha that a total of 28
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Hollywood actor Jonathan Majors landed in trouble after he was convicted of assaulting and harassing his.....
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Lionel Messi penned an emotional note on his Instagram account, celebrating the one-year anniversary of Argentina's World Cup.....
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India flags core issue with Canada after Trudeau's 'tonal shift' remark

The space given to terrorists and extremists remains India's core issue with Canada, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said on Thursday. This comes a day after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau asserted that New Delhi's ties with Ottawa may have undergone a "tonal shift" after the US indictment of an Indian national in an alleged plot to kill a Sikh separatist (Gurpatwant Singh Pannun). Addressing the media, MEA spokesperson Bagchi said, "Our position has been quite consistent. And whenever this has been raised, we have highlighted how we see the

problem." "The core issue remains the space that is given to extremists and terrorists and, anti-India elements in that country," the MEA spokesperson said. "I think you would have heard from the External Affairs Minister recently as well as others, about the developments of that case... and we would hope that they would take action on such extremist, elements that are misusing the freedom of speech and expression in their country," he said. On Wednesday, Trudeau told the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "I think there is a beginning of an understanding that



they can't bluster their way through this and there is an openness to collaborating in a way that perhaps they were less open before." He said the US indictment appears to have convinced the Indian government to adopt a more sober tone. The ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Trudeau's

allegations on September 18 of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on June 18 in British Columbia. India had designated Nijjar as a terrorist in 2020. India rejected Trudeau's allegations as "absurd" and "motivated".

Congress requests Rahul Gandhi to begin Bharat Jodo Yatra 2.0 from east to west

Congress leaders have requested Rahul Gandhi to embark on a second 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' from east to west, Congress MP KC Venugopal said on Thursday. "In the CWC meeting, Congress president (Mallikarjun Kharge) initially told Rahul Gandhi that he's getting opinions from party workers and leaders from all over India that he should do a second yatra from east to west," KC Venugopal said. The Congress leader said a decision on the yatra would be taken soon. His statement came after a Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting during which party leaders discussed their strategy for the Lok Sabha polls, the dismal performance in assembly elections and the suspension of Opposition MPs from Parliament, among other matters. While speaking about the CWC meeting, he said, "We discussed various issues. First is the last assembly elections results. Second is



the parliamentary elections of 2024 and third is the current political situation in the country, including the parliamentary issues. CWC unanimously adopted their resolution. The general mood of the CWC is to sincerely and genuinely evaluate the result of 5 state elections." Venugopal further said that the manifesto committee for the Lok Sabha polls would be announced within the next day or two. The first phase of Bharat Jodo Yatra, which commenced on September 7, 2022, from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu, covered a distance of approximately 4,080 kilometers before concluding in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, in January 2023.

Least number of mob lynchings since Independence under Modi govt: Amit Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said that the period under Narendra Modi's government recorded the least number of mob lynching incidents in the country since independence. The Home Minister made these remarks while introducing the new criminal code bills in the Rajya Sabha. Under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which aims to replace the Indian Penal Code, mob lynching has been made an offence punishable by the death penalty, the Home Minister informed the Upper House. "We have added 21 new offences under the Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita, and one of them is mob lynching. We have been accused of protecting culprits in mob lynching. However, you [Opposition] have never enacted any law, but we have. There can be no bigger crime than murder, and we



will deal with it harshly," Amit Shah said. Along with the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, which seeks to replace the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Bharatiya Sakshya Sanhita, which replaces the Indian Evidence Act, were passed by the Lok Sabha on Wednesday and by the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. The Home Minister also emphasised that the "soul, body, and thought of the new criminal laws are purely Bharatiya" and that they will "usher in a new era in the criminal justice system".

Campus News

BCIIT Hosts Successful NCR Voyix Placement Drive, Unveiling Promising Career Paths for Tech Talent

NCR Voyix, a global leader in providing digital commerce solutions for retail, restaurant, and banking industries, organized a pool placement drive at Banarsidas Chandiwalla Institute of Information Technology (BCIIT) for the role of IT Analyst – Intern, offering a competitive annual CTC of 6 Lacs. The objective of the drive was to identify and recruit talented individuals for various positions at their Gurgaon office. On 22nd November 2023, MCA candidates from prominent institutes such as BVICAM, JIMS, VIPS, C-DAC, BPIT, and BCIIT participated in the Technical Aptitude test. The Placement Drive commenced with an insightful pre-placement talk, followed by eligible candidates undertaking the



technical aptitude test starting at 12:00 pm. The test aimed to evaluate core technical aptitude, problem-solving abilities, and analytical skills of the participating students. From BVICAM, a total of 4 students were shortlisted from the Assessment Test and progressed to the next stage. Subsequently, on 23rd November 2023, technical interviews were conducted in an online mode. This

phase assessed candidates; proficiency in Object-Oriented Programming (OOPS), Database Management, and their project contributions. Successful candidates from the technical round advanced to the Managerial Round, where their knowledge of OOPS, Database Management, Basics of Computer Network, and project contributions were further evaluated. Those who



cleared the Managerial round proceeded to the final HR round, conducted at the Gurgaon office. After a meticulous selection process, NCR Voyix extended an offer to Jimender Kumar from BVICAM on 2nd December

2023. The NCR Voyix placement drive at BCIIT emerged as a successful event, providing students with a platform to showcase their skills and secure promising career opportunities with the company.

Dr. Sheel Nidhi Tripathi and Dr. Ritika Wason receive acclaim for Expert Session at Trinity Institute's Faculty Development Programme

Dr. Sheel Nidhi Tripathi, an esteemed speaker, led a captivating session on "Processing Literature Review for Data Analysis" during the week-long Faculty Development Programme on "Use of Data Analysis in Research" at Trinity Institute of Professional Studies, New Delhi. The event, held from November 16 to November 23, 2023, drew around 250 participants both online and in person. Dr. Sheel's expertise shone as she navigated the intricate process of incorporating literature reviews into data



analysis methodologies. Attendees lauded her insightful approach, and feedback indicated a high

level of satisfaction with the session. Dr. Ritika took a session on utilization and applications of "R" tool in research. Her session was highly impactful and was well appreciated by participants. In recognition of her exceptional contribution, Dr. Sheel and Dr. Wason were honored with an appreciation letter and certificate, further solidifying her standing as a distinguished authority in the field.



Paper at the National Seminar on "Media, Culture, and Society in the Digital Era by Dr Sheel



Dr. Sheel Nidhi Tripathi, Associate Professor, Deptt of JMC-BVICAM, presented a paper at the National Seminar on "Media, Culture, and Society in the Digital Era." Her presentation on "Social Media and its impact on Journalism" emphasized the emerging role of social media as a new beat for journalists. Dr. Sheel's research highlighted the

need for journalist training to combat the spread of fake news. Session chairs highly appreciated her insights, recognizing the timeliness and relevance of her work. The paper contributes significantly to the ongoing discourse on the evolving landscape of journalism in the digital age, showcasing BVICAM's commitment to cutting-edge research and academic excellence.

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NEWS

3 more Opposition MPs suspended from Lok Sabha, total count 146 now

Three Congress MPs Deepak Baij, Nakul Nath, DK Suresh were suspended from Lok Sabha on Thursday, taking the total number of suspended Opposition MPs from Parliament to 146.

Over 140 Opposition MPs have been suspended since December 14 for causing disruptions to the functioning of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and raising slogans while demanding a statement from Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the December 13 Parliament security breach.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla had warned the three Congress MPs against protesting in the House. Opposition MPs could be heard

raising slogans as the Question Hour was taken up.

Soon after the Question Hour concluded, the Speaker warned the protesting members, and named the three Congress MPs.

The session, which began on December 4, saw 14 MPs being suspended on December 14, another 78 on Monday, and 49 on Tuesday and now two more today.

OPPOSITION MPs PROTEST

On Thursday, INDIA bloc MPs on Thursday marched from Parliament to Vijay Chowk in Delhi to protest the suspension of opposition lawmakers, with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge asserting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had



violated parliamentary privilege by not speaking on the security breach issue inside the House.

BILLS PASSED IN PARLIAMENT

Notably, after the suspension of MPs, the Parliament today passed the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023.

This bill seeks to establish a mechanism to appoint the chief election commissioner and election commissioners. The Parliament also passed the Telecommunications Bill, 2023 that seeks to allow the government to temporarily take control of telecom services in the interest of national security, and provide a non-auction route for the allocation of satellite spectrum.

Mosque in Ayodhya will be better than Taj

The mosque, which will be built on five-acre land in Ayodhya's Dhannipur village, will be better than the Taj Mahal, said BJP leader and chairman of Masjid Muhammad Bin Abdullah's Development Committee on Thursday. Haji Arfat Shaikh spoke exclusively to AajTak and highlighted key features and specialities of the upcoming mosque, which will be built only 25 km away from the Ram Temple. The Supreme Court on November 9 last year paved the way for the construction of a Ram Temple at the disputed Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid site at Ayodhya, and directed the Centre to allot an alternative five-acre plot to the Sunni Waqf Board.

Kerala Chief Minister writes to PM Modi, accuses Governor of neglecting duties



Amidst a row over Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Droupadi Murmu, alleging that Khan was not fulfilling his constitutional duties and often violates protocol.

Earlier, Chief Minister Vijayan had alleged Khan's behaviour was not in accordance with the etiquette that should be followed by a Governor and added that the Centre should examine this.

Vijayan and Governor Khan have been at loggerheads since the latter accused the Chief Minister of 'conspiring' to hurt him physically. Khan's scathing accusation came after his vehicle was allegedly hit by activists of the Students Federation of India (SFI), the student wing of the CPI(M), while he was on his way to the

Thiruvananthapuram International Airport to leave for Delhi.

A visibly furious Governor got out of his car and told the media that it was Chief Minister Vijayan who 'conspired' to send people to hurt him physically.



He further contended that if the Chief Minister disagrees with him on something, that does not mean the Marxist veteran should "hatch conspiracies" to hurt him physically.

According to a Raj Bhavan source, black flags were waved at Khan at three places.

UP woman donates kidney to sick brother, NRI husband gives her triple talaq

A woman in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda was given triple talaq by her husband through WhatsApp after she donated a kidney to save her brother's life.

The victim Tarannum's husband, Mohammad Rashid, who works in Saudi Arabia, became furious over the kidney donation and demanded Rs 40 lakh from Tarannum. Upon her refusal, he sent her a triple talaq message on August 30. Tarannum and Rashid were married 20 years ago, but Rashid later moved to Saudi Arabia for employment. During their marriage, the

couple did not have children, and according to Tarannum, Rashid took a second wife.

Her brother, Mohd Shakir, suffered from kidney failure and was undergoing treatment in Mumbai. To save his life, Tarannum underwent surgery to donate one of her kidneys about five months ago. After the procedure, Tarannum returned to her in-laws' home in Gonda, where the conflict with her husband escalated leading to him giving her triple talaq via WhatsApp.

Following the incident,



Tarannum has been forced to live with her parents. She has taken legal action by filing a police case against her husband.

Additional Superintendent of Police Radheshyam Rai confirmed that a case has been registered and necessary actions are being taken.

Central force CISF to handle 'comprehensive' security of Parliament after breach

The government has decided to hand over the 'comprehensive' security of the Parliament building complex to the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) in the wake of the recent breach of the safety ring, official sources said Thursday.

The CISF is a central armed police force (CAPF) that currently guards many central government ministry buildings in Delhi apart from installations in the nuclear and aerospace domain, civil airports and the Delhi Metro.

The sources told PTI that the Union Home Ministry Wednesday directed for a survey of the Parliament building complex so that a "regular deployment of the CISF security and fire wing on a comprehensive pattern" could be done.

Experts drawn from the government building security (GBS) unit of the CISF, which guards central government ministries, and fire combat and response officers of the force along with officials from the current Parliament security team



will undertake the survey beginning later this week. Both the new and the old Parliament complex and their allied buildings will be brought under a comprehensive security cover of the CISF

Campus News



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NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Trump disqualified from holding US President office again, rules Colorado court

Former President Donald Trump cannot appear on the ballot in Colorado in next year's presidential election because of his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol by his supporters, the state's top court ruled Tuesday in a historic judgment that will likely be taken up the U.S. Supreme Court.

The 4-3 ruling from the Colorado Supreme Court makes Trump the first presidential candidate in U.S. history to be deemed ineligible for the White House under a rarely used provision of the U.S. Constitution that bars officials who have engaged in "insurrection or rebellion" from holding office.

The ruling applies only to Colorado's March 5 Republican primary, but its conclusion could affect Trump's status in the state for the Nov. 5 general election. Nonpartisan U.S. election forecasters view Colorado as safely



Democratic, meaning that President Joe Biden will likely carry the state regardless of Trump's fate there.

Trump vowed to appeal the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court, and the Colorado court said it would delay the effect of its decision until at least Jan. 4, 2024, to allow for an appeal.

The ruling sets the stage for the U.S. Supreme Court, whose 6-3 conservative majority includes three Trump appointees, to consider whether Trump is eligible to serve another term as president.

The lawsuit is viewed as a test case for a wider effort to

disqualify Trump from state ballots under section 3 of the 14th Amendment, which was enacted after the U.S. Civil War to keep supporters of the confederacy from serving in the government. The Colorado court concluded that the U.S. Constitution bars Trump, the frontrunner for the Republican nomination in 2024, from appearing on the ballot because of his role instigating violence at the Capitol as lawmakers met to certify the results of the 2020 election. The court's majority acknowledged the decision was "uncharted territory."

'Soros-funded scheme backed by crooked Biden': Trump on Colorado court ruling

Former US President Donald Trump on Wednesday termed the Colorado Supreme Court ruling 'a scheme backed by crooked (President) Joe Biden to interfere in an election'. The former US President also called Biden 'a threat to democracy'.

Trump's remarks came as the ruling disqualified him from serving as US president and stated he cannot appear on the primary ballot in Colorado because of his role in the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol by his supporters. "It's no wonder crooked Joe Biden and the far left group takes a desperate to stop us by any means necessary. They are willing to violate the US constitutions at levels never seen before, in order to win this election," Trump said, speaking in Iowa.

He further said, "Joe Biden is a threat to democracy... he's a threat. They are weaponising law enforce-

ment for a high-level election interference because we are beating them so badly."

Trump's campaign also issued a statement on the Colorado Supreme Court ruling, stating they would file an appeal to the United States Supreme Court against the order.

Meanwhile, Republican presidential aspirant Vivek Ramaswamy vowed to pull out of the Colorado primary ballot unless Trump is reinstated.

The verdict set up a likely showdown in the nation's highest court to decide whether the front-runner for the GOP nomination can remain in the race.

The decision from a court whose justices were all appointed by Democratic governors marks the first time in history that Section 3 of the 14th Amendment has been used to disqualify a presidential candidate.

The Colorado court concluded that the US



Constitution bars Trump, the frontrunner for the Republican nomination in 2024, from appearing on the ballot because of his role in instigating violence at the Capitol as lawmakers met to certify the results of the 2020 election. The court's majority acknowledged the decision was "uncharted territory." "We do not reach these conclusions lightly," the majority justices wrote. "We are mindful of the magnitude and weight of the questions now before us. We are likewise mindful of our solemn duty to apply the law, without fear or favor, and without being swayed by public reaction to the decisions that the law mandates we reach."

33 dead in Israeli strikes in Gaza, UN vote on ceasefire resolution delayed

At least 33 people were killed in Israeli strikes in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday (local time) as Israel continued its offensive in the besieged Palestinian enclave, in response to the October 7 Hamas's attack on the Jewish nation. The Israeli military said it intercepted six rockets fired from Lebanon towards northern Israel and two Israeli soldiers were injured in the attack.

A UN Security Council (UNSC) vote over a boost in humanitarian supplies into the Gaza Strip and an urgent halt in the Israel-Hamas war has been delayed as negotiations were on to avoid a US veto of action over the two-month-long conflict. The vote is set to take place on Wednesday morning (local time).

Here are the top developments of the Israel-Hamas war:

-The vote was earlier expected to take place on Monday afternoon but was postponed as hectic attempts were being made to make Washington either support or abstain from the resolution, The Times of Israel reported.

-Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met some of the families of hostages held by Hamas in Gaza amid reports of some

progress in negotiations on a new deal. The meeting came against the backdrop of the Israeli military's accidental killing of three hostages last week who escaped captivity.

-Israel continued to pound Gaza with missiles in Gaza as 20 people were killed in Rafah near the border with Egypt and 13 more in the Jabalia refugee camp in Gaza City, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. About 75 others were injured in Israeli strikes on the refugee camp, news agency Reuters reported.

-Yemen's Houthis, who are backed by Iran, an adversary of Israel, said it would continue to target vessels operating in the Red Sea despite a US-led naval mission being established to protect ships in the region, Reuters reported. For the past few days, Houthi rebels have been attacking ships with missiles and drones and said it would continue its hostilities unless Israel stopped its bombardment in Gaza.

- Israel's counteroffensive in Gaza to eradicate Hamas terrorists following their attack on the Jewish nation on October 7, has left vast swathes of the Palestinian enclave in ruins.

COVID-19

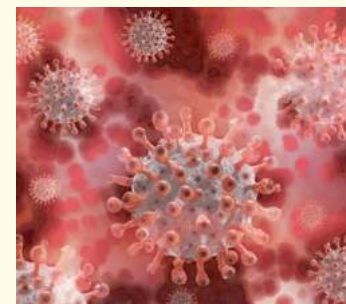
World Health Organization classifies Omicron sub-variant JN.1 as 'variant of interest'

The World Health Organization (WHO) on Tuesday classified the JN.1 coronavirus strain as a "variant of interest" but said it did not pose much threat to public health.

"Based on the available evidence, the additional global public health risk posed by JN.1 is currently evaluated as low," WHO said.

JN.1 was previously classified as a variant of interest as a part of its parent lineage BA.2.86.

The United Nations agency said current vaccines continue to protect against severe disease and death from JN.1 and other circulating variants of the COVID-19 virus.



The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) earlier this month said that the subvariant JN.1 makes up about an estimated 15% to 29% of cases in the United States as of Dec. 8, according to the agency's latest projections. JN.1 was first detected in the US in September, according to the CDC.

Last week, China detected seven infections of the COVID subvariant.



Coping with Health Issues in Contemporary Professional Women

Maintaining good health is pivotal regardless of one's lifestyle, but the demands of a bustling routine can significantly impact well-being. Working women, especially, confront distinct health hurdles as they navigate their professional and personal spheres.

A strenuous lifestyle often leads to chronic back pain, attributed to extended periods of desk work and household chores. Carrying shoulder bags exacerbates shoulder and neck discomfort, causing strains. Strategies like frequent breaks, ergonomic adjustments, proper posture, and suitable bags are vital to alleviate these issues.

Thyroid disorders, more prevalent among women, can worsen due to stress and erratic schedules. Symptoms like fatigue and mood



swings warrant medical evaluation for appropriate management.

Weight gain poses a persistent challenge, stemming from irregular meal schedules and limited exercise opportunities. Balancing work commitments with self-care, incorporating nutritious meals, and scheduling physical activity are key to maintaining a healthy weight.

Nutritional deficiency often occurs amidst busy lives; prioritizing a well-balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and essential nutrients is crucial. Stress-reduction

techniques such as meditation and yoga are valuable for heart health, as persistent stress can impact cardiovascular well-being.

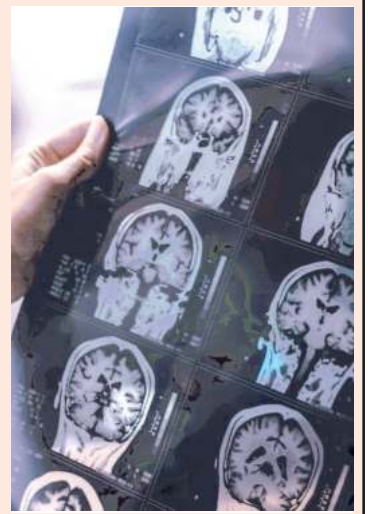
Stress and anxiety, common companions for working women, require attention. Seeking support and employing stress management techniques are essential.

Mental health, despite its societal stigma, should take precedence. Prioritizing self-care, hobbies, and seeking professional help when needed can significantly contribute to a healthier mind.

Irregular sleep patterns may heighten the risk of dementia

New research from December 13, 2023, suggests a potential link between irregular sleep patterns and a heightened risk of dementia. The study in *Neurology®* followed 88,094 participants for seven years, using wrist devices to monitor their sleep consistency. While the study doesn't confirm a direct causation, it highlights a connection between irregular sleep and a greater likelihood of developing dementia.

Dr. Matthew Paul Pase, the study's author, stressed the significance of maintaining regular sleep schedules in evaluating dementia risk. Participants with highly irregular sleep patterns were 53% more likely to develop dementia than those with moderately irregular sleep. Surprisingly, the most consistently



regular sleepers didn't exhibit a reduced dementia risk. The findings emphasize the need for education and behavioral therapies to enhance sleep regularity. The study suggests that even achieving moderate sleep regularity could potentially mitigate dementia risks. However, further research is necessary to fully confirm these observations and explore potential influencing factors.

Measles Outbreak

Measles surge in Europe and Central Asia climbs 3000% year-over-year



Between January and December 5, 2023, Europe and Central Asia witnessed a stark surge in measles cases, totaling 30,601 compared to 909 cases in 2022, marking a 3266% increase. UNICEF has raised alarm over this spike, especially as the rate almost doubled between October and November 2023, signifying an alarming trend.

Regina De Dominicis, UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, highlighted the concerning breakdown in immunization coverage, demanding urgent attention and robust public health measures to protect children from this perilous and sometimes fatal disease. Measles significantly impacts children's health, weakening their immune systems and increasing vulnerability to other

infectious diseases, such as pneumonia.

Kazakhstan reported the highest rate of measles cases, with 69 cases per 100,000 population, totaling 13,254 cases. Kyrgyzstan followed closely with 58 cases per 100,000 population, amounting to 3,811 cases. Romania declared a national measles outbreak, recording 9.6 cases per 100,000, equating to 1,855 cases.

Factors contributing to the surge include declining immunization coverage, vaccine hesitancy due to COVID-19 misinformation, health service disruptions, and fragile healthcare systems. UNICEF advocates for identifying missed vaccinations, boosting vaccine confidence, funding immunization services, and strengthening health systems to address these issues.

1 in 9 Indians with COVID symptoms taking the RT-PCR test in 2023; official caseloads likely to be understated

The recent spike of over 50,000 cases of the JN.1 COVID-19 sub-variant in Singapore during early December has sparked renewed concerns about safety measures, especially the necessity to reimpose mask-wearing. This variant, also found in the US, China, and India, prompted Singapore's Health Ministry to issue travel advisories. Similarly, India's Health Secretary urged increased vigilance following JN.1 variant reports in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, coupled with five fatalities. Despite these alerts, a LocalCircles survey revealed that only 1 in 9 Indians underwent the RT-PCR test, raising fears of underreported infections.

Known as Pirola, the JN.1 sub-variant of the Omicron strain exhibits symptoms such as runny nose, headaches, sore throat, fever, and moderate gastrointestinal distress. First identified in the US in September 2023, this sub-variant has caused global concern. Indian government data indicates over 1800 active COVID cases, yet limited testing of international

arrivals remains a significant concern. Citizens voiced apprehensions on LocalCircles, questioning whether India's heightened risk of delayed JN.1 variant detection was linked to low testing rates.

Conducting a survey from November 20 to December 18 with 24,000 respondents across 303 Indian districts, LocalCircles found that 76% refrained from COVID testing despite experiencing symptoms like cold, fever, or respiratory issues. Only 18% opted for a test when symptomatic, and a mere 12% chose the RT-PCR test. Non-reporting of positive results from Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) or home tests further complicates accurate government records. Individuals cited reasons such as doubts about test accuracy, inconvenience, and cost as motivations for avoiding tests despite symptoms. Moreover, the survey aimed to understand the reasons behind the reluctance to undergo COVID testing despite experiencing symptoms. Responses indicated that many believed testing was unnecessary if



treatment was based on symptoms and recovery progress. Factors contributing to this reluctance included inconvenience, previous testing experiences, doubts about result accuracy, and a perceived lack of testing utility in specific scenarios.

In summary, the surge in global JN.1 COVID cases, despite limited reported instances in India, raises concerns about delayed identification due to insufficient testing rates. The survey highlighted a worrying trend of individuals not undergoing COVID tests despite exhibiting symptoms, with 1 in 9 individuals abstaining from the RT-PCR test. This hesitancy poses a significant risk, potentially contributing to the rapid spread of the infection.

Science & Technology

First full-scale Butterfly air taxi prototype introduced by air taxi developer Overair

Overair stands out among various electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft ventures by successfully constructing its Butterfly model, unlike many others that often remain conceptual. The startup unveiled its first fully assembled prototype of the Butterfly air taxi and anticipates initiating flight trials in the early months of the upcoming year. The Butterfly stands distinguished with four larger rotors, doubling the size of those employed by typical

eVTOL aircraft. This electric air taxi accommodates up to five passengers and a pilot, offering a 100-mile range and a top speed of 200 mph. It promises a noiseless flight experience and is engineered with fail-safes, capable of hovering on two out of its four propellers. The aircraft integrates Optimum Speed Tilt Rotor (OSTR) and Individual Blade Control (IBC) technologies to enhance energy efficiency by 60% during various flight phases, reduce noise, vibration, and maintenance costs, and ensure smoother rides. Designed for diverse uses, including passenger, medical, cargo, and military applications, the Butterfly is set to undergo rigorous flight tests in early 2024, examining



propulsion systems, safety features, and operational performance. CEO Ben Tigner highlighted this milestone as a testament to their commitment to safer and more efficient eVTOL innovations.

New variant of Alzheimer's protein identified

Researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis have detected a new variant of an Alzheimer's-related protein present in the cerebrospinal fluid. This protein offers insights into the disease's progression stage within an individual and correlates with tau protein tangles in the brain. The identified protein, recognized for its association with microtubules, represents a significant discovery in understanding Alzheimer's pathology.

Hyderabad Auto & Taxi Drivers Association introduces Yarry app using ONDC Protocol

The Hyderabad Auto and Taxi Drivers Association introduced Yaary, a ride-hailing app operating on ONDC protocols, aiming to compete with Ola and Uber. Over 20,000 drivers have joined Yaary, and the association plans to extend similar apps across various cities, collaborating with local driver associations. Yaary, akin to Bengaluru's Namma Yatri, pledges not to charge drivers any commissions. Yaary's CEO Hari Prasad emphasized the platform's focus on drivers' welfare, aiming for a superior passenger experience. Founded by Prasad, Mad-

han Balasubramanian, and Paritosh Verma, Yaary adheres to ONDC standards. ONDC's CEO T Koshy anticipates Yaary to offer a cost-effective service for providers and customers in Hyderabad. This move follows ONDC's ongoing cab-hailing pilot in Kolkata with Yatri Sathi, partnered by the West Bengal government. Simultaneously, the competitive landscape in India's ride-hailing industry intensifies. Rapido, a bike and auto-hailing app, entered cab bookings to rival Ola and Uber. Discontent among drivers regarding high commissions and



rider-related issues has led to several unions and state governments contemplating or implementing their apps. Karnataka's transport minister, Ramalinga Reddy, announced the state's intention to launch a ride-hailing app to compete with Ola and Uber, reflecting the evolving dynamics within India's ride-hailing sector.

Blue Origin resumes space missions with successful New Shepard launch



Blue Origin's New Shepard rocket, named after Alan Shepard, successfully launched after a 15-month hiatus due to a previous malfunction. The launch, carrying scientific experiments but no passengers, occurred at 11:43 am ET from the company's Texas base. Following separation 15 minutes later, the capsule entered a period of microgravity with

various payloads. The capsule safely returned to Earth, landing successfully. Simultaneously, the booster completed a gentle landing in the desert at 11:53 am ET. Known as NS-24, this mission carried 33 scientific payloads for various clients, including NASA. Additionally, it transported 38,000 student-posted cards, part of a Club for the Future initiative.

Discovery

TScientists Talk To A Humpback Whale, Claim It Could Help Humans Chat With Aliens Someday



Scientists achieved a groundbreaking feat by engaging in a two-way vocal exchange with a humpback whale named Twain. They played recordings of whale calls through underwater speakers, prompting Twain to respond, matching intervals. This research, published in PeerJ, sets a precedent for cross-species communication. The team, including UC Davis and Alaska Whale Foundation

members, recorded social calls from humpbacks, later attempting interaction with Twain using her pod's calls. The study hints at potential parallels with decoding extraterrestrial communications, as SETI explores. This milestone lays a foundation for interspecies communication studies, bridging knowledge gaps between Earth's intelligent creatures and potentially decoding cosmic messages.

Meteor Shower

Year's Final Meteor Shower Has Begun: When To See The Ursids At Their Best

This winter offers a celestial spectacle with the Ursid meteor shower, slated to peak on December 23. An annual occurrence during the winter solstice, the Ursids result from Earth crossing paths with debris from comet 8P/Tuttle.

While not as grand as the earlier Geminids, this shower still promises a display of shooting stars, producing around five to 10 meteors hourly at its peak, provided conditions are optimal. To catch this event, seek a dark, unobstructed area away from city lights. The prime viewing window is in the early hours of December



22 and 23, pre-dawn. These meteors will emanate from Ursa Minor, visible throughout the night in the northern hemisphere. Spotting the constellation can be facilitated with a sky map app or by identifying the bright star Polaris, marking the Little Dipper's handle. No special gear is necessary; your eyes and patience are

sufficient. Bundle up warmly, bring a blanket or chair, allow your eyes to adjust to darkness, and scan the sky for luminous streaks. The Ursids, though subtle, offer a dependable spectacle, illuminating winter nights with cosmic brilliance. Embrace this chance to witness nature's celestial display before the year concludes.



Savitri Jindal's wealth grew \$9.6 billion in 2023, most among India's richest

India's richest woman, Savitri Jindal, witnessed an unparalleled surge in her wealth in 2023, outpacing the country's richest individuals such as Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani, according to data from the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

The 73-year-old has seen her net worth skyrocket by a staggering \$9.6 billion in the calendar year 2023. In contrast, Mukesh Ambani, the chairman of Reliance Industries (RIL) and India's richest individual, experienced a comparatively modest increase of around \$5 billion in the same period. Despite Ambani maintaining his top position among India's wealthiest with a total fortune of \$92.3 billion, Savitri Jindal's meteoric rise has drawn significant attention as she

became the fifth-wealthiest Indian with a net worth of \$25.3 billion.

Her conglomerate, the OP Jindal Group, oversees prominent listed companies such as JSW Steel, Jindal Steel & Power, JSW Energy, Jindal Saw, Jindal Stainless, and investment firm JSW Holdings.

The OP Jindal Group, which controls 83 per cent of the port operator JSW Infrastructure, successfully listed the company in October 2023. The Jindal family is now eyeing the potential listing of JSW Cement in the upcoming year. Following Savitri Jindal in the list of top wealth gainers in 2023 is Shiv Nadar, founder of HCL Tech, whose net worth surged by approximately \$8 billion to reach around \$32.6 billion. The strong performance of



HCL Tech shares, witnessing a 45 per cent rally in 2023, contributed significantly to Nadar's wealth growth.

Meanwhile, real estate tycoon KP Singh of DLF added another \$7 billion to his total wealth, reaching \$15.4 billion during the year, fueled by an 83 per cent rally in DLF stock amid a real estate boom in India. Industry stalwarts Kumar Mangalam Birla and

Shapoor Mistry both experienced a substantial wealth increase of \$6.3 billion each during 2023. Meanwhile, Mukesh Ambani's wealth recorded an additional \$5.2 billion, and Dilip Shanghvi, Managing Director of Sun Pharma, saw his net worth rise by another \$4.7 billion. Notably, Gautam Adani remains the only prominent figure on the list whose fortunes went the opposite way in 2023.

Spacenet Enterprises raises funds

Spacenet Enterprises India Limited recently announced a successful fundraising of Rs 99.55 crore, marking a significant stride in its expansion and diversification strategy. The investment in Spacenet Enterprises was led by VIKASA India EIF I Fund with Rs 50 crore at Rs 26 per share. The fundraising, comprising convertible equity warrants issued on a preferential basis, attracted a diverse group of investors, including domestic high-net-worth individuals and foreign financial institutions. The fresh infusion of capital positions Spacenet to elevate its stake in Billmart.com, a leading FinTech company, and to further invest in innovative entities like Pathfinders, an AI-based firm, and Neo Bank, an NBFC.

IMF Annual Article

'Unjustified': India opposes IMF for terming currency intervention 'excessive'

India has pushed back against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after the organisation suggested that the Reserve Bank of India's intervention in the foreign exchange market was excessive.

The IMF stated that the rupee's movement within a narrow range from December 2022 to October 2023 indicated that the central bank's intervention "likely exceeded levels necessary to address disorderly market conditions." Subsequently, the IMF reclassified India's foreign-exchange regime from a "floating" system to a "stabilized arrangement." However, India disagreed with the IMF's assessment, considering it "unjustified". The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) countered, arguing that the IMF's evaluation was selective and would fail over a two to five-year horizon. "The RBI strongly believes that such a view is incorrect as, in their view, it uses data selectively," added the report.

The RBI indicated that the period in question was limited to the short term.



During the cited period, the rupee depreciated about 2 per cent against the dollar. According to Bloomberg Economics estimates, the RBI intervened with approximately \$78 billion in the foreign exchange market during the nine months from December 2022 to October 2023. India's foreign exchange reserves currently stand at \$604 billion, approaching the record high of \$642.5 billion reached in 2021. RBI officials have consistently stated that the central bank doesn't target a specific rupee level but intervenes to smooth volatility. The IMF also recommended "ambitious" fiscal consolidation over the medium term to curb public debt, endorsing the RBI's current neutral monetary policy stance as appropriate to bring inflation back to the 4% target.

India tops global remittance flows at \$125 billion in 2023: World Bank

In a World Bank report, remittances are expected to increase by \$14 billion and rise to \$125 billion in 2023, increasing India's share in South Asian remittances to 66 per cent

India saw the highest amount of remittance inflows in the world in 2023 at \$125 billion, driven by several factors, including the country's agreement with the UAE, for promoting the use of dirhams and rupees for bilateral trade, the World Bank said.

In a report, the World Bank further said growth in remittances in India is expected to halve to 12.4 per cent in 2023 from a historic peak of 24.4 per cent in 2022. "Remittances are expected to increase by \$14 billion and rise to \$125 billion in 2023, increasing India's share in South Asian remittances to 66 per cent in 2023 from 63 per cent in 2022," said the World Bank's latest Migration and Development Brief.

India was followed by Mexico (\$67 billion), China (\$50 billion), the Philippines (\$40 billion) and Egypt (\$24 billion).

Economies where remittance inflows represent substantial shares of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) -- highlighting the importance



of remittances for funding current account and fiscal shortfalls -- are Tajikistan (48 per cent), Tonga (41 per cent), Samoa (32 per cent), Lebanon (28 per cent) and Nicaragua (27 per cent).

On India, the World Bank said the main contributing factors were declining inflation and strong labour markets in high-income source countries, which boosted remittances from highly skilled Indians in the US, the UK and Singapore, which collectively account for 36 per cent of the total remittance flows to New Delhi. "Remittance flows to India were also boosted by higher flows from the GCC,

especially the UAE, which accounts for 18 per cent of India's total remittances and is the second-largest source of them after the US," the report said.

It further said remittance flows to India benefited particularly from its February 2023 agreement with the UAE for establishing a framework to promote the use of local currencies for cross-border transactions and cooperation for inter-linking payment and messaging systems. The use of dirhams and rupees in cross-border transactions will be instrumental in channelling more remittances through formal channels, it said.

Education

Revolutionising data management: A groundbreaking solution for universities embracing innovation

In a groundbreaking move, Subhodip Pal has spearheaded a transformative initiative to overhaul the critical IT systems of a prestigious university. Mr. Pal's journey involved replacing an outdated and expensive Oracle Master Data Management (MDM) system with a state-of-the-art Graph Technology-based architecture, marking a paradigm shift from traditional RDBMS and monolithic architecture to a modern cloud-native, scalable, containerised microservices framework. The university's previous MDM system was not only financially burdensome, requiring a staggering \$1M+ annually just to keep the lights on, but also lacked the flexibility to support new enhancements and scalability.

Mr Pal's vision led to the creation of a system that proved to be 10X cheaper in terms of TCO, more than 10,000 times faster and almost infinitely scalable, addressing the university's immediate needs and capable of handling backlogged Data Science and AI Use Cases without any additional system or infrastructure. The technology stack for the solution includes Neo4j (leading Graph Technology), Kafka (for Near Real-time streaming), Docker (for Microservice Containerisation), Cloud Platform, Loqate (for Address Verification), React (for Data Steward UI) and Prometheus/Grafana (for advanced monitoring). One of the key advantages of Mr Pal's Neo4j-powered MDM system is its ability to provide near real-time data streaming and data observability capabilities.



This ensures that the university's critical functions, such as student enrolment, operate seamlessly and efficiently. Mr. Pal's team has successfully executed the last three-term enrolments flawlessly, demonstrating the system's reliability, scalability and performance. Data Observability is a very nascent and upcoming area in the overall Data Strategy aspect and back in 2020, when the system was being

designed and built, it was one of the trailblazers in this space demonstrating how Data Observability across a Microservice Architecture can effectively and very efficiently assist in understanding the bottlenecks or the point of failures. Traditional MDM tools lack flexibility and usability from the Data Steward and operational point of view. Leveraging React JS (React is a free and open-source front-end JavaScript library for building user interfaces based on components. It is maintained by Meta and a community of individual developers and companies) based framework on top of the Graph Database that provides flexibility, usability, portability and cross-browser/mobile device support.

Rising trends in pastry arts education

If we look back just a decade ago, there were no dedicated culinary institutions in the country specialising in patisserie or bakery arts. The absence of such institutions forced many people from that generation to travel abroad for quality bakery education. In India, the demand for skilled pastry chefs has seen a significant increase, with statistics indicating a substantial increase in the enrollment rates for pastry arts courses. According to recent data, enrollment in pastry programmes across various culinary institutes has increased by over 30 percent in the last three years. This surge is indicative of the growing recognition and appeal of the pastry arts as a lucrative and fulfilling career.

US deportation woes: 28 Indian students forced to return home in 2023

In a revelation that has caught the attention of many, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan disclosed in the Lok Sabha that a total of 28 Indian students were deported from the USA to India in the year 2023. However, state-wise data was not available for the deported students.



This information was provided in response to questions raised by members of the Trinamool Congress, Pratima Mondal, and Professor Sougata Ray. Muraleedharan said that the Indian government has expressed concerns to the US authorities regarding such instances and requested them to ensure fairness with regard to the entry of Indian students who hold valid student visas. He added that the Indian Embassy and Consulates in the USA offer consular assistance whenever such issues come to their attention. The ministry and Indian missions/posts abroad are actively involved in organising outreach programmes and issuing advisories. These initiatives aim to sensitise Indian nationals, including students, about safe and legal migration. Additionally, they emphasise caution about fraudulent agents and fake job offers. Complaints related to fraudulent agents and illegal migration are referred to the respective state governments for investigation and accountability.

RISING STUDENT POPULATION IN THE US
Despite these challenges, the United States remains a sought-after destination for Indian students pursuing higher education abroad. The latest Open Doors Report revealed a significant increase in the number of Indians pursuing postgraduate studies in the US, making them the largest source of international graduate students in America. This surge in student numbers underscores the importance of addressing and resolving deportation issues promptly.

Over 29 lakh students fail Class 10 boards exams 2023, stats show rising numbers

More than 29 lakh students failed their Class 10 board exams in 2023, revealed Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan

The Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), operating under the Ministry of Education, disclosed that over 29 lakh students failed their Class 10 board exams in the year 2023. A total of 1,89,90,809 students participated in the Class 10 examination. Out of this, 1,60,34,671 students successfully passed, while 29,56,138 students did not advance to Class 11. Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan shared this data during a session in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

INCREASING STUDENTS FAILING CLASS 10
Over the past four years, there has been a noteworthy escalation in the number of students failing the Class 10 board exams. The figures from 2019 to 2022 illustrate a concerning trend: 1,09,800 failed in 2019, 1,00,812 in 2020, a drop to 31,196 was seen in 2021, and a significant spike to 1,17,308 took place in 2022.

MULTIPLE BOARDS REPORT SIMILAR TRENDS
The unsettling trend is not

confined to one educational board. Various boards, including the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), Assam Board of Secondary Education, Bihar School Examination Board (BSEB), Chhattisgarh Board of Secondary Education, Gujarat Secondary & Higher Secondary Education Board, Board of School Education Haryana (HSEB), Maharashtra State Board of Secondary & Higher Secondary Education, Board of Secondary Education Madhya Pradesh, Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad Uttar Pradesh, and others, reported a substantial number of Class 10 students failing in the past year.

DIVERSE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO FAILURES
Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan highlighted several factors contributing to the surge in student failures. "The factors contributing to students' failure in examinations are diverse, including non-attendance at schools, challenges in understanding school instructions, lack of



interest in studies, the difficulty level of question papers, a shortage of qualified teachers, insufficient support from parents, teachers, and schools, among others," the education minister stated. Another possible factor that the education minister didn't mention but that cannot be ruled out is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on education. The pandemic heightened existing inequalities, disproportionately impacting marginalised communities. The crisis, with its ever-evolving nature, intensified barriers to socio-economic progress for the underprivileged. A 2021 Unicef report revealed the profound educational setbacks in South Asia, where 434 million children faced learning losses due to pandemic-induced school closures.

Campus News



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ENTERTAINMENT

'Dunki' Movie Review: Shah Rukh Khan-Rajkumar Hirani film is a slam dunk

Rajkumar Hirani's world of cinema has created a space in the hearts of cinegoers purely based on the way his characters make you feel. He's one of those rare directors who manages to pull you into the plot on the basis of just pure story telling. He doesn't resort to loud dialogues or VFX-heavy scenes. Instead, he focuses more on the writing and what his characters are saying. After a gap of 5 years, Hirani is back to the cinema with his very first film with Shah Rukh Khan. These are different times. In a year where action packed dramas with top stars has found tak-

ers, will a story of illegal immigrants find its audience? Let's find out. The word Dunki applies to those who wish to enter a country on illegal grounds. Hirani's story starts in Punjab and navigates the globe from London to the Middle East. Hardy Singh (Shah Rukh Khan) stumbles upon a bunch of misfits who dream of making it to London one day. Even though they are born in India and have a connect with the local flavours and colours, their heart flutters each time someone mentions Big Ben. But the road to London isn't easy. It's paved with treach-



erous tests and exams that require the team to learn English in order to get the required visa. After failing in the language test, the group decides to take the road less travelled, but one which promises them their destination. A tragic incident strengthens their determination and grit to make it to London at any cost.

SRK, Taapsee on shooting for 'Dunki' in real jail: Those criminals were dangerous

Shah Rukh Khan and Taapsee Pannu's 'Dunki' has been the talk of the town. After the makers treated fans with various updates from the film, the lead pair along with director Rajkumar Hirani, shared their experience of shooting in a real jail.

Ahead of the 'Dunki' release in theatres, the makers shared a video on YouTube where the film's lead cast including Shah Rukh Khan and Taapsee Pannu sat down for a conversation with the director Rajkumar Hirani. The trio recalled memories of shooting for the film with various old pictures from the sets. During one segment in the show, King Khan shared a picture of the film's team where they shot a sequence



inside the real jail. The 'Munna Bhai M.B.B.S.' director recalled his experience and said, "This is a jail scene. When I used to see English films, I used to think, their jail is different from ours. I thought if I get a chance, I would like to shoot in their jail. And that dream was fulfilled. That was a real jail and prisoners were also there." Adding to

the same, SRK said, They were dangerous criminals, not the easy ones." Taapsee Pannu then mentioned that the structure where they were filming had people inside, and intermittently, those individuals were looking out from the windows and shouting. Shah Rukh Khan thought that those were fans hooting for them.

'Salaar' could be Prabhas' last chance to redeem himself: Trade experts

SS Rajamouli's 'Baahubali' created history in Indian cinema with his larger-than-life canvas and intriguing storyline. It also gave birth to a new mass hysteria Prabhas. While he had a long string of successful films before the period drama, Baahubali put him on the international map. After its much-hyped and successful sequel in 2017, it seemed like Prabhas would become the undisputed king of box office. However, his bright streak was short-lived as his next films 'Saaho' (2019) and 'Radhe Shyam' (2022) tanked at the ticket counter. His fans had pinned



their hopes on 'Adipurush' (2023), where he played Lord Ram. However, owing to director Om Raut's contemporary vision and poor performances by the cast, the film further dented Prabhas' career. Industry experts feel the actor would redeem himself with his latest release 'Salaar'. But, if he doesn't, they believe it could turn grievous for his career.

Hollywood

Jonathan Majors found guilty of assault and harassment, Marvel fires him

Hollywood actor Jonathan Majors landed in trouble after he was convicted of assaulting and harassing his ex-girlfriend Grace Jabbari. Following the conviction, Marvel removed him from a prime role in its superhero blockbusters. The actor's conviction could see him facing up to one-year imprisonment and has upended Marvel's plans for the franchise, which had his character Kang the Conqueror front and center in multiple upcoming films. Majors debuted as 'Kang the Conqueror' in 'Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania' earlier in 2023, and was set to appear in at least two subsequent 'Avengers films' -- the top franchise in the Marvel universe. The studio will



not be moving forward with Jonathan Majors, a source briefed on the decision told AFP after it was reported by US entertainment media. In early March, police said they had responded to an emergency call in Manhattan, determining in a preliminary investigation that there was a domestic dispute between Majors and Jabbari. The decision was declared after a jury of six people spent more than five hours thinking over three days, local media reported.

Keerthy Suresh's 'Raghuthatha' promo out, Makers promise a hilarious adventure

Keerthy Suresh is gearing up for the grand release of her upcoming film, 'Raghuthatha'. On December 19, the promo of the film was unveiled by the production house, Hombale Films. The makers promised that 'Raghuthatha' a rollicking and hilarious adventure. Raghuthatha, directed by Suman Kumar, will release in theatres in 2025. The makers are yet to announce the film's release date. 'Raghuthatha' marks the first collaboration



between Keerthy Suresh and Vijay Kiragandur of Hombale Films. The post-production work is currently underway. 'Raghuthatha' is a comedy drama featuring Keerthy Suresh.

'KBC 15': Big B recalls climbing down mountains during school days in Nainital

In the December 18 episode of 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 15', host and actor Amitabh Bachchan took a trip down the memory lane and narrated his childhood stories. Prompted by contestant Lalit Narayan Vyas discussing his hometown, Nainital, the superstar also reminisced about his own memories tied to the place. The latest episode of 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 15' began with Amitabh Bachchan engag-

ing in Fastest Fingers First and inviting Lalit Narayan Vyas from Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand, to occupy the hot seat. Vyas, now residing in Chandigarh, expressed his longing for his hometown, prompting the host to reminisce about his own school days spent in the hills of Uttarakhand. After listening to stories narrated by Vyas, Amitabh Bachchan also recalled his school days. He mentioned that he did his schooling at Sherwood School, Nainital and was actively involved in climbing



down mountains as their playground was located there. He said, "Tab jawani ka josh tha toh ho jata tha, ab budhaape mein nahi hota (At a young age, it was possible, but now I don't possess the same energy)."

Sports

Sanju Samson, Arshdeep Singh guide India to their 2nd bilateral ODI series win in SA

Sanju Samson's hundred and a collective bowling effort, led by Arshdeep Singh, helped India dominate South Africa in an ODI series decider at Boland Park in Paarl on Thursday, December 21. India posted 296 on the board and successfully defended the total to win the ODI series 2-1, only the second time the Asian side has managed to emerge triumphant in a bilateral series in the 50-over format in the Rainbow Nation. KL Rahul became only the second Indian captain after Virat Kohli in 2018 to lead India to a bilateral ODI series victory in South Africa. It was redemption for Rahul as he was handed a 3-0 defeat in his maiden assignment as ODI captain during India's last tour of South Africa in 2022. India, under Virat Kohli, had dominated



South Africa in a 6-match ODI series, winning it 5-1 with a star-studded squad. However, KL Rahul got the job done with a second-string side as young guns like Arshdeep Singh and Sai Sudharsan stepped up over the course of three matches. Arshdeep finished the series with 10 wickets while Sai Sudharsan hit 2 fifties in his maiden ODI series as the youngsters rose to the challenge in South Africa. It was a test of character for the young side in the ODI series decider, especially after they



were handed a humbling defeat in the 2nd ODI in Gqeberha. However, India put behind the negative result and focused on the job in hand with a clinical show at Boland Park. India were sent into bat on a hot day in Paarl and they had a new opening pair as debutant Rajat Patidar opened with Sai after an injury to Ruturaj Gaikwad. Samson played a 'career-defining' knock of 108 off 114 balls as he took the responsibility of a senior campaigner on a difficult pitch.

Babar needs to be seated and encouraged, says Ramiz Raja after 1st Test failure

Ramiz Raja has claimed that Babar Azam needs to be encouraged as there is a tendency for motivation to drop after relinquishing the captaincy. Babar faced a challenging start to his post-captaincy era during the first Test against Australia in Perth. Despite his previous successes and a strong record against Australia, Babar struggled at the crease, scoring only 21 and 14 runs in the first and second innings, respectively. His dismissal on Day 4 by Australian skipper Pat Cummins marked his seventh consecutive innings without a fifty, highlighting



a significant dip in form. In 2023, Babar failed to score a Test century or even a fifty, averaging a mere 23.14 across seven matches. This slump extended to the ODI World Cup earlier in the year, where he couldn't step up at crucial moments, leading to Pakistan's early exit and his eventual resignation as captain.

Bengaluru SG Mavericks crowned champions of Season 5 after beating Bengal Wizards

On the climactic day of the fifth season of the Tennis Premier League, Bengaluru Mavericks overcame the Bengal Wizards to be crowned as the champions on December 19. The semi-finals kicked off with a riveting face-off between the Bengaluru SG Mavericks and Delhi Binny's Brigade. In a closely contested match, Bengaluru's Arina Rodionova outplayed Sahaja Yamalapalli with a narrow victory of 11-9. With momentum on their side, the



Mavericks entered the final Men's Doubles match needing only 7 points to claim the championship. Ramanathan and Vardhan did not disappoint, swiftly securing the necessary points to clinch the TPL season 5 title, crowning the Bengaluru SG Mavericks as the champions of a memorable and electrifying season.

Pat Cummins becomes most expensive buy in auction history, sold to SRH for Rs 20.50 crore

Australia fast bowler Pat Cummins became the most expensive player in the history of the Indian Premier League. The World Cup 2023 winning captain was sold for Rs 20.50 crore to SunRisers Hyderabad after an intense bidding war between Chennai Super Kings, Royal Challengers Bangalore and the Hyderabad team. SRH were looking for a player with leadership quality in the bowling department that had been left wanting in the last two seasons. Cummins guided Australia to title wins in the World Test Championship 2023 and then the ODI World Cup in November. The bowler had put in a fantastic show in the ODI WC Final in Ahmedabad and had picked up the wickets of Shreyas Iyer and Virat Kohli that derailed the Indian innings.



While Cummins' T20 bowling has not always been up to the mark, but the fast bowler has consistently fetched high-value in the Indian Premier League. Back in the 2019 auction, Cummins had been bought by Kolkata Knight Riders for a mega-sum of Rs 15.50 crore. Cummins joins Australia teammate and one of the best international batters in recent times Travis Head at SRH. Head was bought for Rs 6.8 crore earlier in the auction. SRH's buys indicate a change of personnel in all departments of the team.

Football

Football legend Messi pens emotional note on anniversary of Argentina's World Cup 2022 triumph

Lionel Messi penned an emotional note on his Instagram account, celebrating the one-year anniversary of Argentina's World Cup triumph in Qatar.

On December 18, 2022, Argentina triumphed over France in a World Cup final that will be remembered as one of the most thrilling in the tournament's history. The match, held at the Lusail Stadium in Doha, Qatar, concluded with a 3-3 draw after extra time, leading to a nail-biting penalty shootout. Argentina secured their victory with a 4-2 advantage in penalties, claiming their third world title and first since 1986. Argentina took an early lead with Messi converting a penalty and Angel Di Mara adding a second with a sublime finish following a swift counter-attack. However, France fought back valiantly, with Mbappé scoring twice within minutes to level the game. In extra time, Messi again put Argentina ahead, but Mbappé completed his hat-trick with another penalty, sending the match to a decisive shootout. Argentina's goalkeeper,



Emiliano Martinez, emerged as a hero, saving Kingsley Coman's penalty and watching Aurelien Tchouameni fire wide, setting the stage for Gonzalo Montiel to slot home the winning kick. This victory was particularly poignant for Messi, who finally lifted the coveted trophy, cementing his legacy as one of the greatest players of all time. On the anniversary of the win, Messi shared a heartwarming and emotional note with the fans on Instagram. The Argentine maestro hailed the win as the most beautiful madness of his playing career and said the memories of the tournament will last a lifetime for him.

Messi went on to wish the fans a happy anniversary to conclude his post. "Year of the most beautiful madness of my career—Unforgettable memories that will last a lifetime. Happy anniversary to all!" said Messi in his post. Messi has hinted at continuing to play until the 2026 World Cup as he wants to play for Argentina as much as possible and be with the squad.

