



Ind-Am Kash Patel named as FBI Director

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India a rising economic power: Global leaders

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Vikrant Massey announces retirement

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SURVEY
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This week's question
Will Bangladesh turn into another Pakistan?

Last week's result
Will Trump take action to ensure safety of minorities in Bangladesh?
YES 12% NO 88%

STRATEGIC CONVERGENCE

Strategic convergence with US has grown deeper with time: EAM Jaishankar at CII Summit

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar expressed confidence in the growing strategic convergence between India and the United States (US), emphasizing that the relationship has deepened over time and now offers expanded opportunities for collaboration.

Speaking at the CII Partnership Summit 2024 in Delhi, Jaishankar addressed a range of topics, including advancements in technology, artificial intelligence, and expectations from the incoming Trump 2.0 administration.

The EAM was speaking on the theme of 'India and the World.'

On the incoming Trump administration, EAM

Jaishankar acknowledged that the advent of the second Trump administration is a major consideration in business circles. He noted that different countries have had their own experiences from the first administration, and would presumably draw from that to approach the second.

"I can state with confidence that this strategic convergence with the United States for India have only grown deeper with time," Jaishankar said. "They have created a larger environment in which more collaborative possibilities can be explored today. Naturally, between two major economies, there will always be some give and take."

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Muhammad Yunus behind mass killing: Hasina

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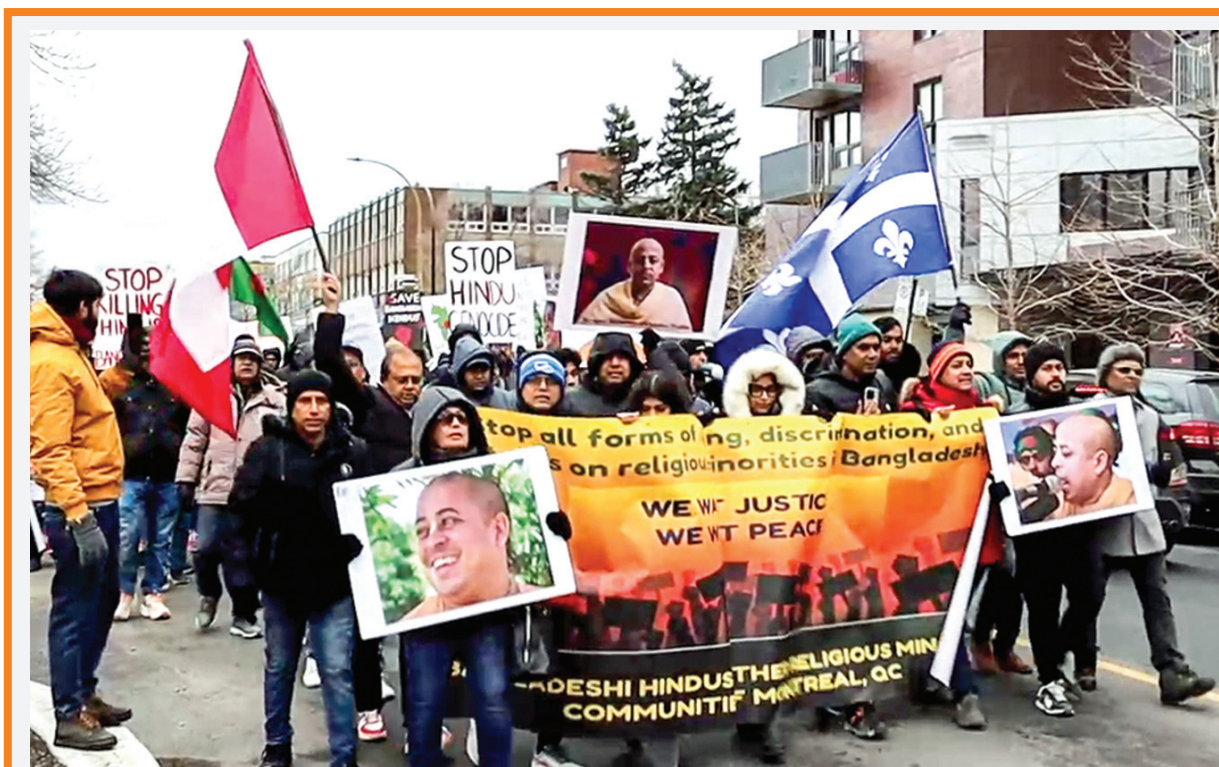
Mamata seeks UN intervention in Bangladesh crisis

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10-day Hornbill Festival begins in Nagaland

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Bangladeshi Hindus stage a protest in solidarity with the ISKCON temple in Bangladesh, in Montreal, Canada on December 2. (ANI Photo)

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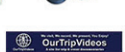
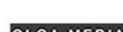
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Nia Sharma: Not the love of my life



TV actress Nia Sharma took five trans-ports to reach her destination and said it was not to find the love of her life

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India, rising economic power



India a rising economic power and gateway for investments; participants in inaugural session of CII Partnership Summit 2024, global leaders said

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On the incoming Trump administration, EAM Jaishankar acknowledged that the advent of the second Trump administration is a major consideration in business circles. He noted that different countries have had their own experiences from the first administration, and would presumably draw from that to approach the second.

"I can state with confidence that this strategic convergence with the United States for India have only grown deeper with time," Jaishankar said. "They have created a larger environment in which more collaborative possibilities can be explored today. Naturally, between two major economies, there will always be some give and take."

On economic and technical partnerships, Jaishankar emphasized the increasing importance of trusted and reli-

Trump in a post on X, said that his administration would impose 100 percent tariffs on all imports from the BRICS countries,

Currency to replace the mighty U.S. Dollar or, they will face 100 percent Tariffs, and should expect to say goodbye to sell-



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar addresses the CII Partnership Summit 2024 on 'India and the World: Partnership for Progress', in New Delhi on December 2. (ANI Photo)

able partnerships, "The case for trusted and reliable partnerships has increased in recent years. So a lot of what lies ahead would be in fashioning terms of engagement that are perceived and recognized to be mutually beneficial," he said.

Earlier, US President-elect Donald

should they dare to launch their currency.

"The idea that the BRICS Countries are trying to move away from the Dollar while we stand by and watch is OVER. We require a commitment from these Countries that they will neither create a new BRICS Currency, nor back any other

ing into the wonderful U.S. Economy," Trump wrote.

"They can go find another "sucker!" There is no chance that the BRICS will replace the U.S. Dollar in International Trade, and any Country that tries should wave goodbye to America," he added. ANI

EAM Jaishankar briefs Parliament on India-China ties: "Next priority will be to consider de-escalation"

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said India remains "committed to engaging with China through bilateral discussions to arrive at a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable framework for a boundary settlement."

Briefing the Lok Sabha on India-China ties as well as disengagement at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Jaishankar said that bilateral ties between the two countries have been "abnormal" since 2020 when "peace and tranquility in the border areas were disturbed as a result of Chinese actions."

"Recent developments that reflect our continuous diplomatic engagement since then have set our ties in the direction of some improvement," he said.

Addressing Lok Sabha, he shared with members of the expectation regarding direction of ties with China in the near future.

"Our relationship had progressed in many domains, but was obviously negatively affected by recent events. We are clear that the maintenance of peace and tranquility in border areas is a pre-requisite for the development of our ties. In the

"Recent developments that reflect our continuous diplomatic engagement since then have set our ties in the direction of some improvement,"

coming days, we will be discussing both de-escalation as well as effective management of our activities in the border areas," Jaishankar said.

The External Affairs Minister said that

"the conclusion of the disengagement phase now allows us to consider other aspects of our bilateral engagement in a calibrated manner, keeping our national security interests first and foremost."

He said that in his recent meeting with Chinese Foreign minister Wang Yi, an understanding was reached that the Special Representatives and the Foreign Secretary level mechanisms will be convening soon.

Jaishankar said, "The immediate priority was to ensure disengagement from friction points so that there would be no further untoward incidents or clashes. This has been fully achieved. The next priority will be to consider de-escalation, that would address the massing of troops along the LAC with associated accompaniments." ANI

Pakistan implements tough measures to secure USD 1.1 billion IMF loan tranche

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani government has implemented several tough measures, including mandatory asset disclosures by civil servants and their families, to fulfill the conditions required to secure a USD 1.1 billion tranche from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), The Express Tribune reported.

The approval of the second installment of the IMF's Extended Fund Facility (EFF) comes with 39 strict conditions, including asset disclosures by civil servants, the elimination of tax amnesties and exemptions, and the submission of a governance and corruption assessment report, as reported by The Express Tribune. ANI

Muhammad Yunus, student leaders masterminds behind mass killings in Bangladesh: Sheikh Hasina

NEW YORK: Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina accused the interim government's Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus of being the "mastermind of mass killings" and orchestrating attacks on minorities in Bangladesh.

Addressing an Awami League event in New York virtually, Hasina slammed Yunus for allegedly targeting Hindu temples, including ISKCON sites, and other religious places of the minorities in Bangladesh.

"Today, I have been accused of mass killings. In reality, it is Muhammad Yunus who is responsible for mass killings through a deliberate plan along with his student coordinators. They are the masterminds," she asserted.

The minorities in Bangladesh, especially Hindus, have come under a severe attack by Islamist elements in Bangladesh after the formation of the interim govern-

Rahman's recent remarks where he had suggested that with continued violence, the interim government in Bangladesh would not last long.

Hasnat Abdullah and Sarjis Alam - the leaders of the so-called 'Anti-Discrimination Student Movement' that led to the fall of government headed by Hasina in August - have been spewing venom against Hindus in the country while calling for an immediate ban on ISKCON Bangladesh, accusing the spiritual organization of "inciting unrest".

Last week, after the Bangladeshi authorities arrested and jailed Chinmoy Krishna Das, a spokesperson of

Hasina.

The Bangladesh Awami League (AL) president and daughter of the 'Father of the Nation' Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had also highlighted several incidents of persecution of members of mi-



Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

nority communities that have been reported from across 52 districts in Bangladesh since her resignation on August 5, this year.

"A temple has been burnt in Chittagong. Previously, mosques, shrines, churches, monasteries and houses of the Ahmadiyya community were attacked, vandalized and looted and set on fire. Religious freedom and security of life and property of people of all communities should be ensured," she stated.

"After the killing of innumerable Awami League leaders and workers, students and members of the law and order forces, harassment is going on through assaults and arrests. I strongly condemn and protest against these anarchist activities," Hasina added. *IANS*

"Today, I have been accused of mass killings. In reality, it is Muhammad Yunus who is responsible for mass killings through a deliberate plan along with his student coordinators. They are the masterminds,"

ment in the country headed by Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus.

"Teachers and police are being attacked and murdered. Hindus, Christians, and Buddhists are being attacked. Many churches and temples are being targeted. Why are minorities being attacked?" she questioned, condemning the violence.

She also mentioned Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader Tarique

the Bangladesh Sammilit Sanatan Jagran Jote who is also associated with ISKCON Bangladesh, Hasina had strongly condemned the "tortures" inflicted on common people by the interim government in Bangladesh and called for "immediate release" of the Hindu priest.

"A top leader of the Sanatan religious community has been unjustly arrested, he must be released immediately," said

No relief for spiritual leader Chinmoy Das, Bangladesh court sets January 2 as next date of hearing

DHAKA: There was no relief for Hindu Spiritual leader Chinmoy Krishna Das who was arrested on alleged sedition charges. On Tuesday a Bangladesh court set January 2, 2025 as the next date of hearing in the case. Chinmoy Das who is currently in custody is expected to remain in jail.

The Daily Star Bangladesh reported that the Chattogram court deferred to January 2 the hearing on the bail petition of Chinmoy Krishna Das. Chattogram Metropolitan Session Judge Saiful Islam set the new date for the hearing, as the defense lawyer was absent from the court.



Chinmoy Krishna Das

Chittagong Metropolitan Police's Additional Deputy Commissioner (Prosecution) Mofizur Rahman later confirmed this information to Bangladesh media.

Earlier, police ramped up security at the court premises ahead of the hearing. Additional police patrols were seen at various points of the court area. A group of lawyers were also seen bringing out a procession. However, the accused was not produced in the court, reported the Daily Star.

Chinmoy Krishna Das, who is associated with the Sammilita Sanatani Jagaran Jote, was arrested in Dhaka on November 25. The arrest followed

a complaint file on October 31 by a local politician that accused Chinmoy Das and others of disrespecting Bangladesh's national flag during a rally of the Hindu community.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has strongly criticized Das' arrest and the denial of his bail. The arrest has sparked widespread outrage, with many calling for his immediate release.

ISKCON had earlier expressed solidarity with Chinmoy Krishna Das, who was arrested on charges of sedition for allegedly raising a flag on a stand displaying Bangladesh's national flag. In a post on X, ISKCON, Inc. stated, "ISKCON, Inc. stands with Chinmoy Krishna Das. Our prayers to Lord Krishna for the protection of all these devotees". *ANI*

UK MP Priti Patel calls on Starmer govt for "robust action" against Bangladesh violence

LONDON: In a parliamentary address, UK MP Priti Patel expressed deep concern over the recent violence in Bangladesh, offering condolences to those affected and called on Keir Starmer government to take "robust action" to protect life and prevent violence.

"I am deeply concerned by the awful violence we have seen in Bangladesh, and my thoughts are with those affected. In Parliament this afternoon, I called on the Government to set out how they are engaging with the Bangladeshi Government on this pressing and important issue," Patel said in her Monday (1 Dec.) address.



Priti Patel

"Robust action needs to be taken to protect life and prevent violence and persecution, including based on religious belief," she added.

Highlighting the situation in Bangladesh, the UK MP noted that the degree of escalation, is "deeply concerning."

"The degree of escalation in the violence is deeply, deeply concerning. And what we are witnessing now is just uncontrolled violence in many quarters. And we are now watching with horror and shock as further violence is spreading in Bangladesh. And all our thoughts in this House are most definitely with the diaspora community here and those who are affected in Bangladesh. These are deeply disturbing reports," Priti Patel said.

Further, she expressed concern over the arrest of a Hindu Priest, Chinmoy Krishna Das, and has urged the government to take decisive action to secure his release. *ANI*

Mamata Banerjee seeks UN intervention in Bangladesh crisis

KOLKATA: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has sought the intervention of the United Nations (UN) in the ongoing crisis in neighboring Bangladesh.

She also floated a proposal for the Union government to consider peacekeeping forces in Bangladesh following the UN intervention.

"These are my proposals. Let the Prime Minister give a statement on the matter and seek UN intervention," the Chief Minister said after mentioning these two proposals on the floor of the state Assembly.

She also explained the reasons for the proposals. "I do not want to speak about illegal infiltrations. This is entirely a matter of the Union government and we always accept the central decisions in the matter. But, the Union government has been silent on the Bangladesh issue for the last ten days. The ruling party (in India) here is demanding the sealing of borders and stopping the supply of food. We can do that if the Union government

wants us to do that," the Chief Minister said.

Through her statement in the House, the Chief Minister reiterated her earlier stand on this issue when she said that her government and party would support whatever stand was taken by the Union government on Bangladesh.

Her statements on the floor of the House came a day after a senior official of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), claimed that the international peace bodies, including the UN, were indif-

ferent to the attacks and atrocities on minority Hindus in Bangladesh, especially the ISKCON monks.

Speaking on 2nd December, the Chief Minister also said if the Union government allows it she will have no problem giving shelter to people coming from Bangladesh. She also criticized the incident of insulting the Indian Tricolor in Bangladesh. *IANS*



Mamata Banerjee

Bangladesh stops 54 ISKCON members from crossing into India via Benapole

DHAKA: Bangladesh's immigration police turned back 54 members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) who possessed valid travel documents and wanted to cross into India from the Benapole border checkpoint last Sunday.

Local media reported that the Bangladesh police did not allow them to proceed, citing "suspicious travel". Some even claimed that the total number of Hindus arriving at the border crossing was over 70.

It was reported that the Hindu devotees from various parts of Bangladesh had arrived at the land port along the international border, wanting to leave the country through the Benapole-Petrapole crossing.

"We consulted the Special Branch of Police and received instructions from the higher authorities not to permit them," Benapole Immigration Checkpost Officer-in-Charge (OC) Imtiaz Ahsanul Quader Bhuiya was quoted as saying by the

Bangladesh's Daily Star.

Bhuiya reportedly mentioned that the Bangladeshi authorities did not allow 54 Iskcon devotees to travel to India due to "suspicions regarding their travel purposes".

However, several members of the group - who were made to wait at the checkpoint since Saturday night (30 Nov.) - stated they were travelling to India for religious rituals

with valid passports and visas but were still turned back with the authorities not giving any clear reason for their action.

"We were going to participate in a religious ceremony in India, but immigration officials stopped us, citing the absence of government

permission," Saurabh Tapandar Cheli, one of the Iskcon members, told local media outlets.

The Integrated Check Post (ICP) in Petrapole, on the Indian side, was jointly inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina in July 2016. *IANS*

It was reported that the Hindu devotees from various parts of Bangladesh had arrived at the land port along the international border, wanting to leave the country

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US chip export curbs on China to have limited impact on South Korea

SEOUL: The United States' latest export control package against China is expected to have only a limited impact on South Korea's semiconductor industry, officials said, citing local businesses' low dependence on the Chinese market in the sector.

The U.S. Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security unveiled the package on the Federal Register, which includes restrictions on exports of high-bandwidth memory (HBM) chips to China.

The US also announced new controls on 24 types of semiconductor manufacturing equipment and three types of software tools for developing or producing semiconductors.

"There could be some impact on South Korean firms producing HBMs, but we can minimize the fallout by shifting to export methods allowed under U.S. regulations," the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy said in a statement, reports YONHAP news agency.

"In terms of semiconductor equipment, the controls are applied only to cutting-edge products deemed significant to U.S. national security," it added, also noting the number of South Korean firms to be affected will be "small."

The ministry pointed out that while the U.S. plans to apply the so-called "presumption of denial" principle, exports to South Korean businesses operating in China that have previously obtained validated end-user status will be allowed regardless of the announcement. *ANS*

India's domestic air passenger traffic to see 7-10 pc growth in FY25

NEW DELHI: India is projected to see 7-10 percent growth (year-on-year) in domestic air passenger traffic at 164-170 million in FY25, according to a recent report.

In the first half this fiscal (H1 FY25), the domestic air passenger traffic stood at 79.3 million, witnessing a YoY growth of 5.3 percent, partly impacted by the severe heat waves and other weather-related disruptions, according to credit rating agency ICRA. *ANS*



India a rising economic power & gateway for investments: Global leaders



Dignitaries attend the Inaugural Session of the 29th edition of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Partnership Summit 2024, at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan in New Delhi (*ANI Photo/Amit Sharma*)

NEW DELHI: India is a rising economic power and a gateway for investments, the global leaders said.

Global leaders participated in the inaugural session of the CII Partnership Summit 2024 in the national capital. Trade Ministers from Italy, Israel, Bhutan, Bahrain, Algeria, Nepal, Senegal, South Africa, Myanmar, Qatar and the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Commerce of Cambodia are partner countries at the Summit.

Speaking to IANS, Minister of Industry, Commerce and Employment, Royal Government of Bhutan, Lyonpo Namgyal Dorji says: "India is a rising economic power. There are a lot of foreign investment companies thriving in India and who are more interested in the region. So we are here to connect that network reach out because Bhutan is increasing focus on foreign direct investments (FDI) in renewable energy, IT enabled services and hospitalities."

Serigne Gueye Diop, Minister of Commerce and Trade, Republic of Senegal, says: "India was one of the leaders in economic investment last year, both globally and in Senegal, my country, and in Africa. That's why we believe that India is now a gateway for African investment. At the same time, it is a very strong partner in technology, IT, and artificial intelligence."

He added that in Senegal, more than 100 companies investing in India today.

"We believe that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, there is much more to come in terms of collaborative investment, both in the economy and in technology," he added.

Myanmar Deputy Minister of Commerce, U Min Min says: "As Myanmar is a neighboring country of India, we have long-standing diplomatic and historical ties. Today, we have the opportunity to meet not only with regional countries but also with countries from all over the world. This gives us a chance to discuss trade, investments, and technologies across various sectors, where we can exchange views and experiences."

Earlier, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said India offers a trusted hand of friendship and partnership to countries of the Global South.

Sharing the common themes mentioned at the session, he pointed out that stability, space, satellite and sustainability were most spoken of by the officials in attendance and emphasized that the world today needs these discussions. *ANS*

US Embassy announces recruitment for 20th Nexus Business Incubator Cohort

NEW DELHI: Nexus, a premier business incubator hosted at the American Center in New Delhi, is currently accepting applications for its 20th cohort, which will begin a nine-week training program on February 2, 2025, the US Embassy in New Delhi said in a recent statement.

The Nexus cohort program provides an invaluable opportunity for 15 Indian start-up com-

panies to receive specialized training from Indian and American experts to sharpen their value propositions, define their target markets, get market feedback on product/technology and create milestones to bring their companies to the market. This latest cohort will also explore the influence of artificial intelligence on start-up ventures and the importance of mental health for entrepre-

neurs, the US Embassy said.

Following the initial nine-week training program up to four companies will be invited to remain at Nexus for more in-depth support. These companies will be given full access to incubator facilities and networks for up to an additional eight months.

According to the statement, during this time, the Nexus team of experts will also work with them to take their companies to

the next level by helping them get their products to market, grow their customer and revenue bases and, if appropriate, obtain funding to scale their operations.

Entrepreneurs interested in applying for this program should submit applications at www.startupnexus.in by January 5, 2025. Selected participants will be notified by January 17, 2025. *ANI*

US DoJ exercise against Adani wasted expense Trump's return set to fix it: Mark Mobius

NEW DELHI: The recent indictment by the US Department of Justice (DoJ) of Adani Group officials is nothing but a wasted expense and once President-elect Donald Trump assumes office, such wasteful exercises involving the government offices with overseas businesses will probably fade away, ace global investor Mark Mobius told IANS recently.

His comment came as serious questions are now being raised regarding the independence of the US DoJ and its indictment against the Adani Group, and whether it is being used for "politically motivated actions".

"My guess is that Donald Trump will come in and whoever he appoints to run the Justice Department will say, what are you guys doing? Sticking your nose into Indian businesses? Spending all this money on a trial which probably won't go anywhere?" Mobius told IANS.

Mobius, who runs the Mobius EM Opportunities Fund for emerging markets, further stated that there is a "good chance" that the Justice Department will move away from the Adani probe and the trial.

"I believe that there would be another implication where the Justice Department will be reorganized in America, and will be asked to get less and less involved in overseas situations and more and more with domestic issues," said the top investor.

The DoJ and the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) recently filed an indictment and a civil

complaint in the New York District Court against the top Adani Group officials. However, the Adani Group vehemently refuted the allegations, terming it 'baseless', and said it would seek legal recourse to defend itself.

According to Mobius, a lot of people are now beginning to realize that with Trump assuming office, "this DoJ situation in the US will probably go away".



Mark Mobius

On Adani Portfolio stocks performing well despite the US-related developments, he said that the situation with the hedge funds going after the Adani Group seemed to have fizzled out.

"A lot of investors began to look at this and said, well, Adani is under pressure but at the end of the day, their business will continue to operate well and probably will continue to do well in the fu-

ture," Mobius noted.

Adani stocks have roared back from initial hiccups, and are now surging almost daily on the Indian benchmark indices. They added more than Rs 2 lakh crore to their market cap in just a three-day rally.

A Bernstein report on Adani Group companies on 3rd December stated the Group is currently in a much stronger position than it was during the Hindenburg attack in January 2023.

Despite facing some US-related developments, the Adani Group is on solid footing across four key areas: no share pledge, leverage, debt repayment and valuations, the report mentioned. IANS

Asia's first water transport service 'Uber Shikara' launched on Dal Lake

SRINAGAR: Asia's first water transport service, "Uber Shikara", is now available in J&K's picturesque Dal Lake.

Uber rolled out Asia's first water transport service with shikara bookings on its app.

Tourists visiting the Dal Lake will now enjoy a hassle-free travel experience with the launch of Uber's first water transport service 'Uber Shikara'.

This innovative initiative aims to combine technology with tradition allowing travellers to pre-book shikara rides through the popular ride-hailing app.

The service was launched by Uber India and South Asia President Prabhjeet Singh, who booked the inaugural shikara ride via the app.

"Uber Shikara is our humble attempt to blend technology and tradition, enhancing accessibility and uplifting

tourism in the breathtaking landscape of Kashmir," he said.

Uber Shikara marks a significant milestone for the company as it is the first water transport offering in Asia after similar services in select European countries like Italy (Venice).

Uber has partnered with seven local shikara owners with plans to expand the fleet based on user demand.

Rides will be available at government-regulated rates, ensuring fair pricing for tourists.

The seven shikaras are stationed at Nehru Park, an island park located in the heart of Dal Lake.

Importantly, Uber will not charge any fees from its shikara partners ensuring that the full fare goes directly to the boat operators. IANS



India among world's top 10 exporters of high-value products

NEW DELHI: India has recorded a sharp increase in exports for several key product categories with the country maintaining or improving its rank among the top ten global suppliers, in export values exceeding \$1 billion in 2023, according to figures released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry on Tuesday.

"From dominating the global market in precious stones to making inroads in advanced sectors like semiconductors and electrical components, India's export performance reflects the country's growing economic prowess," the official statement said.

The country's strategic focus on electronics and semiconductors has yielded impressive results.

Exports grew from \$0.23 billion in 2014 to \$1.91 billion in 2023, achieving a global market share of 1.40 per cent and securing the 9th position, a significant jump from 20th in 2014, the official figures show.

"This progress highlights India's growing role in the global semiconductor supply chain, supported by efforts to enhance domestic manufacturing and innovation," the statement observed.

In the export of precious and semi-precious stones, India has established itself as the world leader, with its global share surging from 2.64 per cent in 2014 to an astounding 36.53 per cent in 2023.

Exports valued at \$1.52 billion highlight India's centuries-old craftsmanship and adoption of modern technology in gemstone processing.

Exports of parts for electric motors and generators have also shown significant growth, reaching \$1.15 billion in 2023, with a global share of 4.86 per cent, elevating India to 6th place from 21 in 2014 globally.

This growth aligns with the rising global demand for renewable energy and electric vehicle components, positioning India as a key supplier in this transformative industry.

The petroleum sector (Petroleum Oils and Oils Obtained from Bituminous Minerals) has seen a dramatic rise, with export values increasing from \$60.84 billion in 2014 to \$84.96 billion in 2023, capturing a global market share of 12.59 per cent.

This significant leap has propelled India to the position of the second-largest global exporter, driven by advanced refining infrastructure.

The government's forward-looking initiatives, such as the New Foreign Trade Policy, PLI Schemes, and many others, play a pivotal role in enhancing India's competitiveness on the global stage. IANS

"This progress highlights India's growing role in the global semiconductor supply chain, supported by efforts to enhance domestic manufacturing and innovation," the statement observed

India a net supplier of HIV medicines to world: JP Nadda

NEW DELHI: India is taking a lead in global AIDS control by being the net supplier of HIV medicines to the world, said Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda last Sunday.

Nadda said this while inaugurating the World AIDS Day 2024 commemoration at the Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya Auditorium, in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.

The Union Minister noted that India has come a long way in the fight against HIV, and is now also supplying affordable medicines to the world.

"From a time when there was no medicine for AIDS, to dealing with over-expensive medicines to now becoming a net supplier of HIV medicines to the world, India has come a long way in its fight against AIDS," he said.

"Today India is taking a lead in AIDS control by producing the most affordable as well as effective medicines and sharing them with the neediest," Nadda added.

He also stated that the Union government provides free medicines for AIDS patients.

The Minister noted that sustained efforts by National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) and State AIDS Control Societies have ensured a decline in new infections in the country. *IANS*

One can be said to be perfectly healthy in body and mind only if no part of the body or mind makes itself felt. A part makes itself felt only when there is something wrong with it. You know that you have a head only when it aches.
Sri Atmananda (1883 - 1959)

Indian traditional medicine takes center stage at global conference

KUALA LUMPUR: India's vision of modernizing traditional medicine (TM) through digital innovation took center stage at the 10th International Conference on Traditional and Complementary Medicine (INTRACOM) 2024 in Malaysia, the Ayush Ministry said on.

A high-level delegation from India showcased India's groundbreaking contributions to the global advancement of traditional medicine at the Conference, which focused on the transformative role of digital technologies in modernizing healthcare practices in Traditional and Complementary Medicine.

At the ceremony, Ayush Secretary Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha also highlighted the successful finalization of the ICD-11 TM2 module as a milestone in the systematic global documentation

of TM practices. The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) 11th Revision is the global standard for diagnostic health information.



The TM2 module comprises 529 categories, which revolves around TM disorders and patterns. This will enable data collection and analysis on an unprecedented scale, the ministry said.

"The ICD-11 TM2 module will revolutionize traditional medicine by enabling standardized documentation of disorders, patterns, and services. This will help mea-

In January, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially unveiled the ICD 11, TM2 module that incorporates data and terminology from Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani Medicine.

"India has already initiated national capacity-building efforts for implementing the TM2 module, including training workshops in collaboration with NCISM. We remain committed to supporting WHO in developing Traditional Medicine codes under the International Classification of Health Interventions (ICHI) framework," Kotecha said.

"India played a pivotal role in its development, leveraging its rich traditional medicine systems -- Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani -- which have well-established practices and regulations," the ministry said.

The conference explored the integration of digital health technologies in TM, aligning with India's pioneering efforts in this domain.

Kotecha also highlighted India's initiatives, including developing a National Digital Health Ecosystem under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and the Namaste Portal, which facilitates seamless integration of TM practices into mainstream healthcare.

"The successful migration of the TM2 module to the ICD-11 main browser will mark another step forward in integrating Traditional Medicine into the global healthcare framework. Together, we can ensure health for all," Kotecha said, noting that the conference "reinforced India's vision of modernizing TM through digital innovation, positioning it as a global health and wellbeing cornerstone". *IANS*

New AI tool help detect Alzheimer's linked behaviors decades early

NEW DELHI: A team of US researchers has developed a novel Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based tool that can pick subtle signs of Alzheimer's disease that emerge decades before a formal diagnosis is made.

The signs are often in the form of irregular behaviors that reflect very early stages of brain dysfunction.

The team from Gladstone Institutes in California engineered mice to mimic key aspects of Alzheimer's and used the new video-based machine learning tool to detect early signs of the brain disease.

The findings, published in

the journal Cell Reports, sheds light on a new strategy for identifying neurological disease earlier than currently possible and tracking how it develops over time.



Gladstone investigator Jorge Palop said that AI can potentially revolutionize how the analysis of Alzheimer's-linked behaviors --

indicative of early abnormalities in brain function -- is conducted.

The machine-learning platform called VAME, (Variational Animal Motion Embedding) ana-

lyzed video footage of mice exploring an open arena. It identified subtle behavioral patterns -- disorganized behavior, unusual pat-

terns and transitioning more often between different activities -- as the mice aged. These behaviors, likely associated with memory and attention deficits, were captured on camera but may not be noticed by simply looking at the mice.

The tool may help decode the origin and progression of the devastating brain disorders, Palop said, noting it can also be applied to other neurological diseases.

Further, the new study also used VAME to learn whether a potential therapeutic intervention for Alzheimer's would prevent disorganized behavior in mice. *IANS*

Mother to child HIV transmission continues to be major concern in India

NEW DELHI: While India has made a significant effort in combating HIV/AIDS, the rate of vertical transmission, which happens from mother to child, remains a major concern in the country, according to a top HIV expert on World AIDS Day on 1st December.

However, "vertical transmission continues to be a major concern, because at least one-third of the women who are found HIV positive, do not reconnect with the antiretroviral therapy (ART) center or the gynecologist, and thus, cannot be given the medication which can stop the risk of transmission", Dr Ishwar Gilada, a noted HIV expert, told IANS.

Notably, it has decreased from over 40 percent in 2010 to 24 percent in 2021.

"Just two-thirds of the women, or 70 percent, with HIV are being treated with ART. This is unacceptable. This should have been zero or near zero, maybe 1 or 2 percent," he said.

Meanwhile, the Union Health Ministry noted that India has outperformed the global reduction rate of HIV. There has been a 44 percent reduction since 2010 -- with adult HIV prevalence recorded at 0.2 percent and annual new

HIV infections estimated at 66,400, the ministry said. India also aims to end AIDS by 2030.

"India being the pharma capital of the world, supplying 92 percent of the ART medications to the rest of the world, can achieve the target," said Gilada, a Consultant in HIV/STDs, Unison Medicare and Research Centre, Mumbai.

Not being able to detect people who are HIV-positive is another major concern in the country.

"In India, this status is around 75 to 77 percent. That means 18 percent less than the achievable target of 95 percent remains weak, which may hinder the target of no infection by 2030," the expert said.

Further, he emphasized the need to boost self-testing to enable people to test HIV at home.

"We need to provide pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for those people who are at risk of HIV, particularly vulnerable communities like communities like male sex with male or bisexuals or trans people, or people in the jails and demand homes where they are at risk," the infectious disease expert said. IANS



Southeast Asia represents 10 pc of HIV global burden: WHO

NEW DELHI: The Southeast Asia region, including India, has about 3.9 million people living with HIV (PLHIV), representing 10 percent of the global burden, WHO's Regional Director, South-East Asia, Saima Wazed, ahead of World AIDS Day.

In the region, 78 percent of PLHIV knew their status in 2023. While 66 percent received lifesaving antiretroviral treatment, 64 percent had suppressed viral load.

Wazed informed that despite treatments, the region also has a high burden (80,000 children and adolescents aged 0-14) due to vertical transmission (mother-to-child); and about 53,000 infants are born with congenital syphilis.

"These children are one too many as there are effective interventions to eliminate mother-to-child transmission during pregnancy, labor, and childbirth," she said.

"While we have made significant strides in reducing HIV/AIDS rates through strong national commitments, we must acknowledge the ongoing challenges that persist," Wazed noted.

In addition, marginalized populations such as men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers, people who inject drugs, trans and gender-diverse individuals, and prisoners continue to face disproportionate impacts due to stigma, discrimination, and in some cases, criminalization. IANS

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DHS, DOL make nearly 65,000 additional H-2B visas available

WASHINGTON: The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Labor (DOL) issued a temporary final rule (TFR) making available an additional 64,716 H-2B temporary nonagricultural worker visas for fiscal year (FY) 2025. These supplemental visas are aimed at helping U.S. employers who are unable to find U.S. workers who are available, willing, and qualified to do the temporary work in industries such as hospitality and tourism, landscaping, seafood processing, and many other sectors. DHS, in coordination with DOL, has authorized supplemental cap numbers in FY 2017, FY 2018, FY 2019, FY 2021, FY 2022, FY 2023, and FY 2024 in accordance with the time-limited statutory authority granted for each of those fiscal years by Congress.

"There are employers across the country that would suffer greatly without H-2B workers. Authorizing these supplemental visas helps U.S. employers fill those positions," said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas. "It helps fuel our economy and reduce irregular migration while also providing a safe and lawful pathway to the United States for noncitizens who are prepared to work."

For more information on USCIS and its programs, please visit uscis.gov. USCIS

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

Immigration POST

"The matter has been taken up with relevant authorities in the Australian Government along with other issues related to students,"

India has taken up matter of rise in visa fees for students by Australia, MoS Singh informs Parliament

NEW DELHI: The Government of India has taken up the matter of rise in student visa fees for international students by the Australian government, Minister of State for External Affairs, Kirti Vardhan Singh informed the Parliament.

In a written reply in Rajya Sabha on the question of Congress MP Neeraj Dangi, MoS Singh informed that the fee for international student visas was increased by the Government of Australia from AUD 710 to AUD 1600 with effect from July 1, 2024.

He acknowledged that the steep increase is expected to create financial difficulties for Indian students aspiring to study in Australia.

The Minister confirmed that the matter has been taken up

with the Australian authorities.

"The matter has been taken up with relevant authorities in the Australian Government along



Minister of State for External Affairs, Kirti Vardhan Singh

with other issues related to students," he stated.

"The hike in visa fee is expected to pose financial chal-

lenges to international students, including those from India, intending to pursue their studies in Australia," MoS Singh added.

MoS Singh emphasized the importance of the India-Australia partnership in education, adding that MEA continues to raise and

follow up with the Australian government on this matter.

"The India-Australia partnership in education forms an important part of our bilateral relationship, including economic, academic, and people-to-people ties. This Ministry continues to raise and follow up with the Government of Australia on matters related to students from India studying in Australia," he added.

The decision by Australia to more than double the fee for international student visas has sparked concerns about accessibility and affordability of education in Australia for Indian students.

Notably, India and Australia have historically shared strong educational ties, with various initiatives fostering exchange programs and collaborative research. ANI

Indian Embassy intervenes after 60 Indian passengers stranded in Kuwait for 13 hours

NEW DELHI: The Indian Embassy in Kuwait has intervened and come to the rescue of around 60 Indian passengers travelling via a flight from Mumbai to England's Manchester, who

got stranded at Kuwait airport for 13 hours after their Gulf Air flight made an emergency landing.

The passengers also complained of severe problems, including not getting "food or help".

The Indian embassy in Kuwait said in a post on X that they immediately took up the matter with Gulf Air and also clarified the visa rule in Kuwait for Indians.

The ordeal of the passengers started after their flight made an emergency landing following an engine fire incident.

A chaotic video surfaced on social media showing the passengers of Gulf Air arguing with the airport authorities.

The passengers alleged they were harassed and only flyers from the European Union, the UK, and the US were given accommodation by the airline. They

alleged bias and harassment against those holding Indian, Pakistani, and other Southeast Asian nation passports.

The Indian embassy in Kuwait in the post on X said a team from the embassy is at the airport to assist the passengers and coor-

Kuwait. All government offices are closed today due to the GCC Summit being hosted by Kuwait," it said.

Passengers said their flight took a U-turn before it landed in Kuwait. They said the announcement of the flight diversion came

The ordeal of the passengers started after their flight made an emergency landing following an engine fire incident

minate with the airline, adding passengers have been accommodated in two airport lounges.

"Efforts are being made to accommodate passengers in the airport hotel which is currently unavailable due to the ongoing GCC Summit. It may be noted that Indian nationals do not fall under visa on arrival facility in

20 minutes before landing.

Gulf Air has not given a statement on the matter yet.

The Indian Embassy in Kuwait said in a post on X that the passengers have been accommodated in two airport lounges as of now, as the airport hotel is unavailable due to the ongoing GCC Summit. IANS

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Schengen Visa Rejection for Indians: Why It Happens and How Akbar Travels Can Help

NEW DELHI: Traveling to Europe is a dream for many Indians but obtaining a Schengen visa remains a daunting challenge. Recent reports reveal that India ranks among the top three countries with the highest Schengen visa rejection rate—approximately 18% in 2022. For aspiring travelers, this statistic underscores the need for expert guidance to navigate the complex visa process successfully.

Why is the Schengen Visa Rejection Rate for Indians So High?

Several factors contribute to the high rejection rate of Schengen visa applications from Indian citizens:

1. **Incomplete Documentation:** Missing or improperly filled-out forms often lead to rejections.

2. **Inconsistent Travel Plans:** Inadequate proof of itinerary or lack of accommodation bookings can be red flags.

3. **Financial Instability:** Insufficient evidence of funds to cover the trip expenses raises concerns about the applicant's ability to sustain themselves abroad.

4. **Travel History:** A lack of previous international travel or overstays in other countries can affect approval chances.

Understanding these challenges is crucial to addressing them, which is where professional visa services come into play.

How Akbar Travels Simplifies the Schengen Visa Process

Akbar Travels, with over 45 years of industry expertise and a remarkable 99.88% visa approval rate, offers end-to-end assistance for Schengen visa applications. Here's why they're a preferred choice:

- **Seamless Online Visa Application:** Akbar Travels provides an easy-to-navigate online platform to apply for a Schengen visa from the comfort of your home.

- **Comprehensive Support:** From form filling to appointment scheduling and document verification, their team ensures every step is hassle-free.

- **Expert Guidance:** With years of experience, Akbar Travels ensures your application meets all requirements, significantly increasing your chances of approval.

- **Travel Add-Ons:** In addition to visa services, they offer affordable Europe tour packages and complete travel insurance for Schengen visa - essential for a worry-free trip.

Why Choose a Visa Expert?

Given the complexities of Schengen visa applications, relying on a trusted visa agent like Akbar Travels can make all the difference. Their personalized approach minimizes errors and ensures compliance with Embassy requirements.

Recent reports reveal that India ranks among the top three countries with the highest Schengen visa rejection rate—approximately 18% in 2022. For aspiring travelers, this statistic underscores the need for expert guidance to navigate the complex visa process successfully

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(ADVERTORIAL DISCLAIMER: The above press release has been provided by ATK. ANI and India Post will not be responsible in any way for the content of the same)

Gaza faces 'most intense' civilian bombardment since WWII: UNRWA

GAZA: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said that Gaza endured the most intense civilian bombardment in the past year since World War II.

It added that the plight of Palestinian refugees remains the 'longest unresolved refugee crisis' in the world, noting that UNRWA was established to provide assistance and protection to Palestinian refugees until a just and lasting solution is found, Xinhua news agency reported.

The UN agency issued the statement to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, observed annually on November 29.

Israel has been waging a large-scale offensive against Hamas in the Gaza Strip to retaliate against a Hamas rampage through the southern Israeli border on October 7, 2023, during which about 1,200 people were killed and about 250 taken hostage.

The Palestinian death toll from ongoing Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip has risen to 44,363, Gaza-based health authorities said in a statement last week. *IANS*

Xinjiang's major land port reports 10-year high in cross-border passenger trips

URUMQI: The Jeminay Port in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region has recorded 100,000 cross-border passenger trips this year, a 10-year record high; local officials said.

As of Friday (29 Nov.) the port has seen a 250 percent increase in border entries and exits this year, with a single-day peak of over 700, according to the local border inspection station, Xinhua reported.

The port is a border crossing between China and Kazakhstan with convenient customs clearance procedures, and it has become a preferred route for cross-border travel with the advancement of the Belt and Road Initiative and the expansion of China's visa-free entry list.

The port offers quality, efficient customs clearance services for travellers. "We continue to optimize and address the challenges in customs clearance to propel high-level opening-up," said Yao Lin, a division head at the border inspection station. *IANS*

Crackdown on human trafficking syndicate; NIA conducts searches in 6 states

NEW DELHI: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) carried out extensive searches recently at 22 locations in six states, as part of a major crackdown on an international human trafficking syndicate.

The case, registered under RC-10/2024/NIA/DLI, involves charges under sections 418, 419, 420, 370, 374, and 120B of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Sources indicate that the case has international links spanning multiple countries, including Myanmar and Laos. The syndicate allegedly lured youth from Bihar's Gopalganj district with false promises of lucrative jobs abroad. Upon arriving in foreign countries, victims were reportedly held hostage in fake call centers and forced into cyber fraud activities.

The owner of M.K. Training Centre, Keshav Singh, was previously arrested for his involvement in the trafficking network. The FIR highlights that the syndicate trafficked Indian youth abroad under the guise of employment opportunities, only to coerce them into working for cybercrime operations.

The NIA's investigation has revealed ties to cyber-scams in Myanmar and Laos. These operations have exploited hundreds of Indian nationals, forcing them into fraudulent schemes such as cryptocurrency scams and call center fraud.

More details of the crackdown are awaited.

The Indian Embassy in Laos has rescued 635 Indians from such centers this year, issuing repeated warnings about fraudulent job offers abroad. In August, 61 Indians were rescued, while earlier in May, 13 others, including seven workers from Odisha, were repatriated.

Fraudulent job offers are often advertised for roles like "Digital Sales and Marketing Executives" or "Customer Support Service." These positions are fronts for scam operations. Agents operating from cities like Dubai, Bangkok, Singapore, and various Indian locations facilitate these scams, promising high salaries, visa assistance, and travel arrangements.

The NIA's searches are expected to yield further evidence against the syndicate, with more arrests likely in the coming days. Authorities have urged citizens to remain vigilant and verify job offers abroad to avoid falling prey to such schemes. *IANS*

The NIA's investigation has revealed ties to cyber-scams in Myanmar and Laos. These operations have exploited hundreds of Indian nationals, forcing them into fraudulent schemes such as cryptocurrency scams and call center fraud

**Indian-American
Kash Patel named
as FBI Director**

WASHINGTON: US President-elect Donald Trump has announced Kash Patel's name as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director.

"I am proud to announce that Kashyap "Kash" Patel will serve as the next Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Kash is a brilliant lawyer, investigator, and "America First" fighter who has spent his career exposing corruption, defending Justice, and protecting the American People," Trump wrote in a post on Truth Social, his social media platform.

"He played a pivotal role in uncovering the Russia, Russia Hoax, standing as an advocate for truth, accountability, and the Constitution. Kash did an incredible job during my First Term, where he served as Chief of Staff at the Department of Defense, Deputy Director of National Intelligence, and Senior Director for Counterterrorism at the National Security Council. Kash has also tried over 60 jury trials. This FBI will end the growing crime epidemic in America, dismantle the migrant criminal gangs, and stop the evil scourge of human and drug trafficking across the Border. *IANS*

COMMUNITY ACROSS AMERICA

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www.indiapost.com

December 6, 2024



Devotees performing Ma Tulsi Puja

Tulsi Vivah celebrated at Shivalaya Mandir of Greater Boston

India Post News Service

The Shivalaya Temple of Greater Boston, Medford, MA celebrated the festival of Ma Tulsi Vivah on Wednesday, November 13, 2024 evening with great enthusiasm and devotion with hall full of devotees. The marriage ceremony between the holy Tulsi plant and Lord Vishnu/Lord Krishna/Saligram is not just a festival but also a celebration of love, devotion, and faith. The festival also teaches us the importance of maintaining a strong and harmonious relationship with our partner. Female devotees appeared in their traditional bright, colorful outfits like saris, lehengas, and Jewelries and make devotees wore Kurta and created an opulent atmosphere of rituals, mantras, devotional



Tulsi family is performing kannyadaan

music and Bhajans.

On Sunday, November 10, 2024, both bride and groom side devotees arranged Haldi, Mehndi, and Chunni ceremonies followed by sumptuous Prasadam for all the devotees. The elaborate rituals symbolize the promises and duties each partner makes to each other and to Dharma, the cosmic law.

On Wednesday, November 13, 2024 evening, temple priest Pt. Bharani Ji welcomed Ma Tulsi and Lord Krishna side devotees with Mantrocchrana.

Vedic Vivah ceremonies began with an invocation by a Pandit to Lord Ganesh so that the Vivah can be performed peacefully without any hindrances. As per Pandit's instructions, Nisha Monu Verma and Neetu Rajan Ponj performed Kanya Aagaman, Saligram as couple received a blessing and shower of flower petals by the devotees as a part of the grand finale of the ceremony.

Varmala exchange, Kanyadan, Hath Milap, Granthibandhan, Manga Sutra tying, Sindhoor application and Saptapadi - taking seven rounds around the holy fire while he was chanting Vedic Wedding Mantras. Ma Tulsi and

at the end, they sang Ma Tulsi Aarati. Maha Mangalarati of Lord Shiva and other deities of the temple followed this. Vikas Sethi thanked the sponsors of Ma Tulsi Vivah and Maha Prasadam. He also thanked all the volunteers



Aparna Kumar, Paru and others sang wedding and Ma Tulsi Bhajans with much devotion and

for making this event a grand success. Sudarshan, Sharma controlled the crowd. Temple priest Pt. Bharani Ji blessed all the devotees and all of them were served with delicious Maha Prasadam with many mouthwatering sweets.

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M4M movie Hindi trailer screened at IFFI-Goa Film Festival

India Post News Service

M4M Movie Director Mohan Vadlapatla along with M4M Heroine Jo Sharma (American Actress) unveiled the Hindi trailer of his pan-India film M4M (Motive For Murder) hosted by IMPPA and NFDC India at the prestigious Goa IFFI 55th International Film Festival of India. The Hindi trailer screening was attended by Atul Patel IMPPA VP, Bollywood Actor Hemant Pandey, Director Sandeep Nath, and few more attended as the chief guests along with other dignitaries. M4M Movie posters are being promoted on IFFI-GOA Red Carpet at Inox.

M4M Movie Hindi Trailer along with interviews of Jo Sharma and Mohan Vadlapatla are promoted and featured on Instagram and Twitter 'X' handles of IFFIGoa (International Film Festival), NFDC India (Official account of National Film Development Corporation - Govt of India), MIB India (Official account of the



Adding to the event's glamour, Jo Sharma, an American actress, was a star attraction at the IFFI Goa coastline celebration. She shared her excitement about the trailer screening in Goa, describing it as a unique experience



Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India), DD national (Doordarshan, India), PIB India (Govt Official account of Press Information Bureau, India) and also M4M team was featured on Day7-WRAP video of IFFIGoa Instagram page 55th International Film Festival of India was a star-studded affair.

Speaking on the occasion, IFFIGoa Chief Coordinators and Hollywood Director Ben praised the trailer for its brilliance, describing it as a fresh and exciting take on the serial killer concept. He commended Mohan Vadlapatla for his significant effort to create such compelling content for audiences across India. He also congratulated Jo Sharma, M4M Heroine with her outstanding acting skills, screen presence, and expressed his best wishes

for the film's success.

Adding to the event's glamour, Jo Sharma, an American actress, was a star attraction at the IFFI Goa coastline celebration. She shared her excitement about the trailer screening in Goa, describing it as a unique experience. Jo called the serial killer concept innovative and highly engaging, noting that such a theme is being explored for the first time in Indian cinema's 110-year history. She expressed her pride in debuting as the lead actress in M4M and extended heartfelt gratitude to Mohan Vadlapatla and IFFIGoa officials for the opportunity.

Director-producer Mohan Vadlapatla, addressing the media, expressed his delight over the Hindi trailer's release at the prestigious Goa International Film Festival

(IFFI). He thanked IFFI Goa officials, and prominent figures from the Indian and international film industry for their support. Mohan highlighted the universal appeal of M4M and shared his confidence that audiences worldwide would be thrilled by the film's content. He teased that the reveal of the "Motive for Murder" will blow audiences' minds and promised an unprec-

edented cinematic experience releasing in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada. He described the movie as a unique psychological narrative and assured audiences that M4M would offer an entirely new cinematic journey. Odisha superstar Sambit Acharya and Jo Sharma will lead the cast, marking the beginning of a new chapter for them on a pan-India scale.



Sunita Devi's journey towards Swavalamban (self-reliance)

India Post News Service

Amigrator's wife and a mother of four to charting her own path towards self-reliance

1. The Migrator's Wife. The Mother.

The story of waiting, uncertainty, and quiet sacrifice

I was scared when he left. Even before he packed his things, I was scared.

Every morning, my husband would wake up early, before the sun, and go to the fields. But no matter how hard he worked, it wasn't enough. The money was



getting less and less. We had six mouths to feed. One evening, he came home and said there was no other way, "We need to think of our children. We cannot have them suffer our own fate. I have to leave Budhadih and go to the city, to Gorakhpur. There is work there."

My heart sank. I knew what it meant. I'd heard stories from the other women in the village-how their husbands left, how the city swallowed them up. But they sent money back. That's what we needed.

Sometimes weeks go by before we hear from him. When the money comes, it helps. He sends Rs 15,000 every month. But it's never enough. All of it goes towards educating our four children. One was studying for engineering college entrance exams. She got into IIT but had to drop out due to mental health issues. The next one

is studying for medical entrance. The younger two will also follow their siblings and leave the village for higher education once they are done with school, I guess.

Every time the money arrives, I wonder how he's managing out there.

I know he's doing it for us. For our future. For our children.

I don't blame him for leaving. I don't blame the other men who left too. ?I blame the fields that don't feed us anymore. I blame the rains.

2. The Silent Wave of Migration

The men leave, the women stay behind, and the struggle continues

I wasn't the only one.

?In our village, more and more men were leaving. First, it was a few, then most of the men I knew. It felt like a wave washing over us, one family after another watching their husbands, brothers, and sons pack up and leave for the cities. I am



lucky. My husband found himself a mechanic's job in Gorakhpur. It is not very far away but I barely get to see him.

Across rural India, more than 37% of households depend on migration to survive. In districts like Gorakhpur, men go to



cities like Delhi or Mumbai, working in factories, construction, or wherever they can find wages. The numbers are staggering-over 450 million people in India are on the move like this, traveling between villages and cities just to keep their families afloat.

We wait-for money that isn't enough, for news from husbands far away, and for a future that feels uncertain.

3. A Path to Swavalamban (self-reliance)

From a wife waiting for survival to a woman shaping her own future

When my husband left, I thought I had to manage alone. ?But with the help and support from Drishtee Foundation, I learned that the answer to our struggles was right here, among the women of our village.

That's when we started talking about Swavalamban-self-reliance. Instead of depending on unpredictable city wages, we realized we could build something sustainable, right here in our village. We could create livelihoods for ourselves-and for other women. We could build a community.

In small groups, we learned skills like crafting, stitching, and making eco-friendly products. But it wasn't just about learning-it was about transforming those skills into

businesses that could support our families. Slowly, we started enterprises that brought income back into the village, creating jobs for other women along the way.

It became a cycle of support-one woman's success became an opportunity for another. As we worked together, our confidence grew. We formed cooperatives, shared resources, and built connections to markets beyond the village.

We were no longer just caretakers. We were becoming business owners, job creators, and community builders.

Today I am an established trainer in my community. I have trained over 150 women and make around Rs 6000 each month. Some of it I save. Some I need for daily expenses. I would like to train more women from neighboring villages to start their own enterprises and become self-reliant.



Swavalamban showed us that we could shape our own futures. We could thrive, even as the men were away. We no longer waited for the rains or for the city wages-we built something lasting, something strong.

If you would like to connect with me virtually or in person to learn more about my journey please reach out to the Drishtee team. If you would like to learn about Drishtee, visit drishtee.org

(This is part of a multi-part series showcasing rural development taking place in India)

UK's Antrim Newtownabbey Borough rebuffs Hindu prayer request

India Post News Service

CHICAGO: The UK's Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, which has been opening its monthly meetings with "Bible Reading and Prayer", has turned down request to have Hindu opening-prayer in an upcoming session.

Richard Baker, Chief Executive of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, in an email response to Rajan Zed (who requested to be scheduled to read opening-prayer in an upcoming Council meeting), wrote that Mayor had "decided to allow only fellow Councilors to open a Council meeting with a Bible reading and prayer".

Monthly meetings of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council have been opening with "Bible reading and prayer", which has been first item on the agenda. Borough Council meetings have been reportedly opening with a prayer since 2015, the year it was established.

Request of Zed, President of Universal Society of Hinduism, seeking Mayor or councilor to read the Hindu opening-prayer supplied by him in one Council meeting, was also not accepted.

There seems to be presently no process of appeal against the current invocation (opening-prayer) structure of the Borough Council.

Rajan Zed feels that it is a case of unfairness, discrimination, and favoritism; and does not speak well of a democratic society.

Zed suggests that it is time for the Borough Council to move to multi-faith opening prayers. Since the Borough Council represents every resident irrespective of religion/denomination/non-belief, it would be quite befitting to do a rotation of prayers representing major religions/denominations, including slots for the thoughts of non-believers.

Democratic governments should not be influenced by one religion or the other; Rajan Zed, who has opened both the

United States Senate and US House of Representatives in Washington DC with Hindu prayers, emphasizes.

The existence of different religions is an evident symbol of God's generosity and munificence. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council should quest for a unity that hailed diversity.

Hinduism, oldest and third largest religion of the world, has about 1.2 billion adherents, and moksh (liberation) is its ultimate goal.

The Borough of Antrim & Newtownabbey in Northern Ireland (United Kingdom) covers about 274 square miles and Belfast International Airport.

The California forestry sector jobs initiative - cultivating diverse leaders and environmental sustainability

VIDYA SETHURAMAN
India Post News Service

Ethnic Media Service hosted an online meeting on Nov 26th to discuss the employment opportunities at the California Forestry department. The California Forestry Sector Jobs Initiative is dedicated to promoting careers in forestry, with a focus on forest management, wildfire prevention, and sustainability. This initiative not only aims to address workforce gaps but also actively works to engage traditionally underrepresented communities, including women, minorities, and veterans. By providing resources on education, training, and career pathways, the initiative ensures more equitable access to forestry jobs, contributing to both community resilience and environmental stewardship across California. This initiative is funded by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).

The forestry industry has long been at

the heart of California's response to the wildfire crisis and climate change. With the frequent occurrence of extreme weather events and the increasing pressure on forest resource management, California is in urgent need of cultivating forestry talents with professional skills. However, the current forest industry workforce is severely

The forestry industry has long been at the heart of California's response to the wildfire crisis and climate change. With the frequent occurrence of extreme weather events and the increasing pressure on forest resource management, California is in urgent need of cultivating forestry talents with professional skills

under-represented and diverse, and recruitment challenges are becoming increasingly acute.

Matt Dias, President and CEO, California Forestry Association said the forestry industry is not just about logging or fire prevention. It covers many fields such as for-

est resource management, natural ecological protection, wood processing, and community economic support. This project will help new practitioners explore diverse career development paths through education and training, skills development and career resource sharing.

Chief Matthew Reischman, Deputy Di-

rector of Resource Management said the plan will work with educational institutions to popularize the importance and career opportunities of the forestry industry to the younger generation through school courses and career guidance. We hope this program will not only meet today's

workforce needs, but also prepare the next generation of forestry experts for the long-term development of the industry. To ensure the smooth implementation of the plan, the forestry department will also develop a series of tools, such as employment information maps and multi-language guides accessible to the public, to help potential practitioners quickly understand industry resources and job information.

Housing issues are a major concern for many potential practitioners, particularly in remote forestry work sites. In this regard, relevant departments will work with local communities and organizations to strive to provide affordable residential support for forestry practitioners and reduce barriers to relocation. In the coming months, CalFire will release guidance and language support tools to make information more accessible to non-English speaking groups. Learn more at caforestryworkforce.com.

ePadosi: A New Online Hub for the Desi Community

Connecting Desi Communities with Local Businesses, Events, and Creative Opportunities

India Post News Service

ePadosi, a comprehensive online platform dedicated to the South Asian community, has officially launched its services in the Bay Area. This innovative platform is designed to serve the local desi communities, providing a centralized space for business listings, job postings, product and service sales, and much more. With its launch, ePadosi aims to become the go-to online platform for the vibrant desi community in the Bay Area.

The platform offers a unique opportunity for business owners to list their enterprises, enabling them to reach a wider audience within the community. Whether it's a local restaurant, a boutique, or a professional service, businesses can now easily connect with potential customers. Additionally, the platform facilitates job postings, making it easier for employers and job seekers to find the right match.

ePadosi is not just about business; it is also a cultural hub where users can discover local desi events, classifieds, movie

reviews, deals and more. The platform is designed to foster community engagement and support cultural exchange among the South Asian diaspora. Users

while also sharing their work on social media platforms.

"ePadosi is more than just a platform; it's a community. Our goal is to bring together the desi community in the Bay Area, providing them with the tools and resources they need to thrive. Whether it's connecting businesses with customers or giving a voice to budding writers, ePadosi is here to support and celebrate the rich cultural tapestry of the South Asian community," said Alok Dube, Founder of ePadosi.com.

The launch of ePadosi

in the Bay Area marks a significant milestone in the platform's mission to connect desi communities across the globe. By offering a comprehensive suite of services tailored to the needs of the South Asian diaspora, ePadosi is poised to become an indispensable resource for the community.

For more information about ePadosi and its offerings, visit the platform (<https://www.epadosi.com/bay-area>) and explore the myriad opportunities it presents for businesses, individuals, and the community at large.

Website - <https://www.epadosi.com/bay-area>

Fb - <https://www.facebook.com/DukamiEnterprises/>

Insta - <https://www.instagram.com/dukamidigital/>



can explore a wide range of events, from cultural festivals to community gatherings, ensuring they never miss out on the vibrant happenings in the Bay Area.

For those with a creative flair, ePadosi offers a unique feature: the ability to create a free publishing page. Aspiring writers and poets can share their Hindi poems and short stories with the community and beyond. This feature allows users to showcase their talents and gain recognition,

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Celebrating Diwali and Garba Hosted by Dev Darshan Senior Center

India Post News Service

CHICAGO: The festivities of Diwali and Garba came to life in a spectacular celebration at the Haridham Swaminarayan Temple in Chicago. Hosted by the Dev Darshan Senior Center, this unforgettable evening united the community for an event filled with music, dance, devotion, and cultural pride. Reflecting the center's mission, "Where Friends Become Family," the event perfectly encapsulated the essence of togetherness, support, and shared joy.

The evening began with a warm welcome from Ms. Mika Shastri, followed by a heartfelt introduction of Emcee Anica Dubey, who greeted the audience with a sincere "Namaskar" and "Good evening." Setting the tone for the evening, Anica shared, "Tonight, we come together to celebrate the double dhamaka of Diwali and Garba, two vibrant traditions that represent the triumph of good over evil and the honoring of feminine divinity."

The festivities kicked off with a powerful Aarti, invoking blessings from Goddess Ambe Maa and commemorating the late Acharya Dr. C. L. Shastri, a revered Sanskrit scholar, astrologer, and Maata Bhagat.

His immeasurable contributions to the Chicagoland community were honored, with the Garba program dedicated to his

legacy. Family members joined Aarti ceremony, adding a deeply personal and spiritual touch to the event.

Following the Arti, attendees stood in respect as the National Anthem of the United States was played. The lighting of the ceremonial lamp served as a meaningful gesture of honor to the distinguished dignitaries in attendance, including Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthy, Mr. Amal McAskill (former NBA player), Dr. Bharat Barai (renowned doctor and proponent of Indo-US relations), Dr. Vijay Prabhakar

The festivities kicked off with a powerful Aarti, invoking blessings from Goddess Ambe Maa and commemorating the late Acharya Dr. C. L. Shastri, a revered Sanskrit scholar, astrologer, and Maata Bhagat

(founder of AMEC and Global Eye magazine), Shri and Smt Manish Gandhi (philanthropist) and Dr. Ashok Shah (a doctor), among others.

The dignitaries were presented with flowers in appreciation of their unwavering support for the community, and several of them took the stage to offer words appreciation. Congressman Krishnamoorthy praised the work of Dev Darshan, provid-

ing seniors with social care, cultural enrichment, and a sense of belonging.

In a touching moment, Mr. Amal McAskill spoke about his connection to Darshan, his sports student and the grandson of Hema Shastri. He shared how Darshan introduced him to the mission of Dev Darshan, a cause that deeply with his own family values of community, respect, and care for elders. Dr. Prabhakar and Manny Gandhi also commended the center's dedication to honoring elders, emphasizing that these values are at the

musical journey as Melody Mahesh Kumar and Poonam Potdar delivered soulful renditions of Diwali and Bollywood classics.

The evening continued to soar as Sammy and Gautami, special guests from Texas, took the stage, delighting the crowd with their performances

Harshad Parekh, Jayesh Parekh, and Dilip Patel from the Friendship Senior Group were recognized for their support in making the event. A group photo was taken to honor all the volunteers, artists, sponsors, and community leaders who have made Dev Darshan's work possible.

The event was also made possible thanks to the Swaminarayan Temple and its volunteers.

The stage was set ablaze by Shailendra Bhatnagar and Bhavna who ignited the audience, inspiring them to join in the dance with unmatched enthusiasm.

The dancers spun in perfect harmony around the Ambe Maa statue, creating an atmosphere of joy and unity that made the evening truly unforgettable.

Now in its second year, Looking ahead, the center announced that member contribution for the upcoming year would be \$50 per member, encouraging continued participation and support from the community.

The evening concluded with a vote of thanks from Hema Shastri.

core of Dev Darshan's work.

A key highlight of the evening was the Diwali celebration led by Hema Shastri, the founder of Dev Darshan Senior Center. Hema captivated the audience with a stunning devotional Krishna dance, blending grace, devotion, and culture into a powerful performance that set the stage for the rest of the evening.

The audience was transported on a

Simple Diet and Lifestyle Tips for Your Healthy Life

Five important steps to keep your diabetes under control

DR. INDRAJEET TYAGI AND DR. IRANNA HIRAPUR

Follow these important tips to understand your diabetes treatment plan and stay on track with diabetes management.

How to manage our ABCs?

A: Go for regular A1C test to measure

6.4% Diabetes: 6.5% or above. Discuss with your health care professional what your goal should be.

B: Try to keep your blood pressure below 140/90 mm Hg or the target the range your doctor sets. C: Control your cholesterol levels and keep close to your target range.

S: Stop smoking or do not start.

Keeping your ABC numbers close to target levels can lower your risk of long-term health problems. Your health care professional can help you set personal targets.

How do we know if our medicines are working?

If your ABC numbers close to or at your target levels, then meet, then your medicines and efforts are working. Continue your medications

If your ABC numbers not close to or at your target levels, then meet with your health care professional to see if your treatment plan needs to be changed. Be sure to take all of your prescription and

cational, nutritional, and emotional needs with your health care professional.

When you experience new complications such as changes in your physical or emotional health or financial needs.

Symptoms of Diabetes

Urinate (pee) a lot, often at night	Are very thirsty	Lose weight without trying
Are very hungry	Have blurry vision	Feel very tired
Have numb or tingling hands or feet	Have very dry skin	Have sores that heal slowly
Have more infections than usual		

over-the-counter medicines and blood sugar records when you meet with your care professional.

When and where can we learn more about managing diabetes?

When:

The best time to have diabetes education and information to manage diabetes is when you notice some diabetes signs/symptoms or when you are first diagnosed.

Once a year when you review your edu-

During changes in your care such as changes to your health care professional, treatment plan, or living situation.

Where

Local diabetes education programs.

Diabetes information sites.

Local diabetes support groups. Request your health care professional for commendations.

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com

Healthy and Unhealthy Blood pressures Ranges

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)	and/or	DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120 – 129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1	130 – 139	or	80 – 89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

Normal blood pressure range by age and gender

Age	Women	Men
18–39 years	110/68 mm Hg	119/70 mm Hg
40–59 years	122/74 mm Hg	124/77 mm Hg
60+ years	139/68 mm Hg	133/69 mm Hg

your average blood sugar over 2 to 3 months. Know your A1C results and understand what your results indicate: Normal: below 5.7% Prediabetes: 5.7% to

Simple Diet and Lifestyle Tips for Your Healthy Life

Know How to Detect Heart Disease 10 Years in Advance

DR. INDRAJEET TYAGI AND DR. IRANNA HIRAPUR

Everyone wishes to know his/her risk for cardiovascular disease (CVD) better and 10 years in advance, which, may help him/her receive preventive care or treatment earlier to reduce CVD risks. Various symptoms and new tests can predict risk of heart disease beginning 10 years younger than before and estimates someone's risk of total heart disease, which includes heart failure, in addition to heart attack and stroke. It also includes a measure of kidney health, which has been recognized more recently as an important risk factor for heart disease that can be managed and treated to improve health outcomes.

What is heart disease?

Heart disease symptoms depend on the type of heart disease. Coronary artery disease is a common heart condition that affects the major blood vessels that supply the heart muscle. Cholesterol deposits (plaques) in the heart arteries are usually the cause of coronary artery disease. The buildup of these plaques is called atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis reduces blood flow to the heart and other parts of the body. It can lead to a heart attack, chest pain (angina) or stroke. One's heart disease progression starts from less than 60% of blockages.

You might not be diagnosed with coronary artery disease until you have a heart

Coronary artery disease symptoms may be different for men and women. For instance, men are more likely to have chest

90% blockage that means you come to know when you have less than 10% blood supply in your heart. For walking you need

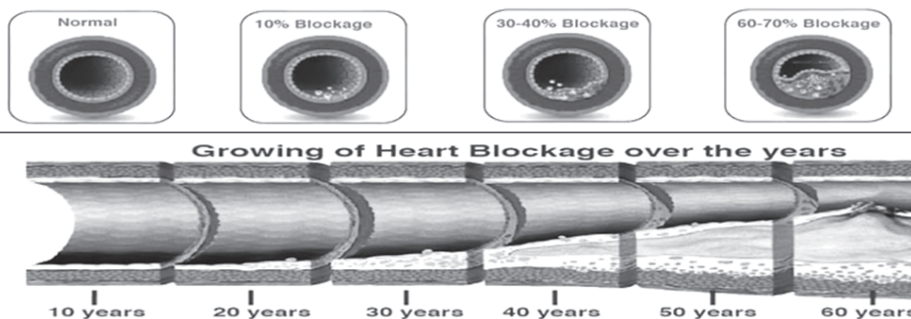
riding a stationary bike while the heart is monitored. Exercise tests help reveal how the heart responds to physical activity and whether heart disease symptoms occur during exercise. This is the best test to find out whether you have 70% or less heart blockage.

Heart (cardiac) CT scan/CT Angiogram - In a cardiac CT scan, you lie on a table inside a doughnut-shaped machine. An X-ray tube inside the machine rotates around your body, collects images of your heart and chest, and helps to find out the percentage of your heart blockage.

Heart (cardiac) magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan. A cardiac MRI uses a magnetic field and computer-generated radio waves to create detailed images of the heart.

Early detection of hear blockages help avoid having any kind heart diseases in the first place. These include eating healthy, being physically active, not smoking, and getting plenty of sleep. Some medications if prescribed by your health care professional.

(Authors: Dr. Indrajeet Tyagi, M. R. Medical College, Kalaburagi, Karnataka, Dr Iranna S. Hirapur, MD, DM (Cardiology) Interventional Cardiologist at Heart Foundation, Kalaburagi, Karnataka)



pain. Women are more likely to have other symptoms along with chest discomfort, such as shortness of breath, nausea and extreme fatigue.

What are the four different stages of heart attack?

Stable angina. Blood vessels are still open, but not completely

Unstable angina. Plaque and blockage are growing, making symptoms occur more frequently with less physical activity

Heart attack with partial blockage

Full heart attack or complete blockage
The blood clot of 100% is the actual cause of the major heart attack. If the blood and oxygen supply is cut off, muscle cells of the heart begin to suffer damage and start to die. Irreversible damage begins

20% blood supply in the heart, while walking, if you get chest pain that means you have 80% blockage. You can easily find out your heart diseases when you have 90% or 80% blockages while it is hard to detect your heart diseases when you have 70% blockage due to lack of any severe symptoms. Therefore, you need to have some tests.

How to detect heart problems in advance?

Everyone wants to know about the chances of developing heart disease 10 years in advance. You can do that by talking different simple tests that diagnose heart disease.

Exercise tests or stress tests. These tests often involve walking on a treadmill or



attack, angina, stroke or heart failure. It is important to watch for heart symptoms such as chest pain, chest tightness, chest pressure and chest discomfort (angina), shortness of breath, pain in the neck, jaw, throat, upper belly area or back, pain, numbness, weakness or coldness in the legs or arms if the blood vessels in those body areas are narrowed. Then one should immediately discuss concerns with his/her health care provider. Heart (cardiovascular) disease can sometimes be found early with regular health checkups.

within 30 minutes of blockage. The result is heart muscle affected by the lack of oxygen no longer works, as it should.

In many instances, clogged arteries do not cause any symptoms until a major event, such as a heart attack or stroke, occurs. When the artery is blocked by 70% or more, the buildup of arterial plaque may cause symptoms that include Chest pain. Shortness of breath. When you have less than 80% blockage, you face problem while going to bathroom, you experience chest pain while sitting in a chair when you have

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AIF investments in India at Rs 4.49 lakh crore in H1 FY25

MUMBAI: India attracted around Rs 4.5 lakh crore alternative investment funds (AIFs) in the H1 (April to September) financial year (FY) 2024-25 due to strong economic growth among the large economies.

Latest SEBI data compiled by ANAROCK Research indicates that out of a total of Rs 4,49,384 crore AIF investments made across sectors till H1 FY2025, real estate's share was the highest at 17 percent -- totaling nearly Rs 75,468 crore.

Other sectors benefiting from AIF investments are IT/ITeS (Rs 27,815 crore), financial services (Rs 25,782 crore), NBFCs (Rs 21,503 crore), banks (Rs 18,242 crore), pharma (Rs17,272 crore), FMCG (Rs11,680 crore), retail (Rs 11,389 crore), renewable energy (Rs10,672 crore) and others (Rs 2,29,571 crore).

Alternative investment funds in India have seen a substantial decadal increase in the number of funds available for investment. AIFs' overall commitment rose by over 340 percent in the last six years -- from Rs 2,82,148 crore in FY 2019 to Rs 12,43,083 crore in H1 FY2025, reflecting increasing appetite for alternative investment strategies.

Between FY2013 to FY2024, the commitment raised in the AIF sector has maintained an impressive 83.4 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR), signaling its growing importance in the broader investment landscape. *IANS*

Real Estate POST



J&K: Under PMAY, housing dreams of Rajouri's poor families fulfilled

India's real estate sector growth outlook firms up: Report

MUMBAI: There is rising confidence in the growth of India's real estate sector over the next six months, according to a Knight Frank-NAREDCO survey released last week.

In the residential market, optimism prevails as 62 percent of respondents anticipate a rise in residential prices supported by consistent demand, mainly from the luxury segment with ticket size Rs 10 million and above. As many as 40 percent of respondents foresee increased sales, and 38 percent expect market stability. Similarly, the office market outlook is buoyant, with strong confidence in key parameters such as leasing, supply, and rents, underscoring stakeholder optimism for robust performance in the coming months, the report states.

The Knight Frank-NAREDCO Real Estate Sentiment Index captures the perceptions of supply-side stakeholders and financial institutions regarding the real estate sector, economic climate, and funding availability. A score of

50 indicates a neutral outlook; scores above 50 reflect positive sentiment, while those below 50 suggest a negative outlook.

The Developer Future Sentiment Score rose from 61 in Q2 2024 to 65 in Q3 2024 indicating

stipulations, and PE funds) maintains the status quo at 68 through Q2 and Q3 2024, reflecting their confidence in well-structured real estate projects and the sector's long-term growth prospects, the report observed.

among stakeholders. Strong demand in high-end residential sales and stable leasing in commercial spaces underscore the sector's steady performance."

The office market outlook for Q3 2024 reflects strong confi-



renewed optimism. Developers remain positive, adapting to shifting market dynamics and leveraging ongoing sales momentum, the report said.

Meanwhile, the Non-Developer Future Sentiment Score (comprising banks, financial in-

Knight Frank India CMD Shishir Bajjal said, "The Q3 2024 Real Estate Sentiment Index highlights the strength of India's real estate sector. While the Current Sentiment Score moderated slightly, the Future Sentiment Score improved, reflecting growing confidence

dence, with stakeholders optimistic about the sector's long-term potential. According to the survey, 76 percent of respondents expect office leasing to improve, driven by positive corporate sentiment and a sustained recovery in demand. *IANS*

Telangana to give priority to poorest of poor in housing scheme

HYDERABAD: Poorest of the poor will be given first priority in the allocation of houses under the Indiramma housing scheme of the Telangana government.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has said the poorest of the poor will be chosen in an order of priority - physically challenged, agricultural laborers, landless people, and sanitation workers.

The Chief Minister conducted a review of the

Indiramma housing scheme at his residence last week. He ordered the officials to take necessary precautions as in the first phase priority being given to those who possessed their own land.

He wanted the village secretary and mandal-level officials to be made responsible in this regard by using the available technology. The officials have been asked to ensure that there are no shortcomings in the functioning of Indiramma Housing mobile

app and the beneficiary should not face any difficulty at any stage.



A. Revanth Reddy

The Chief Minister also warned the officials against mistakes at the department level and suggested steps to provide a special quota for tribals and ITDAs in the Indiramma housing scheme.

Revanth Reddy made it clear to the officials that the beneficiaries should be given the freedom to construct additional rooms in the allotted Indiramma houses if they are interested.

He asked the senior officials to strengthen the Housing Depart-

ment to ensure the effective implementation of the Indiramma Housing Scheme and also appoint the required officers and staff.

State Housing Minister P Srinivasa Reddy, Chief Minister's Advisor Vem Narender Reddy, Chief Minister's Principal Secretary Chandrasekhar Reddy, Housing Secretary Dr. Jyoti Buddha Prakash, Special Secretary V.P. Gautam and others were present. *IANS*

Top 8 Indian cities see 11 pc average housing price growth; Delhi-NCR leads

NEW DELHI: Led by sturdy demand and positive market sentiments, average housing prices in top eight cities in India continued to increase steadily, witnessing a 11 percent growth (on-year) at Rs 11,000 per square feet during the July-September period this year, according to a recent report.

All the eight major cities saw an annual increase in housing prices, with Delhi-NCR witnessing the highest rise at 32 percent, followed by Bengaluru at 24 percent during the third quarter this year, according to the report released by CREDAI, Colliers and Lias Foras, a real estate data analytics company.

Within Delhi-NCR, Dwarka Expressway and Golf Course Extension/Sohna Road witnessed a significant price appreciation of over 50 percent YoY.

Notably, average housing prices have increased for the 15th consecutive quarter since 2021. With anticipation of healthy residential activity in the last quarter, 2024 is likely to end on a strong note, the report said.

"We are seeing more and more aspirational homebuyers come to the fore - resulting in bigger homes that are also being reflected in the rise in prices as homes continue to get more expansive, truly reflecting the current market dynamics and consumer preferences," said Boman Irani, President of CREDAI National.

Overall unsold inventory continued to witness a quarterly drop for the third consecutive quarter, led by healthy uptake in housing units.

At the end of September, unsold inventory stood at over 10 lakh housing units across the eight major cities, with Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) accounting for a majority at about 40 percent share.

"While the housing market is gradually stabilizing, the outlook for the residential segment remains positive supported by strong underlying market fundamentals," said Badal Yagnik, Chief Executive Officer, Colliers, India.



Developers are recalibrating their strategies, particularly in the price-sensitive segments, by offering compact size units.

With existing high unsold inventory levels to the tune of 10 lakh units across the eight major cities, developers are being cautious with new launches.

"Sales and prices continue to grow, suggesting affordability and demand are intact. The luxury segment is still dominant, although we have been seeing a gradual reduction in new launches," said Pankaj Kapoor, Managing Director, Lias Foras. IANS

Why Mannivakkam near Vandalur is becoming a homebuyer's haven: Real Estate soars with connectivity and IT growth

CHENNAI: The localities around Vandalur are witnessing rapid growth in real estate, driven by significant developments in the IT sector and an enhanced road network. Among these, the nearby locality of Mannivakkam stands out as a prime beneficiary. Strategically situated at the node of Vandalur, Mannivakkam enjoys direct connectivity to major road networks such as GST Road, Outer Ring Road (ORR), Chennai Bypass Road, and the Vandalur-Kelambakkam Link Road, ensuring seamless travel in all directions. Additionally, the locality offers access to all major transit modes, including air, rail, and road, making it highly accessible. This advantageous location, coupled with ongoing infrastructure projects and proximity to key employment hubs, is fueling Mannivakkam's rapid development.

Infrastructure Transforming the Landscape

Vandalur is home to the Kilambakkam Bus Terminus, one of South India's largest transit hubs, which enhances intercity and interstate travel. The upcoming metro line to Kilambakkam will further improve connectivity to Chennai's central business districts and IT corridors.

Whereas, Mannivakkam benefits from seamless access to ORR and the Oragadam-Vandalur Corridor, ensuring smooth travel to Bengaluru and other employment and industrial hubs. Located near Perungalathur, it is close to Shriram Gateway IT SEZ, Accenture, Capgemini and Infosys, as well as MEPZ in Tambaram and the Oragadam Industrial Belt, which hosts global giants like Renault-Nissan and Apollo Tyres.

New IT Parks: A Game Changer

The announcement of new IT parks in Vandalur, Mannivakkam, and Malayambakkam along the Outer Ring Road is set to redefine the real estate market. Combined with already established IT hubs near the proximal Perungalathur like ZOHO, Accenture and Capgemini, these developments are expected to generate significant employment opportunities, driving demand for residents in the region.

(ADVERTORIAL DISCLAIMER: The above press release has been provided by NewsVair. ANI and India Post will not be responsible in any way for the content of the same)

J&K: Under PMAY, housing dreams of Rajouri's poor families fulfilled

JAMMU: The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) is turning the housing dreams of lakhs of people into reality, not just in cities, towns and remote locations, but also in the border districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The border town of Rajouri is benefitting a lot from the scheme as many poor families have a house of their own today, courtesy Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's flagship scheme PMAY. Under the scheme, families are getting financial aid of up to Rs 2.20 lakh to build safe and secure homes.

According to Rajouri Municipal Council, a total of 1,022 houses have been sanctioned under the PMAY scheme within the municipal limits. Of these, 567 houses have been completed while around 200 are under construction and work on the remaining houses is about to commence soon.

Initially, the beneficiaries were offered Rs 1.66 lakh, but this was later enhanced to Rs 2.20 lakh in three installments, ensuring adequate support for construction. The up-gradation in financial assis-



tance is welcomed by many beneficiaries. They made gushing praise for PM Modi-led government for providing them with dignity and stability in their lives.

Many locals speaking to IANS expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in particular, for introducing such an impactful initiative. They also commended the Municipal Council for facilitating fast processing of their requests.

"We are deeply thankful to the government for giving us the opportunity to own a safe and permanent home. It's a dream come true for our families," said one of the beneficiaries.

Apart from the beneficiaries, the PMAY has brought immense hope and optimism to those families in Rajouri, who are yet to draw benefits of the scheme. They also hope to benefit from the government's affordable housing scheme soon.

Under the PMAY, the government has taken upon the task to provide permanent, secure housing to economically weaker sections (EWS), Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and other deserving individuals. IANS

Nia Sharma: Not to find the love of my life

Popular television actress Nia Sharma took around five transportations to reach her final destination and she said it was not even to find the love of her life.

Nia took to Instagram, where she shared a video of herself first travelling in the plane, then taking a buggy ride, then taking the train, speedboat, car and a cart.

She wrote as the caption: Mode of transportation to reach the destination : Car & Plane & buggy & Train & speedboat & Cart & (Not even to find the love of my life) Saat Samundar Paar felt like..."

The actress last week had revealed that she is taking "five painkillers a day" due to a swelling on her thumb.

Alongside the glimpse, she wrote: "The swelling doesn't seem to subside at all. Hurts even after taking 5 painkillers a day Also thank you for writing those suggestions many of you do.. I've read many and have been helpful."

On the professional front, the 34-year-old actress was last seen on shows "Laughter Chef Fun Unlimited" and "Suhagan Chudail".

In the former show, she stars alongside Krushna Abhishek, Rahul Vaidya, Karan Kundrra, Ankita Lokhande, Vicky Jain, Jannat Zubair Rahmani, Reem Shaikh, Sudesh Lehri, and Kashmera Shah. It is hosted by Bharti Singh, and judged by chef Harpal Singh Sokhi.

Talking about "Suhagan Chudail", she played the role of a witch named Nishigandha. The fantasy-thriller-romance show also stars Zayn Ibad Khan, and Debchandrima Singha Roy in the lead roles.

She is also known for her roles in 'Behenein', 'Ek Hazaaron Mein Meri Behna Hai', 'Meri Durga', 'Kaali - Ek Agnipariksha'. In 2020, she participated in 'Khatron Ke Khiladi: Made in India' and emerged as the winner. Nia has also worked in web series like 'Twisted', and 'Jamai 2.0'. IANS



Vikrant Massey announces

RETIREMENT

Actor Vikrant Massey, who is basking in the success of his latest film "The Sabarmati Report", has decided to call it quits in acting aged 37 and shared that he realized "it's time to recalibrate and go back home."

Vikrant, who will be seen in "Zero Se Restart", took everyone by shock after announcing that he planned to step back from acting after 2025. He penned a note on Instagram, which read: "Hello, The last few years and beyond have been phenomenal. I thank each and every one of you for your indelible support. As I move forward, I realize its time to recalibrate and go back home. As a Husband, Father & a Son. And also as an Actor."

He said that 2025 will be one last time he will be seen.

"So coming 2025, we would meet each other for one last time. Until time deems right. Last 2 movies and many a years of memories. IANS



TOP TEN HINDI FILM SONGS

- 1 Aaj Ki Raat : **Stree 2**
- 2 Tauba Tauba: **Bad Newz**
- 3 Zaroorat Se Zyada: **Vedaa**
- 4 Tainu Khabar Nahi : **Munjya**
- 5 Sajni: **Laapataa Ladies**
- 6 Soulmate: **Ek Tha Raja**
- 7 Khoobsurat: **Stree 2**
- 8 Ishq: **Ishq**
- 9 Mere Mehboob Mere Sanam: **Bad Newz**
- 10 Taras: **Munjya**



Mallika turns 'desi' Pamela Anderson on the beach

Bollywood actress Mallika Sherawat channeled her inner Pamela Anderson as she had her "Baywatch" moment running on the beach in slow motion.

Mallika took to Instagram, where she shared a video running on the shallow waters towards the beach in slow motion. She is seen wearing a bikini and over it she sported a bright red cover-up.

"That's just how I roll #beachglam #sunkissedstyle #slowmotionvideo #slowmotion #cinematicvibes #cinematic #slowmw," she wrote as the caption.

Mallika added the title track of "Baywatch" as the background score to the video. "Baywatch" was a television series about lifeguards who patrol the beaches of Los Angeles County, California, and Hawaii, starring David Hasselhoff. IANS



Rashmika Mandanna celebrates 1st anniversary of 'Animal'

Actress Rashmika Mandanna, who is awaiting the release of her upcoming Allu Arjun-starrer 'Pushpa 2: The Rule', is celebrating the "very special" month of December with the 1st anniversary of her movie 'Animal'.

The actress took to the Stories section of her Instagram recently, and re-shared a Reel from one of her fans showcasing her character of Geethanjali from the Ranbir Kapoor-starrer 'Animal'.

She wrote on the video, "December has indeed been very very special to me. So grateful. Swami swami swami. Thank you Thank you Thank".

'Animal', which starred Ranbir in the titular role, told the story of the relationship between a son and a father carved in blood. The multi-starrer film, which was directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga of 'Kabir Singh' fame, proved to be a blockbuster, and also triggered a wave of criticism over its portrayal and treatment of women. IANS



Police intensify probe into Kannada actor's death

The body of Kannada actress Shobitha Shivanna, who was found dead at her residence here, was handed over to her relatives after an autopsy while Cyberabad police have intensified the probe into the incident.

A large number of relatives of the film and television actress rushed to Hyderabad from Bengaluru after learning about her death.

The police handed over the body of the 29-year-old to her relatives after the autopsy at the government-run Osmania General Hospital.

The actress was found dead at her residence in Kondapur of Gachibowli here on 1st December. IANS

Shehnaaz Gill celebrates self-love and inner peace

Actress Shehnaaz Gill, known for her striking presence on social media, recently shared a video of herself along with an inspiring message about self-love.

Recently, the actress posted a video where she is seen walking down a road, effortlessly posing for the camera as she embraces the moment. Gill captioned the post with a powerful message, "Life feels lighter and brighter when you learn to enjoy your own company. It's the most peaceful kind of happiness. #shehnaazgill."

In the clip, Shehnaaz could be seen striking different happy poses for the camera. She looked uber cool in a kurta top paired with jeans and shoes. She also added Amit Malsar's popular song "Jo Tum Mere Ho."

Her message struck a chord with fans, emphasizing the importance of self-love and the joy that comes from being content in one's own company. Echoing similar sentiments, one fan said, "Absolutely true. We always need to make time for our own selves. It's a wonderful way to look after our own mind to stay healthy. Look terrific and always be happy. Always supporting you. #ShehnaazGill."

Another wrote, "Very well said @shehnaazgill Love your own company..the most peaceful and blissful gorgeous superstar #shehnaazgill."

The 'Honsla Rakh' had earlier dropped a video of herself dancing to a classic Punjabi track. Sharing the video, she captioned it, "aajao bhangra payiye buraahhhhhhhhh."

IANS





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10-day Hornbill Festival begins in Nagaland with traditional ceremony

KOHIMA: Showcasing the traditional and diverse culture, customs and vibrant life of Nagaland, the 10-day-long 25th edition of Hornbill Festival began at the picturesque Naga heritage village Kisama on 1st December evening.

With the beating of Naga gongs, the sounding of log drums, and the traditional war cry, the annual Hornbill Festival, named after the colorful forest bird, commenced coinciding with the 62nd Nagaland Statehood Day celebrations.

The 25th edition of the festival will showcase a collaborative cultural experience with Japan, the USA, the United Kingdom (Wales), Peru and Bulgaria as country partners while Sikkim and Telangana will be the partner states.

Padma Bhushan, Grammy, and Oscar-winning composer A. R. Rahman and envoys of many countries were also present in the inaugural ceremony.

"It has become a festival where we not only enjoy and curate our unique culture and traditions, our way of life, food, art and crafts, but also it has become a focal point for the networking of people," Nagaland Tourism and

Higher Education Minister Temjen Imna Along said.

Organized by Nagaland's Tourism and Art and Culture department, the Hornbill Festival displays the northeastern state's deep-rooted traditions and its rich cultural heritage in all its ethnicity, diversity and grandeur.

The festival is also a tribute to the great Hornbill, a bird revered by the Naga people for its alertness and grandeur.

THE 25TH EDITION OF THE FESTIVAL WILL SHOWCASE A COLLABORATIVE CULTURAL EXPERIENCE WITH JAPAN, THE USA, THE UNITED KINGDOM (WALES), PERU AND BULGARIA AS COUNTRY PARTNERS WHILE SIKKIM AND TELANGANA WILL BE THE PARTNER STATES

For the thousands of foreign and domestic tourists and guests, it is an opportunity to get a comprehensive understanding of the Naga people, their land and their rich culture.

Nagaland Governor La. Ganesan and Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio were the chief host and host of the festival, respectively.

Nagaland Tourism Director

Veyielo Doulo said that last year the festival witnessed a footfall of 1.54 lakh people, including a large number of foreign tourists and this year they expect the number of tourists, foreign and domestic, to be doubled.

He said that the festival provides a unique platform for visitors to witness not only the Naga cultural diversity converged at one venue but also the states of northeast India as a means of cultural exchange, while adventure, sports, art, handicraft, fashion, music, literature, etc. also come as part of the special package.

Known as the 'Festival of Festivals,' this grand event not only showcases the rich traditions and heritage of Nagaland but also brings together the diverse tribes of the state in a symphony of colors, sounds, and dances.

Since December 1999, the Hornbill Festival has been held at Kisama Heritage Village, 12 km from the capital city Kohima.

The festival has grown in stature over the years to become one of India's premier cultural events.

Each of Nagaland's recognized tribes participates, showcasing their unique customs,

attire, and traditions.

With a population of two million (tribals constitute 86.5 per cent), Nagaland has 17 tribes and all the tribes have their own festivals.

Visitors can witness traditional dances, music performances, indigenous games, and craft exhibitions that provide a window into the life and culture of the Naga people. IANS

Filmfare OTT Awards 2024: Diljit Dosanjh, Kareena Kapoor Khan take home top-honors in film category



MUMBAI: The 5th edition of the Filmfare OTT Awards took place on Sunday, December 1, in Mumbai, bringing together a galaxy of stars from the world of digital entertainment.

This year's ceremony honored outstanding web series and films, with winners across 39 categories.

The event was marked by stellar performances, heartfelt speeches, and a celebration of the rapidly evolving digital entertainment landscape.

One of the evening's biggest moments came when actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh clinched the Best Actor award for his portrayal of the legendary singer Amar Singh Chamkila in the web film 'Amar Singh Chamkila'.

Directed by Imtiaz Ali, 'Amar Singh Chamkila' presented the untold true story of Punjab's original rock star of the masses, who emerged from the shadows of poverty and rose to the heights of popularity in the eighties due to the sheer power of his music, angering many along the way, which led to his assassination at the young age of 27. ANI

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Philosophy

ATMANANDA (KRISHNA MENON)

Every object is a pointer to the Ultimate. Even the much-despised ego is a great help to the realization of the Truth. The presence of the ego in man, though in a distorted form, is infinitely better than the absence of it, as for example in a tree.

Through the ego, you perceive only objects at first. But the objects ultimately point to Consciousness. Therefore the, first perception - though wrong - subsequently leads you on to the Reality; and the perception itself is made possible only by the presence of the ego. Hence the ego is, in one sense, primarily responsible for the realization of ultimate Truth.

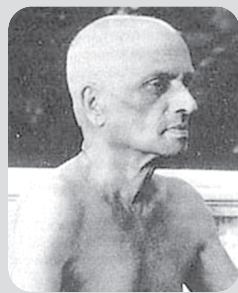
The ego is a spurious entity which does not exist and can never exist. It does not stand the slightest scrutiny. What is the difference between the ego and the other things which you have accepted to be illusions? Such things have at least a momentary appearance, in the mental level. But the ego has not even

recognize your position of vantage and perfection.

If you work against the ego, the ego most skilfully shifts its place to a higher ground. Therefore direct your thought to your real nature, Consciousness, where the ego cannot reach. Then the limitations of thought disappear, and thought remains as Consciousness, pure. So you see that even as thought, it was not thought, but Consciousness in content. This is the best way to annihilate the ego.

Is it right to hate the ego? Yes. Because the ego is something which does not exist. So you hate the non-existent because you want to be the existent Reality. The best way to annihilate the ego is not to think frequently of annihilating it. You need only to ignore the ego at every turn, and the ego will die a natural death.

The ego is like a ghost. The ghost, having no form of its own, takes possession of somebody else's form. When exorcized from there, he takes possession of the form of still another. Similarly, the ego has no form of its own. It claims the form of doer, perceiver or enjoyer af-



Atmananda
(Krishna Menon)

Truth can be realized even through ego

The ego is a spurious entity which does not exist and can never exist

that. It is never experienced by anybody at any time. You stray away from knowledge, down to the object known; and that is the ego.

Jiva [personal ego] comes into being as a result of the false identification of the Atma [Self] with body, senses and mind; or as a result of the superimpositions of doership or enjoyership upon the Atma (Atma + doership = jiva).

The ego is a crude mixture of Consciousness and the material part. When this ego takes the thought that it is Consciousness, the material part drops away and Consciousness shines alone, in its own glory. Thus the ego itself gets transformed into pure Consciousness.

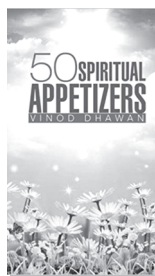
Ahankara [ego or acting 'I'] is the sense of one's separateness from everything else. You can rise above it only by reaching the background Truth, where all sense of separateness vanishes. One of the tests of having annihilated the ego is a genuine sense of humility, expressing itself by never trying to exploit or even

ter the activity. The best way to kill the ego is to refuse to give it any of these forms. The ego will then be starved to death. Directing attention to your real nature is the only sure means of killing the ego.

Excerpted from 'Notes on Spiritual Discourses of Shri Atmananda' taken by Nitya Tripta (Balakrishna Pillai). The 141st birth anniversary of Shri Atmananda is being observed on December 8

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The Third Eye: Are you information savvy?

DC PATHAK

In today's world success is largely determined by the ability to make knowledge-based decisions -- in both personal and professional spheres.

Knowledge helps one realize what should be done and what one should not do.

This enables one to be discrete at work, to have smooth interactions not only with seniors but also with colleagues, and to make meaningful contributions to organizational improvement.

This is, in fact, a management skill from which it can be inferred that good management also depends on competent handling of information-external or internal-as well as of the people one is dealing with.

Even a family is like a small organizational unit and its head has to have the qualities of a good manager while bringing up children as a parent and tackling other family issues.

Innocence is bliss no more and one has

Knowledge of what happened in the past or what was happening in the present adds to one's knowledge but an idea of what lay ahead -- often derived from an analysis of this knowledge -- can become the ultimate guarantor of success.

Information on a future happening is called intelligence and it can be sourced directly or deduced through a competent analysis of what was already in the public domain.

By definition, intelligence is the specially procured information of proven reliability that gives you a peep into the future. Information of intelligence value is important not only in the context of national security but in day-to-day life as well -- for personal security and business advancement -- since it enables you to visualize both opportunities and risks lying ahead.

Intelligence today is an important determinant of corporate and managerial success.

Major businesses invest in establishing intelligence units to analyze the market environment and study the competitors.

Being well-informed means having the right information at

The use of 'intelligence' -- which is a product of 'information' -- contributes to what can be termed as smart living. Being 'smart' by definition is the ability to achieve better results or higher productivity out of the given resources of money, human assistance, and time

to be reasonably aware of the environment, as it exists in the neighborhood and also in the wider world, in the interest of one's safety and well-being.

One should be able to 'observe' what one sees, 'absorb' what one observes, and 'analyze' what one absorbs for any learning that could be deduced from it.

The use of 'intelligence' -- which is a product of 'information' -- contributes to what can be termed as smart living.

Being 'smart' by definition is the ability to achieve better results or higher productivity out of the given resources of money, human assistance, and time.

Information can be defined as "an intelligible fact or data that tells you what you did not already know".

It is clear that being better informed than somebody else can become a matter of competitive advantage in a given situation where that particular information is relevant.

the right time and having the information that makes the difference between a decision and a guess.

Also, being well-informed is not a one-time event -- one has to remain well-informed continually as new information often keeps coming in.

Being information savvy is a basic requirement of one's progress in any field.

There are certain characteristics of information-savvy people. Firstly, they tend to read a lot -- an individual who is averse to reading cannot be a well-informed person. They like to keep information in the categorized form as they have an innate ability to analyze the facts in front of them. They have the discipline of a logical progression of thought and quickly go through the What? Why? and Where? in any situation.

(The writer is a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau) IANS

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Udupi Palace is a South Indian vegetarian BYOB restaurant. My friend and I had dinner there shortly after I returned from south India. We were greeted warmly and the ambiance is pleasant. The menu is so enticing that we ordered too much food but it was almost as good the next day.

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Sustaining democracy and development in J&K: Looking beyond the 2024 elections

ALLEN DAVID SIMON

Jammu & Kashmir held elections after a decade in September-October 2024 for the first time following the 5th August 2019 abrogation of Article 370 (special status of the State of Jammu and Kashmir) and reorganization of the state into a union territory, which had made it subject to greater New Delhi control.

A historically unstable yet strategically important region, Jammu & Kashmir is a contested land between India, Pakistan and China, even though it is mostly administered by India. These elections, though local, shape the geopolitical status of East Asia. Moreover, Jammu & Kashmir's recent discoveries of lithium have given it a seminal role in the global semiconductor wars and the Sino-Indian rivalry. Located between three nuclear powers, Jammu & Kashmir forms the frontline in the hostilities between India and China-Pakistan that have become the prevailing feature of South Asia geopolitics.

Pointers from the election results

The October 2024 results gave the INDI Alliance, comprising the National Conference (NC), Indian National Congress (INC) and Communist Party of India (Marxist), a majority of 49 seats in the 90-member legislative assembly. The comeback of the NVC, the biggest political player in the Kashmir valley, from 15 in 2014 to 42 (23.43% votes) in 2024, coupled with the massive fall of Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) from 28 seats to just six seats (8.87% votes) has ended the bipolar competition between the Valley parties.

In parallel, the fall of the INC to only six seats have ended its relevance in the Jammu region. This coincides with the emergence of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with 29 seats (25.64% votes), with all seats from the Jammu region where the BJP has been able to consoli-

date, making the BJP the principal opposition in the union territory legislature.

The less-than-eager BJP-led Union government held elections in response to the Supreme Court verdict in December 2023 ruling that the Indian government must ensure that election is held for the legislature in Jammu and Kashmir within a year. The Modi government's apprehension towards statehood for Jammu and Kashmir and to relinquish administrative powers to an autonomous regional government is not without cause. Chinese aggression along the Line of Actual Control in the Ladakh region and the ever-present perception of the Pakistani threat across the Line of Control makes Indian insecurities a justified one. Having fought both Pakistan and China for control over the region, Indian policy has always been geared towards a firmer political grip over the region.

A historically unstable yet strategically important region, Jammu & Kashmir is a contested land between India, Pakistan and China, even though it is mostly administered by India. These elections, though local, shape the geopolitical status of East Asia

Regional-religious divides

The outcome shows a clear disjuncture between the two areas and the two communities constituting Jammu & Kashmir. Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley gave a clear verdict in favor of the INDI alliance, whereas Hindu-majority Jammu region gave overwhelming support to the BJP. This may further fracture the two communities in the region, which has already suffered through the 1990 genocide and exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits. While the Hindu vote stood firm with BJP, its failure to win goodwill in the Kashmir Valley reflects how Article 370 remains a key poll issue for Kashmiri Muslims.

Reports over the BJP's less than discrete engagement with

secessionist politicians, allegedly to fragment the Muslim vote in the Kashmir Valley between the established NC, PDP and smaller secessionist parties, had left the established parties disgruntled. The Union government was accused of using the lieutenant governor (the union territory's constitutional head) to act as the long arm of New Delhi. Further suspicion over the partial treatment against Kashmir, as Jammu received a greater increase in seats at the legislature than Kashmir, disproportionate to the population trends, left Kashmiris distrustful.

Democratization of Kashmir

While Kashmir Valley has been prone to boycotting elections to protest "Indian rule", the 2024 elections saw a clear break in this historic trend. Kashmiris had chosen to hold a "protest vote" against established "pro-India"

politicians (like the NC, INC & PDP) in favor of outsiders, who in this case were secessionists, during the parliamentary elections of May 2024. The Kashmiri voters however realigned themselves during the union territory elections, showing cohesion in support of the NC as the preferred party to represent the Valley and completely marginalizing the secessionist candidates.

(The author is a postgraduate researcher pursuing M.A. in Political Science at St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Kolkata & M.P.A. from Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi). South Asia Monitor

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MISUSE OF TAX PAYERS' FUNDS

US government has committed \$220 million to rent the Roosevelt Hotel, a Manhattan landmark owned by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), which is owned by Pakistan government. The hotel, housing over 1,200 rooms is being used to accommodate undocumented migrants for three years under a lease agreement. The deal is expected to generate significant revenue for Pakistan, to set off its ailing economy.

The arrangement has drawn sharp criticism from US Republican Vivek Ramaswamy, who expressed his disapproval in a social media post. "A taxpayer-funded hotel for illegal migrants, is owned by the Pakistani government which means NYC taxpayers are effectively paying a foreign government to house illegals in our own country. This is nuts," he said. Ramaswamy's reaction followed a report by author John LeFevre, who revealed details of the agreement on social media platform X.

LeFevre stated, "The city of New York pays \$220 million to rent the entire Roosevelt Hotel in Manhattan to house illegal migrants. The hotel is owned by the government of Pakistan, and the deal was part of a \$1.1 billion IMF bailout package to help Pakistan avoid defaulting on their international debt."

The 19-storey Roosevelt hotel was closed in 2020 but reopened under the deal. Critics like Ramaswamy have slammed the arrangement, arguing it uses taxpayer money to benefit a foreign government. The deal has reignited debates on immigration spending and government waste. The said property was supposed to return to Pakistan government after three year lease agreement, according to sources.

President elect Trump has promised a sweeping overhaul of U.S. immigration policy, one that aims to build upon and escalate the already strident measures of his first term. As per the plan he shared throughout his campaign, Trump intends to commence mass deportations of millions of people, a project that could be marked by widespread workplace raids and the involvement of the U.S. military, all while putting federal resources into expanding the border wall at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Should Trump move forward with his proposed agenda, it would represent a dramatic shift in American immigration policy, targeting millions of undocumented immigrants and redefining the nation's approach to newcomers.

Trump's dark view of immigration has helped define his political career since he launched his first presidential campaign in 2015. His rhetoric around the issue has raised concerns that his immigration agenda is rooted in an idealized fantasy of racial purity. In one of his earlier speeches, he said that migrants coming into the U.S. are "poisoning the blood of our country." He believes undocumented immigrants who commit murder have "bad genes."

Trump's proposals have reignited debates around legality, ethics and the potential societal impacts of such an expansive crackdown. Critics argue that his strategies could pose fundamental challenges to civil rights and humanitarian obligations. But Trump's campaign capitalized on rising public discontent regarding immigration and border security, framing their plans as a necessary response to what Trump describes as a national crisis.

Will Trump's new administration honor the Roosevelt Hotel deal or, will this also be eliminated under his new policy.

Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal to the author

JIM CORBETT NATIONAL PARK

— "HOME TO THE ROYAL BENGAL TIGER" —

Jim Corbett National Park is the oldest national park set amidst the foothills of the Himalayas in the Nainital district of Uttarakhand. Known for housing the endangered Bengal tiger, Corbett National Park is part of the larger Corbett Tiger Reserve.

Famous for its wildlife safaris, Jim Corbett National Park has multiple resorts set on the riverside. Home to more than 650 species of rare and migratory birds, it is a haven for bird watchers. The most popular attraction at Corbett National Park is Dhikala, a forest lodge located on the border of Patil Dun Valley, which is known for the stunning location and rich wildlife.

Only 180 vehicles are allowed to enter the national park in a day. Jim Corbett National Park remains closed from July to October during the monsoons. However, Jhirna, Dhela, and Sitabani tourism zones, remain open for tourists throughout the year. Safaris are organized in all the zones by two shifts by the forest officials in all the zones.

The Jim Corbett National Park was established in 1936 as Hailey National Park and is named after Jim Corbett who is a famous hunter and naturalist. It was the first place where Project Tiger was launched in 1973. The park is spread over an area of more than 500 sq km and is divided into 5 zones: Bijrani, Dhikala, Jhirna, Domunda and Sonanandi to promote tourism.

THINGS TO DO IN JIM CORBETT NATIONAL PARK

Jungle Safari: The jungle safaris at Jim Corbett are organized once in the morning and in the evening. Divided into five tourism zones, each zone has a restriction on the

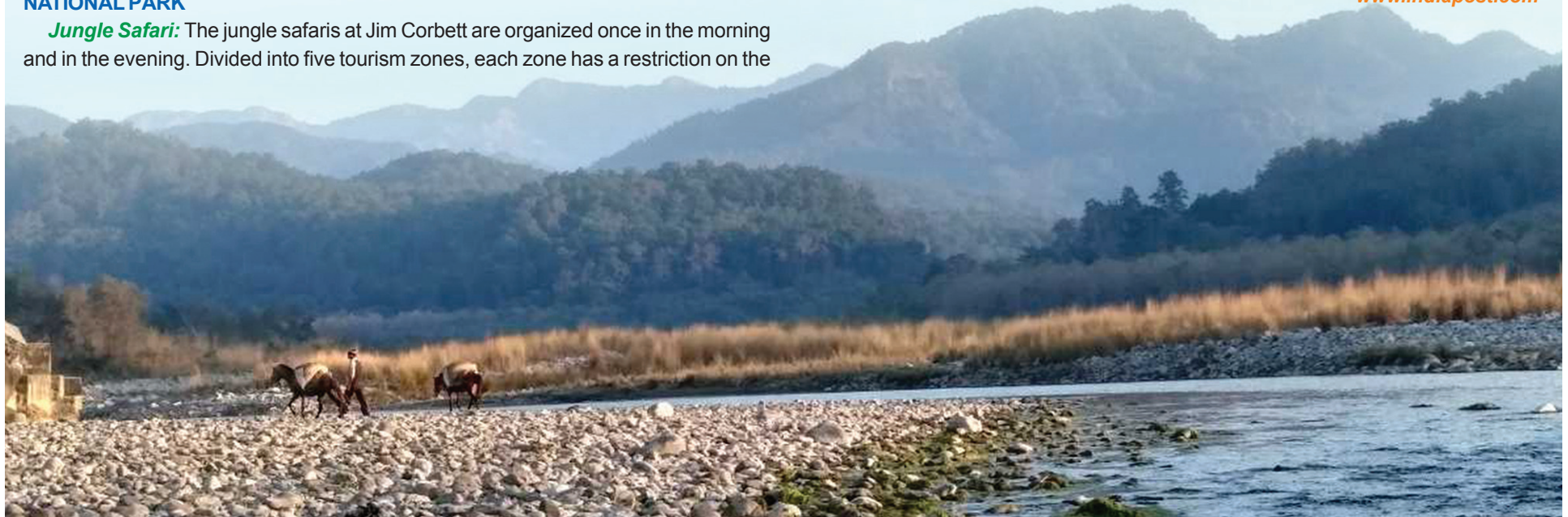
number of vehicles allowed within at a given point in time. There are two types of safaris at Jim Corbett National Park - Jeep Safari and Canter Safari.

Corbett Waterfall: Corbett Falls is a beautiful waterfall, located 25 km away from Ramnagar in Kaladhungi. Surrounded by dense forests and offering a very serene environment, this 66 ft. high waterfall is a sight to witness, especially on full-moon nights. Nature lovers often camp and come on a picnic near this waterfall. A short 2km trek leads to Corbett Waterfalls.

River Rafting in Corbett National Park: River rafting in the Kosi River at Corbett National Park is one of the most beautiful ways to enjoy its speedy waters, taking you through Class II & III rapids. This activity is meant for all - beginners or professionals. River rafting in Jim Corbett can be done only during the monsoons.

Dhikala: The Dhikala Forest Lodge is the most popular tourist attraction at Jim Corbett National Park. It is famous for spotting the Bengal tiger, spotted deer, Dhikala Chaur and the rare Hog deer. Dhikala is located 30 km inside the Dhangari gate and is open to tourists from 15 November to 15 June. Dhikala is the only tourism zone where canter safari is available. www.holiday.com

For detailed story visit www.indiapost.com



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