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ISRO's GSLV-F15 all set to launch the NVS-02 satellite on Jan. 29, from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. This will mark ISRO's 100th launch from the space centre

Woman killed, 6 injured in explosion in Jharkhand

GIRIDIH (JHARKHAND): A woman was killed and six others were injured in an explosion at a house in Jharkhand's Giridi district early on Monday, police said. The blast occurred around 1.30 am after a fire broke out at the house in the Sheetalpur locality under the jurisdiction of the Mufassil Police Station. Giridi Superintendent of Police (SP) Bimal Kumar told PTI that a fire broke out in the house, and the blast was powerful, damaging the roof and walls of the house. "The investigation is underway to ascertain the cause of the explosion," the SP said. Mufassil Police Station in-charge Shyam Kishore Mahto said the blast took place at the home of one Umesh Das. The injured were referred to Ranchi's RIMS hospital for further medical treatment, he added.

Police rescue 3 kidnapped persons in Odisha's Ganjam

BHUBANESWAR: Police on Monday rescued three persons including a man working for a financial firm in Delhi, who were allegedly kidnapped by unknown persons and threatened with a cobra in Odisha's Ganjam district, an officer said. The victims were taken to a forested area in Chikiti, where they were held captive by the kidnappers, who reportedly demanded a ransom of Rs 2 crore for their release. The matter came to light when one of the captives managed to escape and alerted the Chikiti tahasildar, who then informed police. The police conducted a raid and rescued the three other persons, the officer said. An injured cobra snake was also rescued from the room where the three persons were detained, police said.

Nagaland Congress protest against BJP's remark on Ambedkar

KOHIMA: The Congress in Nagaland on Monday staged a protest rally as part of the ongoing 'Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan Abhiyan' aimed to honour Dr BR Ambedkar and uphold the values of the Indian Constitution. Addressing the protest, Member of Lok Sabha and Nagaland Pradesh Congress Committee (NPCC) President, S Supongmeren Jamir, stated that the protest is to protest BJP leaders' remarks against Dr BR Ambedkar, the Father of the Constitution, and their alleged attempts to undermine the Constitution. He emphasised the Congress party's commitment to protecting constitutional values and ensuring justice and equality for all.

Two killed, 11 injured in head-on collision between car, truck in UP's Pratapgarh

PRATAPGARH (UP): Two people, including a woman, died and 11 others were injured on Monday in a head-on collision between a car and a truck on the Ayodhya-Prayagraj Highway, police said. The accident occurred near the closed toll plaza at Dharouli Madhupur, about 15 km from the district headquarters, when a car en route to Prayagraj collided with a truck of devotees travelling in the opposite direction, Circle Officer (CO) Shiv Narayan Vaish said. The car occupants, Manoj (50) and Sunita (50), from Mainpuri district, died in the accident, the officer said. Seven people in the car and six devotees from the mini truck, residents of Sant Kabir Nagar district, were injured in the accident, Vaish added.

Two arrested with smack worth Rs 1.23 crore in UP's Saharanpur

SAHARANPUR: Two suspected drug traffickers were arrested with 615 grams of smack, estimated to be worth Rs 1.23 crore, in this Uttar Pradesh district, police said on Monday. A joint team of the Nanota police station and the Anti-Narcotics Task Force on Sunday arrested the accused, identified as Nawab alias Junaid and Md Usman, they said. The police seized 615 grams of smack, two mobile phones, a car, and Rs 1,730 in cash from them. A case has been registered against the accused at Nanota police station. During interrogation, the accused revealed that they had purchased the smack from Moradabad at a low price and intended to sell it for a profit. However, they were apprehended before completing the deal.

Teen boy shoots himself dead with father's revolver in Solapur

MUMBAI: A 14-year-old boy allegedly committed suicide in Maharashtra's Solapur district on Monday by shooting himself with the service revolver of his father, who is part of the Sashastra Seema Bal, a police official said. The boy, a student of Class VIII, killed himself around noon when he was alone in his house in Adhegaon in Madha tehsil, the official said. "His mother found him in a pool of blood when she returned home. An accidental death case has been registered at Tembhurni police station. Further probe into the incident is underway," the official added.

It is responsibility of each nation to take back their citizens who are illegally living in US: Trump admn

PTI, WASHINGTON: The Trump administration on Monday said that it is the responsibility of each nation to take back their citizens who are illegally present in the United States in a serious and expeditious manner.

President Donald Trump has "made it clear that under his administration, America will no longer be lied to nor taken advantage of, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a strongly worded statement.

It is the responsibility of each nation to take back their citizens who are illegally present in the United States in a serious and expeditious manner, Rubio said, a day after confrontation with Colombia on the issue of taking back illegal immigrants from the US.

"Colombian President (Gustavo) Petro had authorised flights and provided

It is the responsibility of each nation to take back their citizens who are illegally present in the United States in a serious and expeditious manner, Rubio said, a day after confrontation with Colombia on the issue of taking back illegal immigrants from the US

all needed authorisations and then cancelled his authorisation when the planes were in the air," he said. "As demonstrated by today's actions, we are unwavering in our commitment to end illegal immigration and bolster America's border security." On Sunday, Colombian President Petro denied entry to US military planes carrying Colombian migrants.

The US cannot treat Colombian migrants as criminals. I deny the entry of American planes carrying Colombian migrants into our territory, Petro said on X, a move that angered Trump.

I was just informed that two repatriation flights

from the United States, with a large number of illegal Criminals, were not allowed to land in Colombia. This order was given by Colombia's Socialist President Gustavo Petro, who is already very unpopular amongst his people, an outraged Trump said on Truth Social, a media platform owned by him.

Petro's denial of these flights jeopardised the National Security and Public Safety of the United States, Trump said.

The US President directed his administration to immediately take urgent and decisive retaliatory measures. He ordered visa restrictions and 25 per cent

tariffs on all Colombian incoming goods, which would be raised to 50 per cent in one week.

The Colombian Government immediately responded by saying that it was sending a presidential plane for the dignified return of its people from the United States.

Later in the night, the US paused sanctions and tariffs on Colombia after it agreed to accept all the terms of President Trump, including accepting flights of deported migrants from America, the White House said. The Government of Colombia has agreed to all of President Trump's terms, including the unrestricted acceptance of all illegal aliens from Colombia returned from the US, including on US military aircraft, without limitation or delay, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said.

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HC TAKES PROACTIVE STANCE TO CLOSE GAP IN NOISE MONITORING

In response, senior Adv Coelho Pereira argued that locals' complaints were often exaggerated. "Every time they come, they create a hue and cry. The Amicus Curiae does not visit these locations but relies on reports from the petitioners," he stated.

Justice Karnik then instructed Adv Costa Frias to carefully select a name for the NMC, ignoring Adv Coelho Pereira's objections. "I will consult with an NGO for a name. I will ask senior advocate Norma Alvares to suggest a suitable candidate," Costa Frias responded, emphasising the need for an 'absolutely neutral' individual.

Adv Coelho Pereira continued to question the purpose of the NMC, prompting Justice Karnik to remind him that the committee was part of a previous judgment and could not be disregarded.

The hearing then shifted to a discussion about the willingness of the NMC members to continue their roles. Dominic Pereira and Devanand Shirodkar, who were present in court, both confirmed they would remain on the committee. However, petitioner Desmond Alvares raised an objection regarding Pereira's position, citing a potential conflict of interest. Alvares claimed that Pereira, as president of the Anjuna Comunidade, had permitted five of the most noise-polluting establishments to operate on land owned by the Comunidade.

"This is a clear case of conflict of interest," Alvares argued. "How can someone who has allowed these businesses to operate be expected to monitor their noise levels?"

Pereira denied any involvement in granting land, stating, "I am the president of Anjuna Comunidade, but that does not mean I have given the land."

Amicus Curiae Adv Costa Frias assured the court that he would investigate the claim and the hearing was adjourned to Wednesday, February 5, 2025.

After the hearing, local resident Alex Noronha from Anjuna expressed relief, stating, "It's a huge relief that the High Court is appointing an independent individual to conduct checks. The authorities have been trying to mislead the court by claiming that no violations occurred once the police arrived. It's about time they realise they can't fool the court anymore."

DRAMATIC TWIST: POST-MORTEM REVEALS ARAMBOL ASSAULT VICTIM DIED OF 'HEART ATTACK'

According to the police, Surrender and other staff members of the Sea Lounge Beach Shack, with common intent, engaged in a verbal altercation with Bandekar over the issue of shifting chairs arranged on Arambol Beach by the shack where the accused were employed. The quarrel escalated, and in a fit of rage, the accused allegedly assaulted Bandekar with slaps, kicks, and sharp and hard objects, causing him serious bodily injuries.

To save himself from further assault, the victim managed to escape from the spot. However, after running a short distance, he collapsed. He was shifted to the Community Health Centre (CHC) in Tuem, where the medical officer on duty declared him brought dead.

Mandrem police have registered the case under Section 103 read with 3(5) of BNS 2023.

Meanwhile, the body was handed over to the relatives for last rites.

On Monday morning, forensic experts, along with Mandrem police, visited Arambol Beach to further investigate the case.

Mandrem PI Sherif Jacques is conducting further investigations under the guidance of Pernem SDPO Ashish Shirodkar and SP North, Rahul Gupta, IPS.

Condemning the incident, Congress vice president Sunil Kawthankar said, "Serious criminal incidents are being reported in the State, and in the last two months, three murder cases have been reported in beach shacks. Goa is known for being a safe tourist destination, and these incidents will send the wrong signal. Law and order has completely failed in Goa."

Goa Forward Party's North Goa president, Deepak Kalgutkar, said, "The incident that happened on Sunday, in which Amar Bandekar was murdered, is a complete failure of the Home Department. This is due to inadequate policing in the tourism belt of Goa. There have been incidents where police from other States have picked staff and workers of shacks and restaurants in Goa, who have been found to be history-sheeters. This incident paints the State in a negative light, and the incident in Harmal is a result of the loosened guard of the Home Department."

Charlie Smith, a British tourist on holiday in Benaulim, said, "We have been coming to Goa for years, and one thing that has never changed is that we have always felt safe. While it is still how it used to be in South Goa, with some changes over time, we are quite shocked by the repeated incidents of violence in North Goa that we are hearing and reading about. We get messages from our friends and family back home, as they don't know whether it's South Goa or North Goa. There was already one death at a shack, then one tourist was beaten black and blue, and now a local resident

has been killed after an argument with shack staff. What is going on? These kinds of attacks have to stop. Aren't there police to deal with incidents before they escalate?"

"I must clarify that I have not seen this in the South, but it is a feeling based on what has happened in the North recently. This is also something I witnessed when I visited a beach on that side of Goa. Why do the waiters at these shacks have easy access to long bamboo sticks, which they use to intimidate visitors to their shack or near their shack if there is a problem? This is very scary. It is as though they are armed with weapons, based on how these objects are reportedly used. Can't there be a check on this? This is definitely ruining not just the reputation of Goa but also the reputation of shacks, as these incidents keep taking place, as they have in the last few weeks. This was not the case earlier," said Lily Taylor, a UK tourist in Cavelossim.

MULGAO IMPASSE: VILLAGERS-VEDANTA MEET FAILS TO BREAK ICE

"We have been proactive in addressing compensation issues and request concerned entities to share the long pending details we have sought and which will help bring closure to the matter," the company said.

On Monday, the truck operators from Bicholim protested against the mining company's decision to outsource trucks through a contractor for ore transportation.

The truck operators stopped their operations and staged a protest in front of the company's gate at Bicholim, demanding to withdraw trucks hired by them.

Truck Owners Association of Sesa Mining president Rajaram 'Satish' Gaonkar said that after resumption of mining activity they were struggling to make minimum two trips per day, while the company had now brought 12-wheeler trucks to transport ore.

"We will not allow the company to use their trucks. We have 180 truck owners and we will not operate our trucks till the time the company withdraws the trucks outsourced by them to transport ore," warned Gaonkar.

GBS OUTBREAK: MAHARASHTRA REPORTS FIRST SUSPECTED DEATH

Following his death, the case was referred to the Solapur government hospital.

"A primary report has indicated that he had contracted GBS," the official said.

Dr Thakur said they also performed a clinical autopsy to ascertain the exact cause of death.

The primary report indicated the death was due to GBS, he said. The blood samples of the deceased have been sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune for further examination, he added.

A state health department official earlier in the day said, "The total number of GBS cases in Pune on Sunday increased to 101, comprising 68 males and 33 females. Of these, 16 patients are on ventilator support. One suspected death has been reported in Solapur."

GBS is a rare condition that causes sudden numbness and muscle weakness, with symptoms including severe weakness in the limbs, loose motions, etc.

Bacterial and viral infections generally lead to GBS as they weaken the immunity of patients, and in the present case, the disease is suspected to have been triggered by contaminated water, according to doctors.

State Health Minister Prakash Abitkar inspected a well in Nanded village on Sinhgad Road, from where the water is supplied to adjoining villages, and said the state health department and the Pune Municipal Corporation's health officials are taking necessary measures to curb the cases.

"I will preside over a review meeting, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) will be decided to address the causes such as contaminated water or any other causes," he said.

He said the source of water in the well was probed by expert teams, and based on their reports, a decision will be taken.

Abitkar said, "Generally, death does not occur due to this disease. However, in an unfortunate case, a patient suspected to have contracted GBS died in Solapur. Precautions are being taken, and awareness is being created to ensure no further casualties."

The minister further stated that the ailment has been included in the Mahatma Phule Health Scheme, under which patients can avail treatment up to Rs 2 lakh, and as deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar stated on Sunday, a separate budgetary provision will be made.

According to civic officials, the Pune civic body has set up a 45-bed facility at Kamla Nehru Hospital to treat GBS patients. Meanwhile, the Rapid Response Team (RRT), set up by the state and civic health departments, continued surveillance in the affected Sinhgad Road areas.

A total of 25,578 houses have been surveyed so far, including 15,761 in the Pune Municipal Corporation limits, 3,719 in Chinchwad Municipal Corporation limits, and 6,098 houses in the district's rural areas, an official said.

UK Trade Secy Jonathan Reynolds to visit India in Feb to finalise FTA talks

PTI, LONDON: Britain's Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Jonathan Reynolds, on Monday revealed plans to visit India next month with a focus on finalising the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations as part of the UK government's ambition to elevate the bilateral partnership across all sectors.

Addressing India Global Forum's (IGF) annual UK-India Parliamentary Lunch at the House of Lords complex in London, Reynolds highlighted the strength of the bilateral trading relationship which stood at GBP 41 billion in the year until September 2024.

However, the Cabinet minister went on to reaffirm the British government's commitment to improve trade between India as the fifth and the UK as the sixth largest economies of the world.

"I want to reaffirm the UK's commitment to deliver growth for both coun-

tries through the trade deal that we're talking about, through the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and the Technology Security Initiative; and I can let you know exclusively, I hear what you say about urgency, [that] I've just been finalising my own visit to India next month to make sure we proceed on that basis," said Jonathan Reynolds.

The visit comes against the backdrop of British Prime Minister Keir Starmer announcing an early 2025 relaunch of UK-India FTA talks, stalled by general elections in both countries last year. The announcement followed his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Brazil last November.

"India is a top priority partner for the UK, and we want to elevate that ambition across all aspects of our relationship, but also to take it to new heights," he added.

CENTRE DEPLOYS EXPERT TEAM IN MAHARASHTRA

The team will work closely with the state health departments and take stock of on-ground situation and recommend necessary public health interventions. The central team has been tasked with monitoring the situation and coordinating with the state.

Meanwhile, the Rapid Response Team (RRT) and the Pune Municipal Corporation's health department continued surveillance in the affected Sinhgad Road area in Pune.

"A seven-member high-level team of experts has been deployed in Maharashtra to assist the state in the monitoring and management of the increasing cases of GBS," an official source said.

US SUSPENDS ALL FOREIGN AID

"He is initiating a review of all foreign assistance programmes to ensure they are efficient and consistent with US foreign policy under the America First agenda," Bruce said.

She added that the secretary is proud to protect America's investment with a deliberate and judicious review of how to spend foreign assistance dollars overseas.

"The mandate from the American people was clear - we must refocus on American national interests. The Department and USAID take their role as stewards of taxpayer dollars very seriously," State Department spokesperson said.

The implementation of Trump's Executive Order in this regard and the secretary's direction furthers that mission, she added.

Bruce reminded reporters that Rubio has said, "Every dollar we spend, every programme we fund and every policy we pursue must be justified with the answer to three simple questions: Does it make America safer? Does it make America stronger? Does it make America more prosperous?"

In 2023, USAID distributed nearly \$45 billion in foreign aid to 158 countries. This included \$400 million to Bangladesh, \$231 million to Pakistan, \$1 billion to Afghanistan, \$175 million to India, \$118 million to Nepal, and \$123 million to Sri Lanka.

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE COMES INTO FORCE IN UTTARAKHAND

"It is nearly three years since I made that commitment to the people of the state and now the day has finally arrived when we are fulfilling that promise," he said.

Trying to bust the myths surrounding it, Dhami said the UCC is not meant to target any religion or community as often thought.

"It is a constitutional tool to end all legal discriminations in the name of caste, religion or community. It will put an end to all evil social practices like 'Halala' and 'Iddat'," Dhami said.

The UCC does not interfere with the marital rituals of any community, he said, adding that most Islamic countries of the world have implemented such laws.

Explaining why Scheduled Tribes have been kept out of its ambit, he said it has been done so that it does not intrude upon their unique social and marital practices.

Denying allegations that by making the registration of live-in relationships mandatory the UCC usurps the privacy of live-in couples, Dhami said it was meant only to protect the lives of women by keeping a digital record of their relationships so that they are not subjected to violence.

Citing an instance, he said it will help prevent brutal incidents like the one in 2022 in which Shraddha Walkar was allegedly killed by her live-in partner Aftab who kept her body in a fridge after chopping it into pieces.

"I hope the Gangotri of UCC after originating from Uttarakhand will flow to the rest of the country and inspire the whole nation," he said.

Former Chief Secretary Shatrughna Singh, who headed the drafting committee that framed the rules and regulations of the UCC, said special attention was paid during the framing of rules to keep the processes simple, user-friendly and transparent.

It has been ensured that the applications received for registration of marriage, divorce and live-in relationships are disposed in a time-bound manner.

The option of online registration will spare people the trouble of running around government offices to register their marriages, divorce and live-in relationships.

The online registration will also create an authentic, elaborate and almost real-time database of the people of the state, he said.

He praised individuals associated with the UCC drafting committee and those who accompanied him on the panel to frame its rules for their hardwork and knowledge they brought to the exercise.

"We are scripting the golden moment in India's constitutional history today by implementing the UCC," he said.

It marks a historic moment as Uttarakhand is the first state in independent India to bring into effect a UCC, modelled basically upon the vision of a single set of laws applying to all citizens, regardless of their religion as enshrined

