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Fifty drops of kindness



(l-r): Nazim Ali with Airedale Hospital staff and Mohammed Azeem

Nazim Ali marks milestone with gifts for children in hospital

By the time Nazim Ali reached Ward 17 at Airedale Hospital, he had already made history of a quiet, human kind. The bags in his hands - filled with cuddly toys, play sets and baby gifts - marked the 50th time he has delivered presents to children in hospital over the past 13 years. This week's visit carries particular meaning. It coincides with 27th Rajab, one of the holiest nights in the Islamic calendar, commemorating the Prophet Muhammad's (BPUH) spiritual journey from Makkah to Jerusalem and beyond. For Nazim, a multi-award-winning community campaigner from Bradford, it is a moment to translate faith into action. "We wanted to spread goodness and positivity at a time when families are under enormous stress," he said.

Continued on page 4

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Six continents down - just one frozen frontier to go for avid travel explorer

By the time most people are still debating their next city break, one secondary school teacher has already crossed deserts, rainforests, megacities and mountain ranges on six continents.

This year Bradford-born explorer, Imran Fazil, intends to step onto Antarctica - completing a personal ambition to set foot on every continent on Earth.

It is a goal shaped less by luxury than by curiosity.

Fazil has travelled to 51 countries so far, moving fast and light, favouring experiences over indulgence. Hiking trails, long scenic drives and local museums matter more to him than five-star hotels or fine dining. The payoff, he says, is memory rather than comfort - and the freedom to travel more often.

Antarctica, the last blank space on his map, has been years in the making. His plan is to travel first through Argentina before embarking on an expedition cruise from Ushuaia, the southernmost city in the world, across the Drake Passage to the white continent.

"I'm excited to see the enormous icebergs, the wildlife, the dramatic landscapes," Fazil says.

"There are things you can only experience there - the midnight sun, the aurora australis, the feeling of standing somewhere so untouched."

The journey will cap a decade of tightly planned travel, fitted around work, family life and responsibility. Fazil does not disappear for months at a time. Instead, he builds short, focused trips into the gaps of everyday life, an approach he says has allowed him to see far more of the world than traditional long-haul holidays ever could.

Of all the continents he has explored, Asia holds the deepest pull. "It's the most blissful and diverse," he says, pointing to its scale, landscapes and cultural depth.

Japan remains his standout destination - a place where futuristic cities sit alongside ancient rituals, where natural beauty is matched by a culture of respect and hospitality.

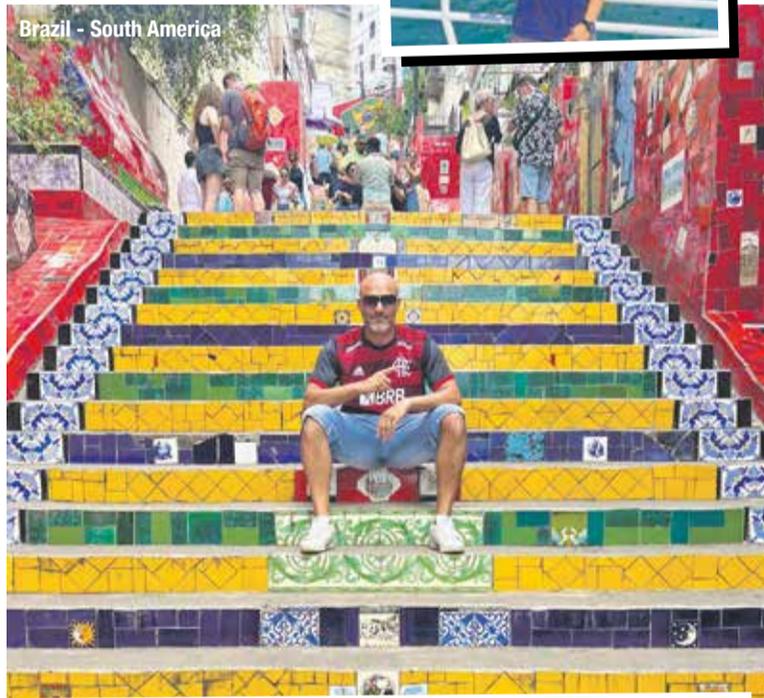
Travel, for Fazil, has also become a way of understanding faith, gratitude and perspective. "It's opened my eyes to different cultures and expanded my horizons," he adds.

"It brings a sense of wonder and gratitude into my life. Alhamdulillah."

Along the way, he has also ticked off six of the world's seven New Wonders - milestones that many travellers only dream of. They include the Colosseum, Christ the Redeemer, Machu Picchu, Chichén Itzá, Petra and the Great Wall of China.

Only one remains. After Antarctica, Fazil hopes to visit the Taj Mahal, completing not just a checklist, but a personal chapter of exploration that has reshaped how he sees the world.

His guiding principle is simple, and borrowed from a line often attributed to St Augustine: 'the world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page'. For Imran Fazil, the pages are nearly all turned. Only the last, frozen chapter remains.



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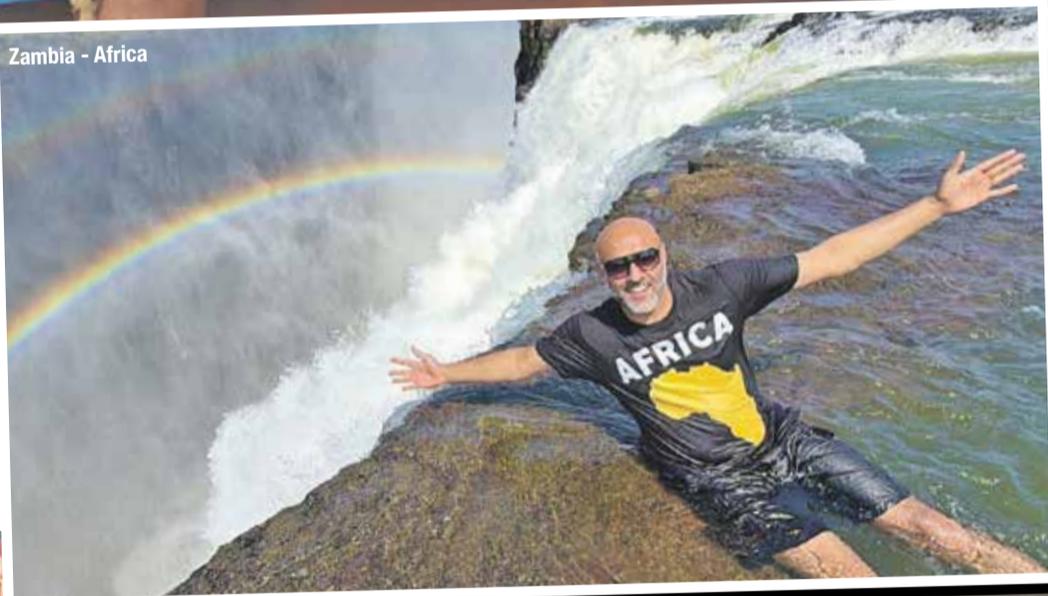
Imran Fazil has travelled to 51 countries so far. Pictured here in Thailand



Greece - Europe



Zambia - Africa



Imran Fazil's favourite country - Japan

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Fifty drops of kindness

Nazim Ali marks milestone with gifts for children in hospital

Cover story continued

“Having a child in hospital is frightening. These gifts are a reminder that the wider community cares.”

Dozens of presents were delivered to children aged from newborn to 16, for every child on the ward, regardless of faith.

Ali’s motivation is deeply personal. As a five-year-old, he spent months in hospital battling tuberculosis. “I can empathise with what these children are going through,” he said. “Those hundreds of smiles over the years have enriched me and humbled me.”

The initiative, called ‘Creating Smiles’, began in 2013 and now runs five times a year - for Eid, Christmas, Easter and the Prophet Muhammad’s birthday, as well as 27th Rajab - supporting both Airedale Hospital and Bradford Royal Infirmary.

Thousands of pounds’ worth of gifts have been distributed.

This week’s visit was made with Mohammed Azeem, a long-time supporter and “friend of Airedale Hospital”, who spent more than 40 days in a coma with Covid-19 during the pandemic. The project is sponsored by Bradford-based Saveco Cash & Carry, whose managing director Shiraz Ahmed, alongside Fairaz Ahmed, has backed the scheme for years.

“We are truly humbled to support this fabulous initiative,” Shiraz Ahmed said.

“Knowing so many children will feel joy when they receive their presents fills us with happiness. Giving back is part of our responsibility as a Bradford business.”

“Knowing so many children will feel joy when they receive their presents fills us with happiness. Giving back is part of our responsibility as a Bradford business.”

Karen Reece, play leader at Airedale NHS Foundation Trust, said: “These gifts will be hugely appreciated by the children and families on the unit. A huge thank you to Nazim, Azeem and Saveco for their continued support.”

Nazim dedicates each drop to the values he says lie at the heart of Islam. “The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) taught kindness and compassion to all, particularly those in need,” he said.

“These are universal values. They bring people together.”

His work stretches far beyond toy drops. Through the Nazim Ali Foundation, he runs the Khidma Community Kitchen in Manningham, serving hot meals every week. Since March 2024, more than 15,000 meals have been provided. Over the past 13 years, Nazim has raised almost £1.3m for charitable causes.

In recognition of his work, he received a British Empire Medal in the 2025 King’s New Year Honours, attended the Queen’s Garden Party in 2022, and was awarded an honorary fellowship by the University of Bradford in 2023.

Yet standing in a hospital corridor, those accolades feel distant. What matters is a small hand clutching a new toy, a moment of distraction, a spark of joy.





Ishfaq Farooq is a director MyLahore and dessert brand Wunder Crumble

MyLahore and Wunder Crumble boss becomes Bradford Hospitals Charity's first-ever ambassador

When Bradford Hospitals Charity announced its first-ever official ambassador this week, the choice felt less like a new appointment and more like the formal recognition of a relationship years in the making.

Ishfaq Farooq, a Bradford-born entrepreneur and director of MyLahore and dessert brand Wunder Crumble, has been quietly supporting local hospitals for more than a decade - providing meals for staff, funding furniture for wards and backing patient care projects long before any title existed.

Now, as the charity enters a new phase of growth, Farooq will act as its public champion, embedding fundraising and awareness into the large-scale community events delivered by the MyLahore group.

Recent examples include Wunder Winterland, a festive attraction that drew many thousands of visitors and raised £1,500 for the charity. Future events will place Bradford Hospitals Charity at their core, turning popular gatherings into platforms for sustained community giving.

Initial fundraising will focus on the charity's "Home from Home" appeal, which aims to build a kitchen and dining space for families whose premature or seriously ill babies are

being treated at Bradford Royal Infirmary's neonatal unit - a place to rest, eat and regain a sense of normality during long hospital stays.

"These events show how community-led initiatives can do more than entertain," Farooq said. "They can create safe, inclusive spaces while supporting causes that matter.

"Bradford is my home. Our family has used these hospitals for generations. Bradford Teaching Hospitals isn't just a service to us - it's like family."

Laura Riach, director of Bradford Hospitals Charity, said the appointment reflected years of commitment. "I couldn't think of anyone better as our first ambassador. Ishfaq has been unbelievably generous for more than 10 years," she said.

"We're excited to work with him as we grow the charity and launch the Home from Home appeal, which will provide free accommodation and better facilities for families of babies in intensive care. It's a cause very close to his heart."

Bradford Hospitals Charity works alongside more than 8,000 NHS staff, funding equipment, research, services and spaces that fall outside NHS budgets but make a profound difference to patients and their families.

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Britain's road reckoning

Vow to cut deaths by two-thirds in radical safety shake-up

Young and inexperienced drivers have been placed at the centre of the government's most radical road safety overhaul in more than a decade, after ministers conceded that a failure to tackle risk among newly qualified motorists has helped entrench Britain's stubbornly high death toll on the roads.

Drivers aged 17 to 24 make up just 6% of licence holders, yet are involved in almost a quarter of all fatal and serious collisions - a disparity ministers now describe as untenable.

Under new proposals, learner drivers could be required to complete a mandatory learning period of three or six months before being allowed to take a driving test, forcing greater exposure to night driving, adverse weather and heavy traffic.

The measures form part of a sweeping new road safety strategy, the first comprehensive plan of its kind in more than ten years, which aims to reduce road deaths and serious injuries by 65% by 2035, rising to 70% for children under 16.

Campaigners say the scale of ambition reflects the severity of a crisis that has been allowed to stagnate for too long.

Around four people are killed on Britain's roads every day, with thousands more left seriously injured each year. Over the past decade, 22 European countries have made faster progress in cutting fatalities, pushing the UK down international safety rankings and prompting warnings that the country has endured a "lost decade" of road safety policy.

Alongside action on young drivers, ministers are also preparing to confront drink and drug driving - still one of the leading causes of road deaths. One in six fatalities in 2023 involved alcohol.

The government will consult on lowering the drink-drive limit in England and Wales, which has remained unchanged since 1967 and is currently the highest in Europe.

The consultation will also explore preventative technologies such as alcohol interlock devices, which prevent vehicles from starting if a driver is over the legal limit, and new powers allowing police to suspend licences for those suspected of drink or drug driving offences.

Some offenders could, in future, be required to have an interlock fitted as a condition of being allowed back on

Over the past decade, 22 European countries have made faster progress in cutting fatalities, pushing the UK down international safety rankings and prompting warnings that the country has endured a "lost decade" of road safety policy.

the road.

Older motorists will also face new scrutiny as Britain's population ages and the number of drivers over 70 continues to rise. Ministers will consult on mandatory eyesight testing for older drivers, while developing options for cognitive testing, arguing that the aim is to protect road users without unnecessarily stripping people of independence.

The strategy also targets a growing range of enforcement gaps, including illegal and so-called "ghost" number plates designed to evade camera systems, uninsured driving, and vehicles without a valid MOT.

At the same time, 18 new vehicle safety technologies - including autonomous emergency braking and lane-keeping assistance - will be mandated, bringing Great Britain into line with European standards and requiring manufacturers to adopt consistent safety requirements.

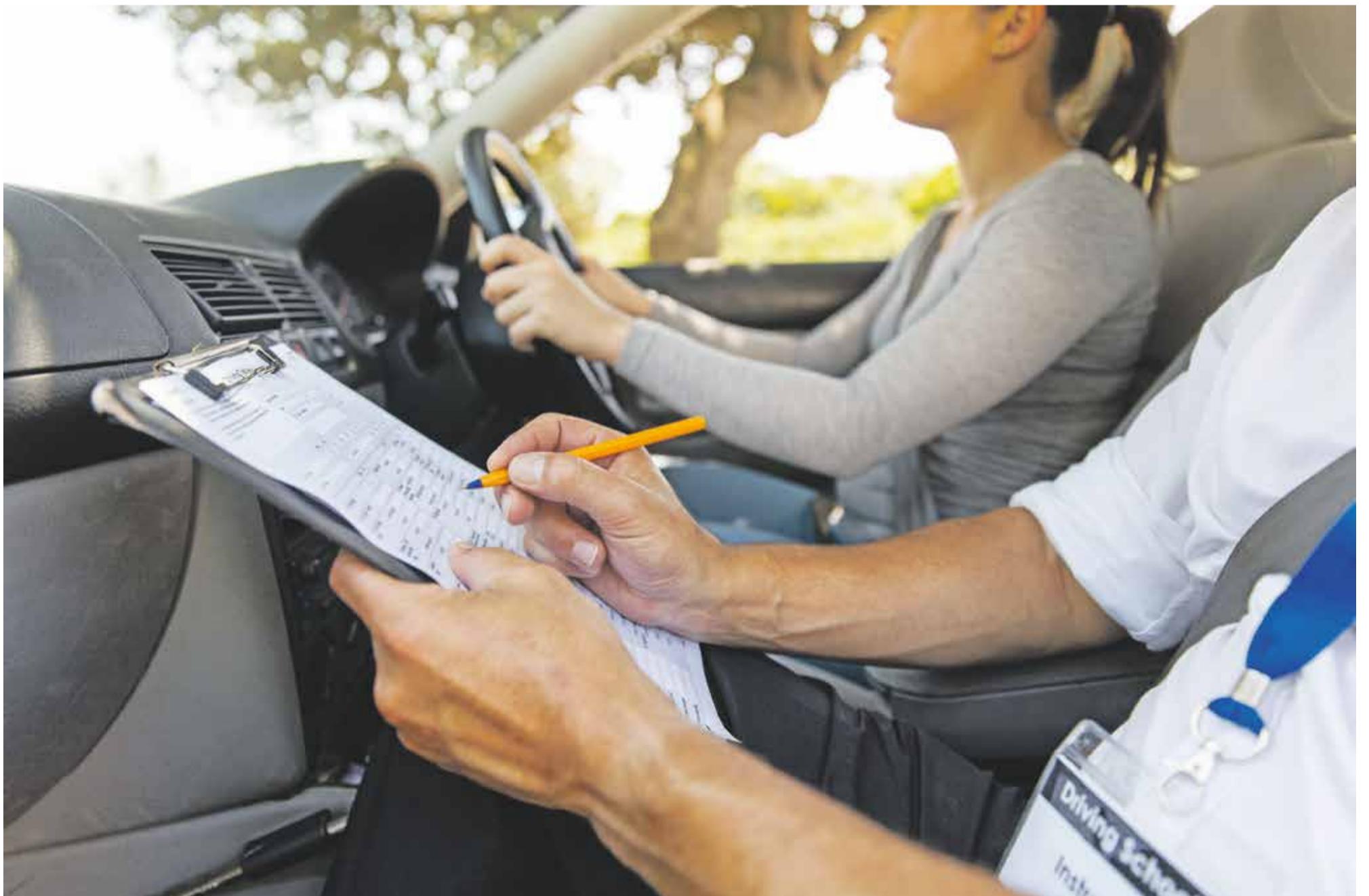
A new Road Safety Investigation Branch will analyse collision patterns using linked police and healthcare data, with the aim of identifying root causes and preventing repeat tragedies. Oversight will sit with a new Road Safety Board chaired by the local

transport minister and supported by an expert advisory panel drawn from local authorities, emergency services, active travel groups and road safety organisations.

Vulnerable road users remain a central concern. Motorcyclists account for just 1% of traffic but 21% of road deaths, while children from the most deprived neighbourhoods are four times more likely to be injured as pedestrians than those in the least deprived areas. The strategy includes consultations on reforming motorcycle training, testing and licensing, alongside rural road safety trials.

Work-related driving is another overlooked risk. An estimated one in three road deaths involves someone driving or riding for work, prompting the launch of a national work-related road safety charter aimed at employers across the public and private sectors.

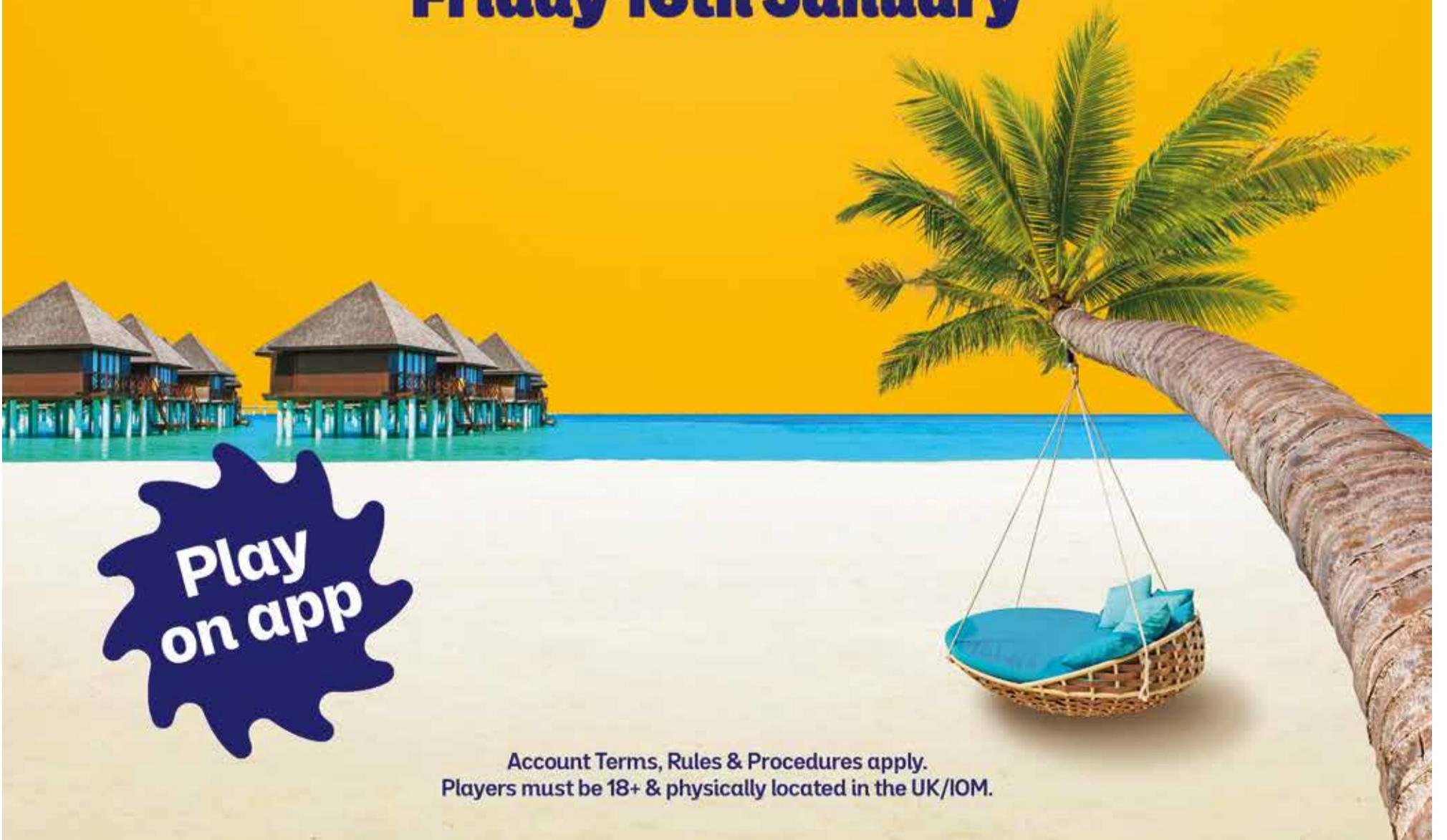
Campaigners broadly welcomed the scale of the intervention, while stressing that delivery would be key. Meera Naran MBE, whose eight-year-old son Dev was killed in a road traffic collision, said the strategy was long overdue and praised the government for committing to legislative change that could prevent future deaths.





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Architects of Bradford's cultural renaissance recognised with MBEs



The leaders behind one of the most ambitious cultural regeneration projects in recent British history have been recognised in the King's New Year's Honours, with two of the organisers of Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture awarded MBEs for services to culture.

Shanaz Gulzar, the creative director of Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture, and Dan Bates, its executive director, have been honoured for their role in reshaping the cultural and civic life of one of England's youngest and most diverse cities.

The awards mark a significant moment for Bradford, whose year as UK City of Culture has drawn millions of visitors, mobilised tens of thousands of residents and helped overturn long-standing national narratives about post-industrial towns in the north of England.

Gulzar, an acclaimed artist, producer and broadcaster, led the creation of a programme that placed Bradford's communities at its centre, while connecting local stories to national and international audiences. Working across film, visual arts, theatre and public space, she steered a year-long programme rooted in the district's heritage, creativity and global connections.

Previously a producer at Manchester International Festival, Gulzar is also known to television audiences through BBC programmes including Yorkshire Walks and the documentary Hidden Histories: The Lost Portraits of Bradford. Her work on Bradford 2025, however, has been widely seen as career-defining.

"This honour isn't just for me," she said. "It reflects the work of all my remarkable colleagues. The people of our city and district have completely owned this year, which has been a privilege and a delight to witness. I am grateful and humbled by this recognition."

Bates returned to West Yorkshire in 2022 to lead Bradford Culture Company at a pivotal moment, overseeing the organisation's operations alongside major capital projects, skills and training initiatives, and one of the largest cultural volunteering programmes seen in the UK. His partnership with Gulzar proved central to translating artistic ambition into large-scale delivery.

Before Bradford, Bates spent 13 years as chief executive of Sheffield Theatres, where he led the organisation to national and international acclaim, including four consecutive years as the UK's



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During his tenure, Sheffield premiered productions such as Everybody's Talking About Jamie, Life of Pi and Standing at the Sky's Edge, all of which went on to major national and international success. In 2022, he was ranked among the most influential figures in British theatre.

"I am thrilled and humbled," Bates said. "Working on Bradford 2025 has been a huge privilege and a career highlight. This incredible year belongs to our brilliant team and to the people of Bradford, who welcomed the designation with open arms."

Delivered by Bradford Culture Company Limited, the year-long celebration has reached every corner of the district, from city centre venues to towns, villages and green spaces. Early estimates suggest more than 3 million people attended over 5,000 events, with audiences drawn from all 30 wards of Bradford and from across the UK and beyond.

Residents were not just spectators. More than 87,000 people actively participated in events, supported by over 2,700 volunteers. Local feedback indicates improvements in wellbeing, increased civic pride and stronger connections between communities.

The programme also delivered lasting structural change. Bradford 2025 invested in 30 cultural organisations, supported more than 650 local artists and creative groups, and provided training opportunities for 5,500 people. Young people were central to the strategy, with apprenticeships, young creative schemes, engagement across 160 schools and the establishment of a Youth Board designed to open pathways into creative careers.

Economically, the impact has been equally significant. The designation is forecast to attract 15.5 million visitors and generate an additional £136.9m in visitor spend, contributing to up to £389m in overall economic growth for the district. Tourism, city centre footfall and overnight stays have all risen, alongside increased inward investment.

While the official year concludes in 2025, the work will continue. Bradford Culture Company will operate beyond the designation, in partnership with Bradford Council, to sustain cultural growth and build on what many now describe as a turning point for the city. A full economic and social impact report is due at the end of 2026.

Charity urges older people to check Pension Credit eligibility



Thousands of pensioners across the UK are struggling through the winter in acute financial hardship, with many skipping meals, cutting back on washing and spending hours in public places to keep warm, according to a charity warning that vital financial support is going unclaimed.

The charity Independent Age said its helpline has received thousands of calls this winter from distressed older people on low incomes, as the cost of living crisis continues to bear down on those in later life.

Advisers described hearing harrowing accounts of pensioners rationing food, avoiding heating altogether and limiting themselves to a single small meal a day in an effort to cope.

Despite the scale of need, the charity warned that large numbers of pensioners are missing out on Pension Credit, a government income top-up worth more than £4,000 a year on average.

Nationally, take-up remains stubbornly low, leaving tens of thousands of eligible households without support they are legally entitled to at a time when living costs remain high.

Campaigners said the failure to reach pensioners who qualify for Pension Credit is worsening poverty among older people and forcing many into impossible

choices between heating and eating.

Pension Credit also unlocks access to other crucial support, including free TV licences for over-75s, free NHS prescriptions, housing benefit, council tax support and free eye tests.

Independent Age said winter had become an especially punishing period for pensioners on fixed incomes, with energy bills and food prices continuing to stretch already limited budgets.

Advisers reported callers who were washing less to save money, relying on public spaces such as libraries or shopping centres to stay warm, and cutting back on essentials to survive.

The charity is urging pensioners aged 66 and over, as well as their families and carers, to check whether they may be eligible for Pension Credit - even if they own their home or have some savings.

Eligibility can be checked using the Pension Credit calculator on the government website www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator, or by calling the Pension Credit claim line on 0800 99 1234.

Independent Age is also calling for greater awareness of the benefit and improved support for those struggling with the application process. Its free helpline, 0800 319 6789, offers confidential advice and assistance.

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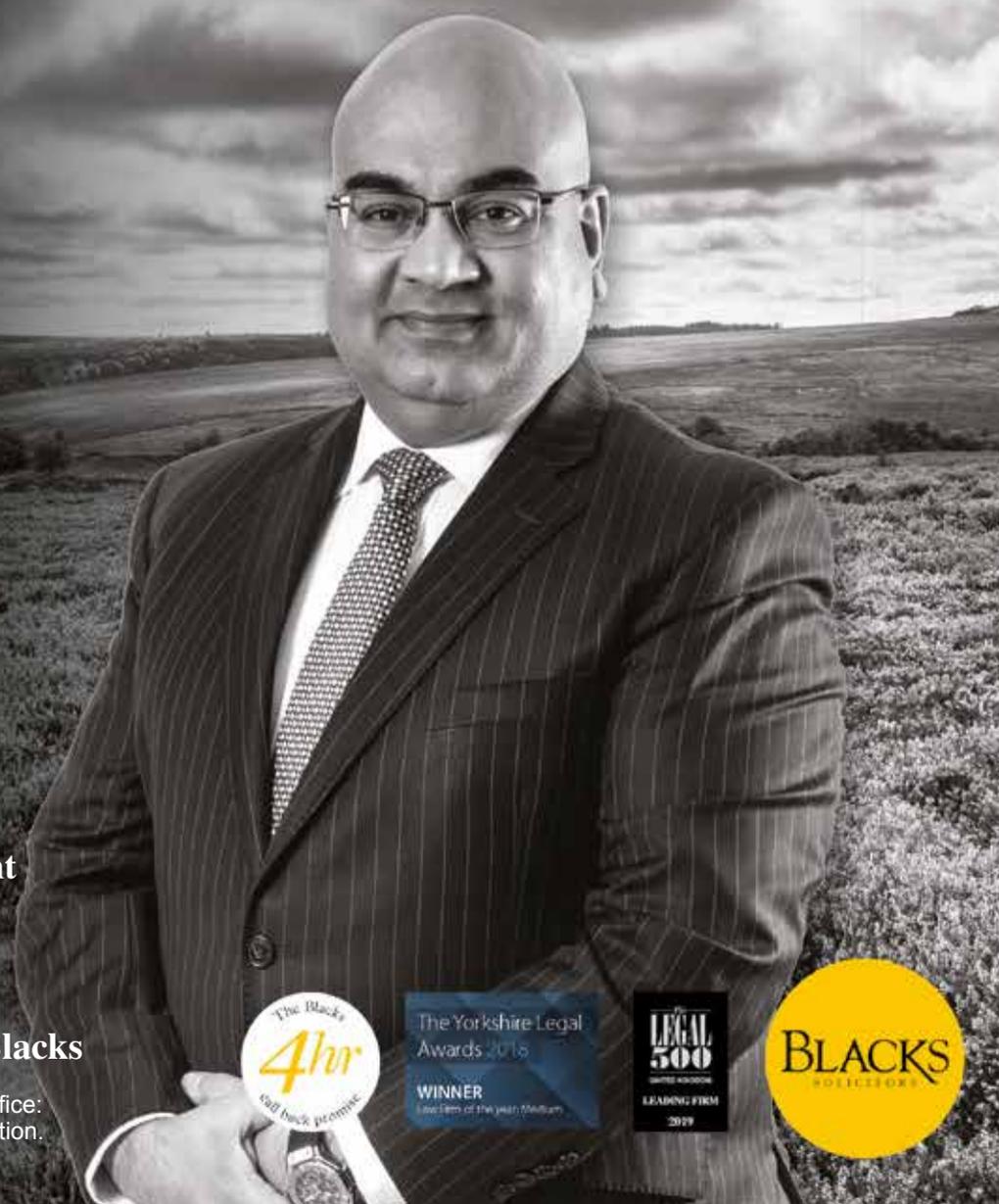
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Menopause and prostate conditions to be prioritised under NHS online hospital plans

Menopause care and prostate conditions are to be among the first priorities for the NHS's new online hospital, a flagship digital reform intended to change how patients in England access specialist care.

The service, known as NHS Online, is expected to begin treating patients from 2027 and will initially focus on nine common conditions, including severe menopause symptoms, menstrual disorders linked to endometriosis or fibroids, and prostate problems such as enlargement and raised prostate-specific antigen (PSA) levels.

Announced as part of a wider drive to modernise the health service, the online hospital will allow patients to be triaged through the NHS App, consult specialists by video and be monitored from home, reducing the need for hospital visits.

Ministers and NHS leaders say the model could help tackle long waiting lists and reduce inequalities in access to care.

Under the plans, patients whose GP refers them for specialist treatment will be able to choose NHS Online instead of a traditional hospital appointment.

While there will be no physical site, patients will be digitally connected to clinicians across England, regardless of where they live. Tests, scans and procedures will still take place at local hospitals or hubs, with clinicians

reviewing results remotely.

NHS England estimates the service could deliver the equivalent of up to 8.5 million virtual appointments and assessments in its first three years – around four times the annual outpatient activity of an average NHS trust.

Alongside women's health and prostate care, the initial conditions covered will include eye diseases such as cataracts, glaucoma and macular degeneration, as well as iron deficiency anaemia and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

The online hospital will not replace face-to-face care, NHS leaders stressed. Patients who need physical examinations or procedures will continue to receive them in person, and those who prefer traditional appointments will still be able to access them.

Professor Stella Vig, national clinical director for elective care at NHS England, said the initiative marked "a huge shift" in how specialist care is delivered.

"By giving patients the option of an online appointment with a specialist anywhere in England, we can provide faster and more convenient access to diagnosis and treatment for conditions that can be painful and difficult to live with," she said.

Dr Sue Mann, NHS England's national clinical director for women's health, said the service could be particularly

transformative for women experiencing menopause or chronic menstrual problems.

"These conditions can affect every part of a woman's life," she said. "Being able to see a consultant from home, without waiting months for an in-person appointment, could make a real difference to daily wellbeing."

The NHS points to existing digital services as proof of concept. At Moorfields Eye Hospital, a single point of access system already allows GPs and optometrists to refer patients online to eye specialists, helping patients be seen more quickly and easing pressure on hospital clinics.

At University Hospital Southampton, digital follow-up tools introduced by the gastroenterology team have cut waiting times by more than 60%, with the majority of patients with low-risk IBD now managed virtually.

Health leaders argue that expanding such models nationally could help bring down waiting lists while freeing up in-person appointments for those who need them most.

The government has framed NHS Online as part of a broader shift "from analogue to digital" in healthcare, promising a system that fits around people's lives rather than forcing patients to organise their lives around appointments.



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Imam Qari Asim MBE: "Let's step into 2026 with hope"



Mosques as beacons of hope:

Why British Muslims step into 2026 with resolve

Dr Qari Asim MBE

Imam at Makkah Mosque Leeds & Co-Founder
Leeds Muslim Network

As 2025 draws to a close, many British Muslims pause not only out of fatigue, but reflection. It has been a year that tested patience, principles and our shared sense of belonging. A year marked by grief and gratitude, strain and solidarity. Yet as 2026 approaches, there is also resolve - a quiet confidence that difficult years can still lead to renewal.

For many in Muslim communities, 2025 felt like living under heightened scrutiny. Global crises involving Muslims, acts of violence by extremists, and international conflicts repeatedly spilled into domestic debate.

Ordinary British Muslims found themselves asked, implicitly or explicitly, to explain, condemn or account for events far beyond their control. That experience was wearying, but it is not unique. Many minority communities know what it feels like to be viewed through the lens of collective responsibility rather than individual humanity.

The war in Gaza and the immense suffering of ordinary people sharpened those tensions. Across Britain, people

of many backgrounds campaigned tirelessly calling for an end to civilian suffering and respect for international law. At times, empathy was lost in polarised public debate. For British Muslims, these moments carried a particular emotional weight, rooted in faith and conscience.

Anti-Muslim hostility continued to rise in 2025. Women wearing hijab continued to report harassment; mosques and Muslim graves were targeted. In the last few months, over 27 mosques were attacked or vandalised, according to British Muslim Trust. At the same time, moments such as the Unite the Kingdom march raised wider questions about national identity and belonging.

The framing and the language used at that march deeply unsettled Muslims and minority communities. But it is important to acknowledge that many Christians and faith leaders responded by reaffirming pluralism and rejecting exclusionary narratives promoted by the extreme far right. Those voices of solidarity matter, because cohesion is built not by uniformity, but by mutual

respect.

Yet 2025 was not defined by division alone.

Across the country, mosques and community centres became spaces of service: food banks during the cost-of-living crisis, mental health support, youth mentoring and neighbourhood initiatives that served people of all backgrounds. These efforts rarely made headlines, but they reflected a simple truth - when communities invest locally, everyone benefits.

The year also highlighted the role many British Muslims play in public life as advocates for dignity, fairness and the rule of law. Speaking out for justice, whether at home or abroad, is not the preserve of any one group. It is a shared civic responsibility. That commitment sometimes came at a cost, but it also revealed how deeply interconnected Britain's moral conversations have become.

Honesty, however, requires looking inward as well as outward. Like all communities, British Muslims must confront challenges within their own ranks.

Regressive cultural practices - including extremism, misogyny, abuse or racism, cause real harm and cannot be ignored or excused. Addressing these issues is not about appeasing

critics; it is about protecting the vulnerable and upholding the ethical standards that our faith and law both demand. Accountability strengthens trust, both within communities and across society.

There were also signs in 2025 of a political and civic shift. Engagement among British Muslims is becoming more confident and more collaborative, rooted less in identity alone and more in shared concerns: fairness, opportunity, safety and social cohesion. This is a healthy development, not just for Muslims, but for British democracy as a whole.

None of this erases the emotional toll of the year. Watching global suffering unfold in real time, alarming rise in Islamophobia and domestic tensions - ranging from immigration crisis to cost of living crises, left many feeling drained and consider migration from Britain. But hardship also revealed something enduring: resilience.

Britain's Muslim communities, like many others, are shaped by histories of migration, struggle and contribution. Parents and grandparents built lives in the face of exclusion and uncertainty, laying foundations through work, service and perseverance. That legacy continues to inform how challenges are

met today.

Looking ahead, there is reason for hope. There are more people - neighbours, colleagues, journalists, faith leaders, willing to challenge anti-Muslim prejudice and anti-immigrant sentiments when they encounter them. There is a younger generation, confident in both identity and belonging, rejecting false binaries between Islam and British citizenship.

Faith, at its best, reinforces this hope. It teaches that hardship is not the end of the story, and that optimism is not denial, but commitment and a belief that societies can improve when people choose empathy over fear.

As 2026 begins, British Muslims are not asking for special treatment. Like many others, they ask for fairness, dignity and the chance to contribute without suspicion. To be seen not as symbols or stereotypes, but as fellow citizens invested in the country's future.

As we look forward to 2026, the conviction that shared challenges can produce shared progress is necessary. Hope, in uncertain times, is not naïve, it is essential. It is with that spirit - grounded in honesty, shared responsibility and mutual respect that we move into the year ahead.

A third of children left behind

Bradford lays bare the depth of England's school readiness crisis

One in three children is arriving at school without the basic skills needed to learn, socialise and thrive - and nowhere is the scale of the failure more starkly exposed than in Bradford, where deep inequalities mean a child's chances are still shaped long before their first day in the classroom.

New analysis from Child of the North reveals a damning picture of early years provision across England, with a widening gap between advantaged and disadvantaged communities.

Nationally, there is now a 9.6 percentage point divide in school readiness, but in Bradford the disparity is far sharper: just 52% of children in the city's most deprived neighbourhoods are school ready, compared with 86% in its most affluent areas.

Researchers warn that these figures represent more than statistical variation - they are evidence of systemic failure.

"Averages are disguising entrenched disadvantage," the report concludes, pointing to a city where postcode has become a powerful predictor of a child's future.

Teacher surveys paint an equally bleak picture. Nearly half of early years professionals believe school readiness is getting worse, not better, with growing numbers of children starting reception unable to use the toilet independently, struggling to communicate or interact socially, and showing signs of developmental delay linked to excessive screen use.

The findings are published in the latest report under the Child of the North's #ChildrenFirst campaign, Supporting children in the preschool years: a new approach to improving the UK's health. It warns that early disadvantage does not fade with time but compounds across a child's life, driving poorer health, lower educational attainment and long-term economic damage.

Professor Josie Dickerson, director of early years, prevention and child equity at Born in Bradford, said Bradford had become an unignorable case study in what happens when inequality is allowed to embed itself from birth.

"In Bradford, the gap is not marginal - it's profound," she said. "Children in disadvantaged communities are facing multiple,

overlapping challenges, and without targeted support those challenges become lifelong barriers."

Born in Bradford, one of the UK's largest and longest-running birth cohort studies, tracks more than 30,000 children and their families. Its data shows that by the time children reach school age, many inequalities are already entrenched - with lasting consequences for health, education and employment.

What makes the findings more uncomfortable, researchers argue, is that Bradford also demonstrates that this outcome is not inevitable.

The city has pioneered a system-wide early years approach that links data across health, education and social care through the Connected Bradford programme, uses predictive modelling to identify children at risk, and holds public services collectively accountable for outcomes.

"This isn't a lack of evidence problem," Dickerson said. "We know which children need help and what kind of support works. The real question is whether we have the political will to act early enough."

The report was produced with partners including Bradford's



Prevention and Early Help Systems Board and Health Determinants Research Collaborative, supported by the National Institute for Health and Care Research. Its recommendations have fed into the government's Opportunity Mission, which aims to break the link between background and future success.

Baroness Anne Longfield, founder of the Centre for Young Lives thinktank, said the Bradford data should serve as a national warning. "This is not about individual parenting failure - it is about a system that

intervenes too late," she said. "The first years of life are decisive, and Bradford shows both the cost of inaction and the potential of doing things differently."

Professor Mark Mon-Williams, who edited the report series, described the situation as urgent. "A third of children are starting school already behind," he said.

"Unless we adopt a system-wide early years approach, places like Bradford will continue to carry the heaviest burden of inequality for generations to come."

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Rubbish reality

A year of Birmingham's bin strikes and a city left to clear its own waste

One of Britain's biggest cities is still living with the aftermath of a refuse dispute that began with walkouts in January 2025, and escalated into an all-out strike in March - leaving households improvising, shopkeepers organising their own clear-ups and the council warning repeatedly about health risks.

By the time Mohammed Bashir picks up his broom on an icy morning in Small Heath, the routine is familiar: sweep up what the wind has scattered, shift the dumped bags away from the pavement, and try - again - to stop the pile outside his home becoming a permanent fixture.

The 80-year-old, who has lived in Birmingham for decades, says the strike has turned basic cleanliness into a daily chore, with rubbish, broken items and fly-tipped furniture building up on his street.

Across the city, that same pattern has hardened into a new, weary normal.

Residents who can manage

it have been taking their waste directly to household recycling centres, booking slots online and joining long queues - a workaround the council has actively encouraged, even extending tip opening hours as the dispute dragged on.

Others have turned to informal community clean-ups, while some local businesses say they have had little choice but to pay for private collections or transport waste themselves to protect staff, customers and neighbouring homes.

The strike, led by Unite, began with a series of walkouts in January 2025 before escalating into indefinite, all-out action on 11 March.

Birmingham city council declared a major incident on 31 March, citing mounting public health concerns as uncollected waste accumulated and reports of rats and other vermin spread.

A dispute about jobs, pay - and a council in financial crisis

At the heart of the stand-off is a restructuring of the waste service,

including the removal of the waste recycling and collection officer (WRCO) role. Unite has argued that scrapping the role leaves significant numbers of workers facing steep losses - repeatedly citing potential pay cuts of up to about £8,000 for some staff.

The council disputes the scale of the impact, saying far fewer workers are affected and that it has offered alternative roles, retraining and redundancy options as part of its proposals.

The conflict has played out against the backdrop of Birmingham's wider financial turmoil - the authority effectively declared bankruptcy in 2023, and the government has been involved through commissioners overseeing aspects of the council's recovery plan.

Unite has claimed government involvement has hindered negotiations, an allegation ministers have rejected.

"Take it yourself"

For residents, the most visible

consequence has been the shift from a predictable weekly routine to a patchwork service - some collections happening sporadically, recycling disrupted for months, and streets in parts of the city repeatedly blighted by fresh fly-tipping.

The council's pressure valve has been the tips. At points it extended opening hours into the evening, while mobile collection points drew "mile-long" queues as people tried to dispose of accumulated rubbish.

But "take it yourself" is not a simple instruction in a city where many residents do not drive, some are elderly or disabled, and others struggle with digital booking systems.

The impact has not stopped at the front gate. Shop owners along busy high streets, food businesses managing packaging waste, and small firms without space to store refuse have described a constant balancing act: keep premises hygienic and compliant, or risk losing trade.

Some business owners say they

have arranged private collections or transported waste themselves to avoid attracting vermin and to keep walkways clear for customers. Others have relied on staff volunteering time outside working hours to shift rubbish to disposal sites.

Both sides insist they want a resolution, but the shape of any settlement remains politically and financially fraught: Unite says it is defending members from unacceptable losses, while the council argues it cannot cross "red lines" given its finances and equal pay liabilities.

For Birmingham's residents and business owners, the argument often feels remote compared with the daily reality: the smell in warmer spells, the anxiety about vermin, the sense of a city forced into DIY waste management - dragging bin bags to the tip, paying for private removals, or spending evenings clearing pavements by hand.

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Two weeks after hundreds gathered in Bradford Live to celebrate the Race Equality Network's 25th anniversary, the sense of momentum from that night still reverberates across the city's civic and grassroots spaces.

What might have been a simple commemoration has instead become a rallying point: a reminder that a quarter-century of work on racial justice is both a milestone and a mandate, as communities across Bradford continue to confront inequality and fight for human rights.

At the anniversary gala, REN members, activists, community organisers and national figures came together to reflect on the Network's legacy and to sharpen its purpose for the years ahead.

The evening, hosted by the artist and activist Jermain Jackman, blended celebration with a clear-eyed assessment of the challenges still facing racialised communities. Jackman's presence set the tone for a night that felt as much about the future as the past.

Speakers from across the movement shaped the narrative of resilience and resolve. Former Chair Yusuf Karolia and CEO Humma Nizami reflected on decades of capacity building and community development, while incoming Chair Carol Peltier offered a bold, hopeful vision for the next phase of REN's work.

MP Naz Shah spoke candidly about representation and lived experience, urging continued action to dismantle systemic inequalities.

Contributions from Kojo of Black Lives Matter UK, Lee Jasper, Sammie Phoenix of Healthwatch Bradford, and Sam Keighley from the VCS Alliance underscored the breadth of

the struggle for racial justice across sectors.

REN's staff team, including Nadim Qureshi, Fatima Mahmood and Piers Telemacque, added their own reflections, illustrating how advocacy, activism and lived experience intertwine in the fight for dignity, opportunity and safety for all communities.

Throughout the night, themes of hope, justice, solidarity and human rights were woven through speeches, conversations and performances. For REN, hope is not passive: it is the collective belief that a fairer society can be built through persistence and accountability. Solidarity, several speakers noted, remains the movement's most powerful tool.

"This anniversary is not just a celebration of our history," said CEO Humma Nizami.

"It is a celebration of everyone who has stood with us over the last 25 years. REN has always been powered by people who refuse to accept inequality as inevitable." She added that racial justice "doesn't happen by accident" but through communities unafraid to challenge harmful systems.

Incoming Chair Carol Peltier echoed that sentiment, describing the evening as "a reaffirmation of our purpose." Every voice and every act of resistance, she said, brings society closer to fairness and equity.

Performances by Hassan Khan, Musumba and Ahmed Nizami added emotional depth to the programme, capturing themes of identity, resistance and collective memory. Around tables, attendees shared stories of progress, frustration and renewed determination, reflecting a movement that has weathered setbacks yet remains unshaken.



Race Equality Network marks 25 years with renewed call for justice at Bradford Live gala



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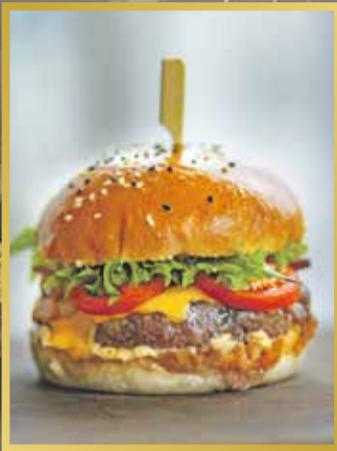
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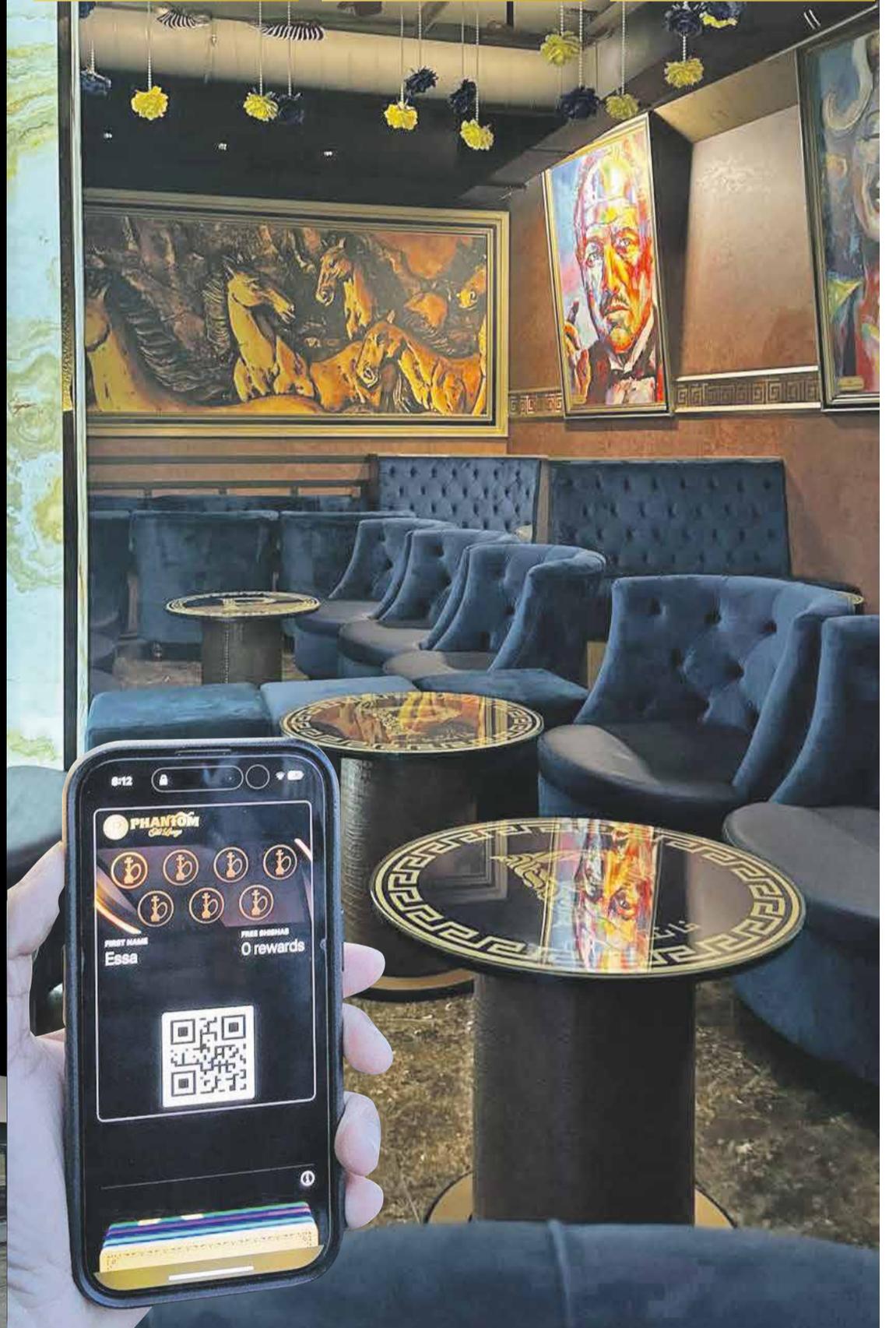
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“The day of my diagnosis was the worst day of my life”

After shock diagnosis, MD launches £100k campaign and asks why 150 people a day are being diagnosed with breast cancer

A British managing director has launched a powerful fundraising campaign after being diagnosed with Stage 2 breast cancer, asking the question many are too afraid to voice: “150 people a day are being diagnosed with breast cancer – why is that?”

When Worcester-based business leader Jothie Walford, 50, received her diagnosis earlier this year, her world stopped.

“I couldn’t believe it – I was in total shock,” she said. “With no family history I never thought it would happen to me. My first thought went to my children – I didn’t want them to grow up without a mum.”

That moment of devastation became

the spark for action.

Jothie, a mother of two and managing director of British home appliance firm Gtech, has since channelled her experience into a nationwide effort to raise £100,000 for Cancer Research UK and Worcestershire Breast Unit Haven, while also raising awareness about the sharp rise in breast cancer diagnoses.

She said the statistics were impossible to ignore. “The day of my diagnosis was the worst day of my life.

“I have since found out that 150 people a day, every day, are also being diagnosed with breast cancer – they are having their worst day ever – and rates are increasing. Why is that?”

Her words have become a rallying

cry for the company’s new ‘Powers Through Everything’ campaign – a slogan that reflects both the company’s product line and the resilience of those battling serious illness.

While still undergoing treatment, Jothie continues to work, supported by her colleagues, family and friends.

As part of the fundraising drive, the company will release a limited-edition Pink AirRam 3 vacuum cleaner, with 20% of profits going directly to the £100,000 target. To bolster donations, anyone who contributes £1,000 or more will receive a free Gtech product.

Two major fundraising events are also planned – including a Bollywood-meets-Hollywood charity ball at the

Gtech Community Stadium in Brentford and a local gala in Worcester later this year.

The campaign has already gained backing from leading medical professionals.

Mr Steven Thrush, Consultant Breast Surgeon at Worcestershire Breast Unit, praised Jothie’s initiative: “From the point of diagnosis through surgery and treatment, our team and the Worcestershire Breast Unit Haven charity are committed to going above and beyond for patients.

“It’s very special when patients decide to give something back. We are delighted to be working with Jothie and her team.”

The initiative, supported under the hashtag #PowerThroughEverything, will also see the company’s logo temporarily turn pink – a visible symbol of solidarity with those fighting cancer.

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A chilly start to 2026 has brought widespread freezing weather and Met Office warnings for snow and ice lasting throughout the coming days.

Freezing weather slows everything down, including the chemical reactions that power your car battery. Road safety and breakdown organisation GEM Motoring Assist is urging drivers to prepare their

vehicles now to avoid cold weather breakdowns.

In freezing conditions a battery can lose around 35% of its performance, even though every modern vehicle relies heavily on electrical systems. Headlights, heaters, wipers, and in-car technology all add to the demands placed on the battery.

Drivers of electric vehicles should know that their cars are not immune

to the effects of cold weather. Low temperatures slow battery chemistry in electric cars, reducing the range available from a full charge. Using the heater and defrosters adds to the drain.

GEM head of road safety James Luckhurst says simple precautionary checks can save drivers a lot of trouble. "Cold weather puts real strain on a car's 12-volt battery, and its ability to hold charge drops

significantly as temperatures fall," he explained.

"That means it's often at its weakest just when you need it most.

"Batteries rarely last beyond five years, so if yours is getting old, don't wait until it fails. A quick check or replacement now could save you the inconvenience – and potential danger – of being stranded at the roadside."

GEM reminds drivers that

prevention is always better than cure. "Many garages and automotive centres offer free battery health checks, which can tell you if your battery is charging and holding power safely," added James Luckhurst.

"With freezing weather forecast to continue into next week, it's well worth taking a few minutes now to check, before you're left out in the cold."

Don't risk a breakdown during this cold snap

Listen out for the signs of failure:

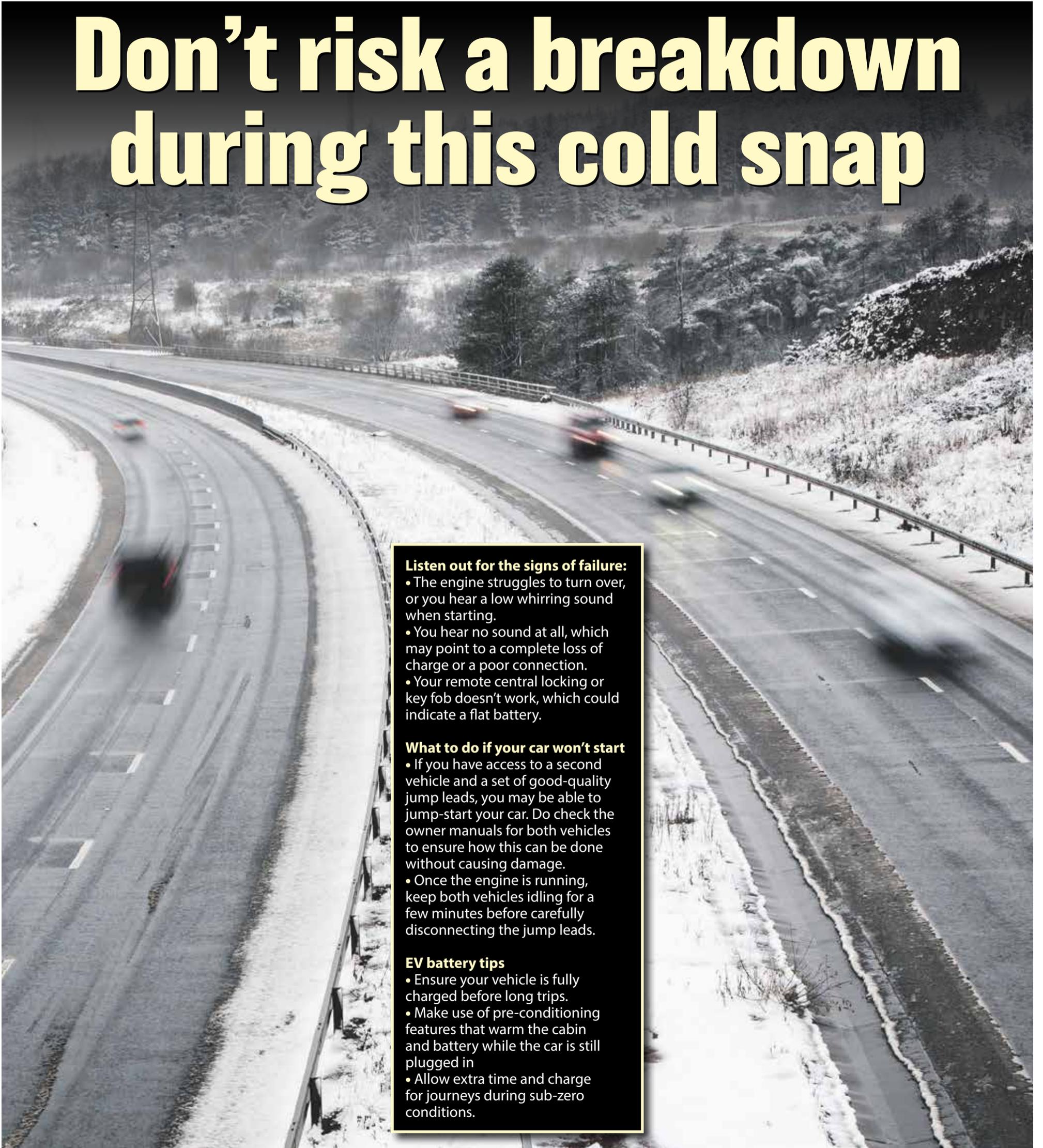
- The engine struggles to turn over, or you hear a low whirring sound when starting.
- You hear no sound at all, which may point to a complete loss of charge or a poor connection.
- Your remote central locking or key fob doesn't work, which could indicate a flat battery.

What to do if your car won't start

- If you have access to a second vehicle and a set of good-quality jump leads, you may be able to jump-start your car. Do check the owner manuals for both vehicles to ensure how this can be done without causing damage.
- Once the engine is running, keep both vehicles idling for a few minutes before carefully disconnecting the jump leads.

EV battery tips

- Ensure your vehicle is fully charged before long trips.
- Make use of pre-conditioning features that warm the cabin and battery while the car is still plugged in
- Allow extra time and charge for journeys during sub-zero conditions.



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Pupils from four Leeds secondary schools have stepped into the role of detectives this week as part of a pioneering knife crime education project run by West Yorkshire Police, transforming Leeds First Direct Arena into the setting for a fictional investigation.

Sixteen students from Corpus Christi Catholic College, Roundhay School, Ralph Thoresby School and Leeds West Academy took part in the Junior Detectives programme, which for the first time used the city's landmark arena as a simulated crime scene.

Wearing CSI suits, pupils spent a half day learning crime scene investigation techniques, supported by officers and partner organisations.

The students were formally sworn in by Chief Constable John Robins QPM DL before following a case from first report through to a mock court hearing at Leeds Crown Court.

Along the way, they developed interview skills by taking statements from actors playing the victim and suspect, and learned about the real-life consequences of knife crime through sessions with a surgeon from Leeds General Infirmary and Judge Guy Kearn KC, the Recorder of Leeds.

In another first for the programme, pupils also faced a mock press conference with journalism students from the University of Leeds.

The fictional case centred on the stabbing of a 15-year-old girl by a 17-year-old boy after she rejected his advances, deliberately exploring themes of misogyny and violence against women and girls.

Detective Inspector Nick Calveri said the programme was designed to help young people understand knife crime from multiple perspectives,



Junior Detectives programme turns Leeds arena into live crime scene for knife crime education

including those of victims, families and professionals dealing with its aftermath.

He added that early education was

vital to challenge harmful attitudes before they become entrenched.

Developed jointly with the University of Leeds, the scheme

also aims to turn participants into anti-knife crime champions in their schools. Alison Lowe OBE, Deputy Mayor of West Yorkshire for Policing

and Crime, said hands-on education was essential to preventing knife crime and praised the partnership approach behind the initiative.

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business power

From displacement to enterprise: how a Syrian refugee rebuilt a business in southern Türkiye



Ghazwan stands amid his diverse workforce, which he takes great pride in. (Photo: IOM/Emrah Özesen)

Inside a garment factory on the outskirts of Gaziantep, the steady rhythm of sewing machines tells a story of survival turned into renewal.

For Ghazwan, a 58-year-old Syrian entrepreneur, the workshop represents far more than commercial success - it is proof that lives and livelihoods can be rebuilt after forced displacement.

When war engulfed Syria, Ghazwan was forced to flee, leaving behind both his home and the textile business he had built over decades.

After three years in Jordan, he moved with his family to south-east Türkiye, joining millions of Syrians grappling with the loss of stability and the challenge of starting again in a foreign country.

Yet Ghazwan carried with him one crucial asset: experience. "I've worked in the clothing industry since 1999," he says. "I never once thought of giving it up."

With the backing of his family, he opened a small sewing shop - a modest beginning that would later grow into a factory employing both Syrian and Turkish workers.

Continued on page 27



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business power

Playing Fair Matters

In the case of *Salinas Pliego and Another v Astor Asset Management 3 Limited and Others*, the High Court struck out the Claimants' application for Summary Judgment on the grounds that the Claimants' conduct amounted to an abuse of process because the Claimants had engaged private investigators to obtain sensitive and privileged information about the Defendants' case from their former solicitors.

In that case, a Mexican billionaire and his company were the victims of a sophisticated fraud by the Defendants. The Claimants obtained a worldwide Freezing Order against the Defendants and pursued a claim to recover their money.

The Claimants instructed a Business Intelligence and Strategic Consultancy firm who engaged in what the Judge described as a "sting operation" to obtain information from the Defendants' solicitor about the Defendants' case. The consultancy firm lured the Defendants' solicitor into a series of meetings on the false premise that he was pitching for work from a potential new client. They secretly filmed and recorded the meetings whilst extracting information about the strengths and weaknesses of the Defendants' position, including litigation and settlement strategy. The solicitor was "skilfully and tenaciously steered" into providing details of the Defendants' case.

The Claimants then used this information to bring a Summary Judgment application. The Defendants issued a cross-application to strike out or stay the proceedings for abuse of process and/or risk of an unfair trial.

The Judge condemned the Claimants' conduct stating that:

"... this is something that should not happen and it cannot be

countenanced by the Court. The use of unethical methods to target an adversary's solicitor in the hope of extracting sensitive information or insights is anathema to the norms and values of civil litigation. It is cheating the system with a view to undermining the level playing field which the Court strives to maintain between opposing parties. It offends justice."

The Court struck out the Claimants' Summary Judgment Application and said that it was likely to order them to pay the Defendants' costs on an indemnity basis. However, the Judge did not strike out the Claimants' claim finding that it would be disproportionate to do so where the Claimants had good prospects of success on the full claim. As there was insufficient time at the hearing, the Judge ordered that a further hearing be listed to determine the evidential status of the unlawfully obtained information and whether the Claimants' possession of that material created a substantial risk of an unfair trial. The Judge also granted the Defendants permission to appeal the grounds relating to the Claimants' behaviour as an abuse of process. The Appellate Court could take a tougher stance regarding the Claimants' conduct and their claim may yet be struck out.

This case should serve as a cautionary tale for litigants who obtain evidence unlawfully or by unethical means as there are likely to be legal repercussions which expose the parties (and their legal advisors) to sanctions, even if the evidence is ultimately admitted. In the most serious cases, it could result in the claim or defence being struck out altogether.

If you are involved in any civil or commercial dispute, then Blacks Solicitors can assist. Please contact Luke Patel on 0113 227 9316 or by email at "LPatel@LawBlacks.com"



Millions still to file as self assessment deadline approaches

More than 5.6 million people still need to file their self assessment tax return, with less than a month to go before the 31 January deadline, according to figures from HM Revenue & Customs.

While millions remain yet to complete their return for the 2024-25 tax year, thousands of taxpayers chose to start the new year with their finances in order.

HMRC said 54,053 people submitted their return on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, opting to deal with their tax affairs rather than traditional celebrations.

In the final hour of 2025 alone, 342 people filed their return, while almost 20,000 submitted theirs on New Year's Day, foregoing a winter walk or a day in front of the television. The busiest filing window across the two days was between 11am and midday on 31 December, when 3,927 people completed their return.

Overall, more than 6.36 million taxpayers have already submitted their self assessment, leaving about 5.65 million still to do so. Anyone who misses the 31 January deadline faces an automatic £100 late filing penalty, even if there is no tax to pay.

Myrtle Lloyd, HMRC's chief customer officer, urged those who have yet to start to act quickly. "New Year is a great time to start afresh," she said. "What better way than to ensure your tax affairs are in order for another year. If you have yet to start, the clock is ticking."

HMRC said a wide range of online support

is available via GOV.UK, allowing people to start their return, save progress and return to it as often as needed before submission. Although the tax bill does not need to be paid immediately after filing, payment must be made by 31 January.

The department said the simplest way to pay is through the HMRC app, which also allows users to set up reminders so they do not miss payment deadlines. Alternative payment options are also available.

Those unable to meet the deadline are advised to contact HMRC before 31 January. The tax authority said it would treat people with reasonable excuses fairly.

Penalties increase the longer a return remains outstanding.

After three months, daily fines of £10 apply for up to 90 days. Further penalties are added after six and 12 months, alongside interest on any unpaid tax.

Some taxpayers who currently complete a self assessment solely to pay the high income child benefit charge can opt to move to a new PAYE digital service, allowing the charge to be collected through their tax code instead. Eligible customers must notify HMRC before the filing deadline.

HMRC also warned that people completing self assessment are at increased risk of scams and should never share login details, including with tax agents. Guidance on avoiding fraud is available on GOV.UK.

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business power

Syrian and Turkish workers stitch garments side by side at Ghazwan's textile factory, demonstrating both craftsmanship and collaboration. (Photo: IOM/Emrah Özesen)



From displacement to enterprise: how a Syrian refugee rebuilt a business in southern Türkiye

Continued from page 25

The path was far from smooth. Establishing a business in a new country meant navigating unfamiliar regulations, securing permits and adapting to shifting markets. More recently, soaring inflation, rising production costs and the aftershocks of the devastating 2023 earthquakes placed further strain on the operation, pushing many small firms in the region to the brink.

A timely grant from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), through its Enterprise Development Fund, proved decisive. The funding enabled Ghazwan to purchase machinery, secure raw materials and take on additional staff at a moment when liquidity was scarce.

"It helped us stabilise when many businesses were closing," he says.

As production recovered, the company

began expanding again, meeting export demand and securing international clients. Engineers and managers now work across multiple languages, including Turkish, Arabic, English and French, while new employees receive training to develop their skills.

Diversity, Ghazwan believes, is central to the firm's resilience. Syrian and Turkish workers sit side by side at long tables, stitching garments and solving problems collectively. "Different perspectives strengthen us," he says, crediting Syrian staff with helping revive parts of the footwear market in particular.

Beyond productivity, the factory has become a small example of social integration in a region that has absorbed large numbers of refugees. Ghazwan insists on formal employment and registration, arguing that undocumented work leaves

migrants vulnerable to exploitation. "It may cost more at first," he says, "but it protects everyone in the long run."

Looking back, he sees migration not only as a story of loss, but also of possibility. His business has contributed to the recovery of Gaziantep's historic textile sector and created jobs in a challenging economic climate.

Despite ongoing uncertainty, Ghazwan is focused on expanding markets and creating further opportunities.

"We're stronger together," he says. "If we work collectively, businesses and communities can both benefit."

Since 2021, IOM has supported hundreds of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises across Türkiye through its Enterprise Development Fund, aiming to accelerate recovery and foster longer-term social and economic cohesion.



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Which household chores burn the most calories?



Household chores can be a daunting task that many of us do not look forward to, but considering the added benefits of getting fit and burning calories can help boost motivation.

Whilst they shouldn't be a replacement for regular exercise and more vigorous activity, household chores can help you to avoid the ill effects of a sedentary lifestyle and even aid in weight loss.

Some tasks are considered light to moderate exercise, whilst others can even equate to a full workout!

For an extra challenge, try to incorporate more physical exercise into your routine, such as doing lunges whilst vacuuming or standing on your tiptoes to stretch your calf muscles as you do the washing up. This can arguably improve focus on the task and even make it more fun!

Here's a round up the chores that will see you getting yourself in shape as well as your home as you burn off those calories:



Vacuuming

There are a variety of lightweight, quiet, and powerful vacuum cleaners on the current market, making it now a usually fairly enjoyable task. This is a good thing as it is also one of our most frequent household chores, and it is recommended that you do it at least once or twice a week to clear up dust and allergens, and potentially more often in high-traffic areas or if you have pets. Vacuuming can be a great form of cardio, and you can burn anywhere between 200-400 calories per hour, depending on your current weight and how vigorously you are working. On average, just a quick 10-minute blitz can burn up to 60 calories!

Continued on pages 30 & 31

Which household chores burn the most calories?



Making and Changing the Beds

Making your bed each day is important as it can significantly boost your mood, contribute to a tidy living space, and improve sleep quality by creating a more organised and inviting environment in which to rest. You should wash and change your bed sheets at least once a week for optimal hygiene, although factors such as sweating, pets on the bed, or allergies may lead to the requirement for more frequent changes. Making the bed is considered a moderate-intensity activity involving movement and stretching, which contributes to calorie burn. Stripping the bed completely and putting on fresh linens will generally burn more calories than just fluffing pillows and straightening blankets. Overall, the combination of the two activities can add up to your burning the equivalent of 400 calories in an hour.



Cleaning the Bathroom Sink and Surfaces

As your toilet becomes a breeding ground for airborne bacteria and germs, it is vital that you clean your bathroom surfaces with a disinfectant spray once a week. Cleaning your sinks regularly and your bathtub on a slightly less regular basis is also important to prevent a build-up of bacteria, dirt and soap scum that can lead to the formation of mould and mildew. If you spend just 10 minutes a week cleaning and disinfecting your bathroom surfaces and sink, this could add up to a burn-off of around 200 calories in a month. It's not bad for the small amount of effort it takes if it's kept on top of regularly!

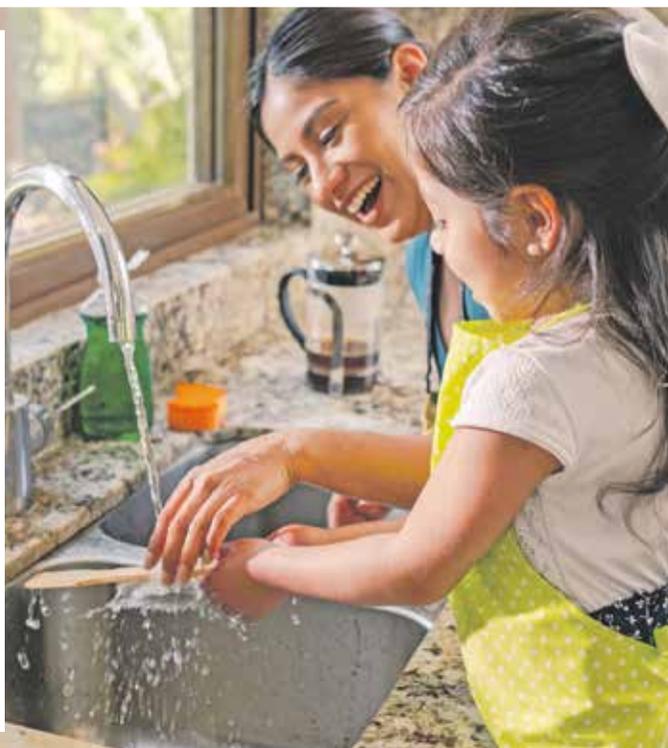


Doing the Laundry

Doing regular laundry is important for hygiene, preventing the spread of germs and viruses, and extending the life of your clothes, sheets, towels, and other soft fabrics. How often you need to do this chore depends on the size of your family and how much laundry you produce each week, but generally, when it comes to clothing, items should be washed after every wear if they are sweaty or visibly dirty. Doing the laundry is considered a moderate-intensity activity, meaning that it can make a good contribution to your overall calorie expenditure. On average, loading, unloading, sorting, and folding clothes can burn approximately 50-100 calories per hour. This number can increase based on the size of the load and how much movement is involved, such as carrying laundry baskets up and down stairs.

Washing Up

Washing up every day (either multiple times or one big clean in the evening) is essential in avoiding a cluttered kitchen worktop and keeping bugs and bacteria at bay. Dishes and cutlery quickly end up covered in food debris, grease, and other dirt and can become a breeding ground for germs if left unwashed for a long period of time. Dishwashers are readily available on the market, but those of us who still wash by hand can see some great side effects in terms of calorie burning. A quick 10-minute wash can easily burn 40 calories per time, but if you have a larger family and spend more time washing dishes, it could lead to you burning a ginormous 800-850 calories per week through all of that scrubbing, drying and tidying away!



Dusting

Dusting is essential to keeping our homes free of dust and other debris that could trigger certain allergies and respiratory conditions. How vigorous an activity is depends on where we are cleaning. Dusting our easy-to-see shelves and surfaces should be a regular activity, but sometimes, we will also be stretching up to dust those harder-to-reach areas, such as the tops of cabinets. All of the moving furniture and standing on tiptoes to reach those tricky corners can really pay off in terms of exercise, and you can expect to burn around 200-300 calories per hour of dusting your home.

Cleaning Windows

Cleaning the insides and outsides of windows is not one of our most regular household chores, but it will still require a fair amount of effort during the times that it is necessary. Aside from potential ladder-climbing, you will be stretching, wiping and wielding various different tools – all multiplied by the number of windows you have to clean. With this in mind, you can easily burn off 200-300 calories per hour when cleaning that pesky dirt, grease and grime from your windows.



Decluttering

Decluttering your home is an important task because it can significantly improve your mental well-being by reducing stress and anxiety, boosting focus, and creating a more calming environment by removing unnecessary items from your space. The act of decluttering may be associated with larger clear-outs during sessions such as spring cleaning but can also refer to the daily tidying away of items once we have used them. Having a clutter-free home can not only boost productivity and organisation in other areas but also allow you to burn off calories while you are tidying. Sorting out the clutter in your home can help you burn off around 200-250 calories per day, which is roughly equivalent to a walk around the block.

Mowing the Lawn

Household chores are not limited to the interior of your home and can extend outside to your garden area. If you have a lawn, you are going to want to mow it regularly, especially during the spring and summer months, to reduce weeds, improve the appearance, and maintain healthy grass. Naturally, the amount of calories you will burn during this activity depends on the size of your lawn area, as the larger your lawn, the more work you will need to put in. On average, with an electric mower that requires pushing, you can expect to burn around 250-350 calories per hour while getting your lawn in shape.



Washing the Car

If you have a car, it is important to wash it regularly to preserve the paintwork by removing dirt and grime that can damage the surface, prevent rust formation, enhance safety by ensuring clean visibility through clean windows and mirrors, and overall improve the aesthetic appearance of your vehicle. On average, you should aim to wash your car every couple of weeks, but this can vary depending on factors such as driving conditions and how dirty it gets. Washing your car is a full-body activity that can improve your coordination and endurance and increase your heart rate. Typically, cleaning the exterior of your car alone by hand can lead to you burning around 250-300 calories per hour – add to that vacuuming and cleaning the interior and it can be a great exercise activity!

The quiet therapy happening in your kitchen

By Prity Farooq

Prity Beauty & Aesthetic, Bradford

For many of us, the kitchen has long been a place of obligation – another item on the to-do list, another task squeezed between work emails and the school run.

But as more people look for simple, grounding ways to support their mental health, cooking is quietly stepping into the spotlight. Not as a chore, but as a balm.

At its best, cooking functions as a kind of active meditation.

There's something strangely soothing about chopping onions or stirring a simmering pot – a rhythm that hushes the noise in your mind. Focusing on one step at a time can nudge you into that elusive flow state, where racing thoughts finally begin to settle.

And then there's the small but mighty lift that comes from making something – anything – from scratch. A meal finished, a dish plated, a flavour perfected: these are tangible acts of achievement in a world where so much feels abstract and out of our control. For many, that sense of "I did this" becomes a quiet boost of confidence and self-worth.

Cooking also invites creativity in a way we don't always give ourselves permission for elsewhere. Trying a new spice, swapping ingredients on the fly,

decorating a dish just because it makes you smile – it's play, disguised as dinner. And play does wonders for mood, curiosity, and positivity.

But perhaps what's most overlooked is how cooking anchors the day. Preparing and eating meals at regular times introduces structure, which can be a lifeline during periods when everything feels unmoored. Add to that the sensory comfort of scent, texture, heat, and colour, and suddenly the kitchen becomes one of the most grounding rooms in the house.

Of course, not everyone loves the actual process of cooking – and that's fine. The mental health benefits don't end at the stove. Eating meals at home, particularly shared ones, can be just as powerful. Eating together remains one of the most universal ways humans express care. Picture the laughter that rolls around a table, the stories swapped, the familiar clatter of cutlery, the silent reassurance of simply not eating alone.

These small rituals strengthen relationships and counter loneliness in ways that few other daily habits can.

Even the cognitive work of cooking – the planning, organising, problem-solving – nudges the brain to stay sharp, offering a gentle workout for your executive functions.

So whether you're plating a masterpiece or reheating leftovers, the message is simple: the act of preparing and sharing food carries emotional weight. In a culture hooked on speed and convenience, it's a reminder that slowing down, stirring a pot, setting a table, or passing a dish can be quietly transformative.

Local support is available for complementary therapies. Contact Prity Farooq on 01274 307040 for a free counselling session.



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Street Fighter stars storm Game Awards with explosive first reveal

The worlds of gaming and cinema collided in spectacular fashion as the stars of Street Fighter took to the stage at The Game Awards to unveil the very first sneak peek of the long-awaited live-action feature film, set for release in 2026.

The surprise reveal sent fans into overdrive, offering a thrilling first look at all 17 legendary characters reimagined for the big screen. The brief but explosive preview teased the scale and ambition behind the new adaptation of Capcom's iconic fighting franchise, confirming that this is no ordinary reboot.

The surprise unveiling was made even more electric by the presence of the film's global cast, who appeared on stage to introduce the footage.

Stars in attendance included Noah Centineo (Ken), Andrew Koji (Ryu), Callina Liang (Chun-Li), Joe "Roman Reigns" Anoa'i (Akuma), David Dastmalchian (M. Bison), Cody Rhodes (Guile), Andrew Schulz (Dan), Vidyut Jammwal (Dhalsim), Orville Peck (Vega), Olivier Richters (Zangief), Rayna Vallandingham (Juli), Mel Jarson (Cammy) and Jason Momoa, who takes on the dual role of Blanka and producer. Their collective appearance underscored the scale and ambition of Paramount Pictures' live-action reboot, confirming Street Fighter as a truly global blockbuster in the making.

The brief but explosive preview teased the scale and ambition behind the new adaptation of Capcom's iconic fighting franchise, confirming that this is no ordinary reboot. Packed with global stars, stylised combat and arena-level spectacle, Street Fighter is positioning itself as one of the most anticipated action films of the year.

At the centre of the story is the World Warrior Tournament, drawing fighters from across the globe into a high-stakes competition that soon reveals a far darker conspiracy beneath the surface.

Fan-favourite rivals Ryu and Ken return as the emotional core of the film, joined by a formidable line-up including Chun-Li, Guile, Blanka, Vega, Akuma, Zangief and Balrog, each revealed during the Game Awards showcase to deafening applause.

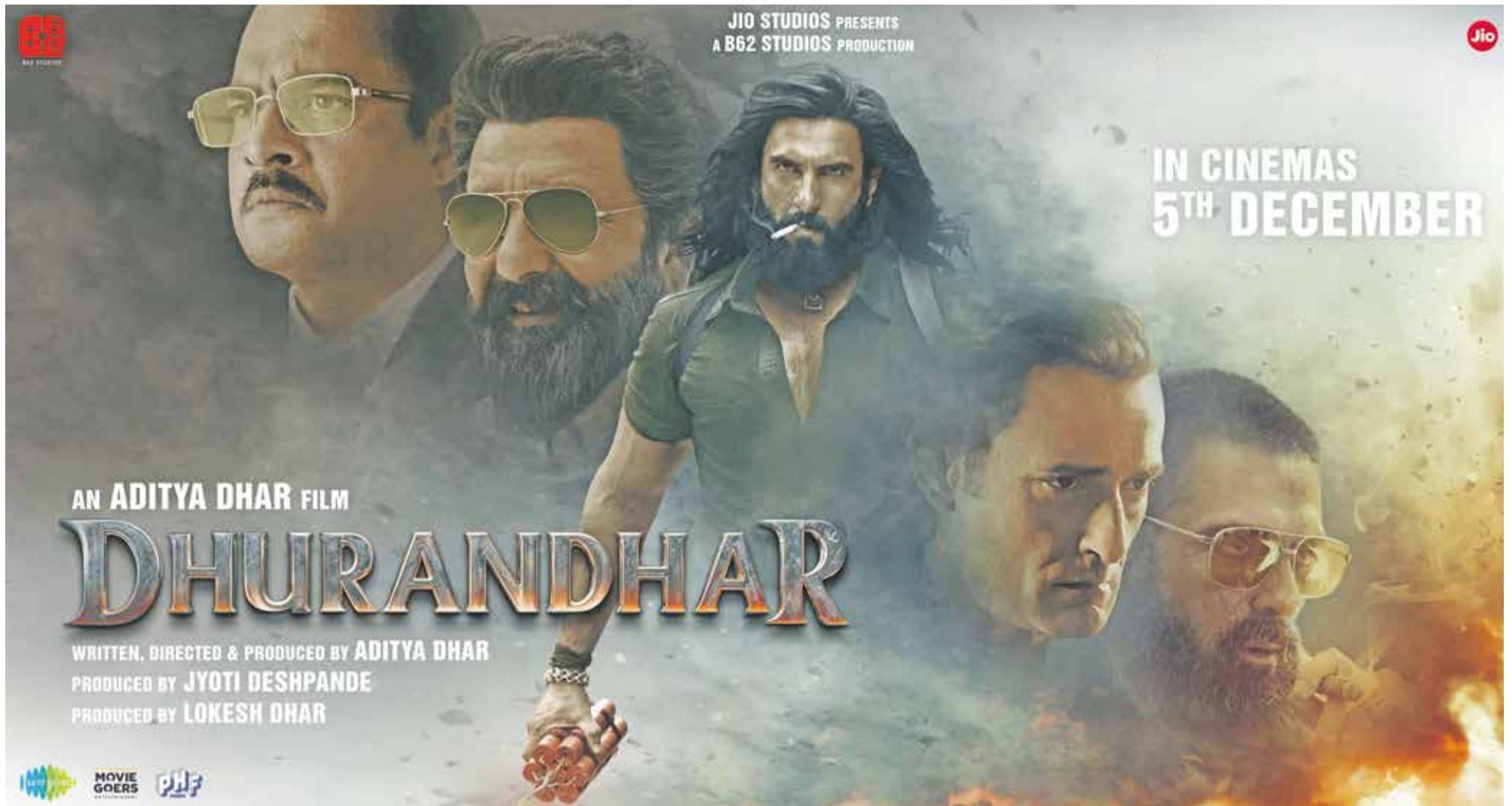
One of the biggest talking points is the casting of Indian action star Vidyut Jammwal as Dhalsim, marking a major Hollywood breakthrough and a significant moment for South Asian representation in a global blockbuster. Known for his real-world martial arts skill and screen presence, Jammwal's portrayal of the calm yet devastating yogi-warrior has already sparked excitement among fans worldwide.

The ensemble cast blends Hollywood heavyweights, international actors and sporting icons, underlining the film's global reach and appeal. Early footage hints at faithful character design, stylised special moves and large-scale fight sequences designed for IMAX screens, promising a visual experience that honours the game's legacy while pushing it into modern blockbuster territory.

Directed by Kitao Sakurai and produced in collaboration with Capcom, the film aims to strike a balance between nostalgia and fresh storytelling, appealing to lifelong gamers and new audiences alike. The Game Awards reveal confirmed that the creative team is leaning into the franchise's bold personality, iconic rivalries and larger-than-life characters.

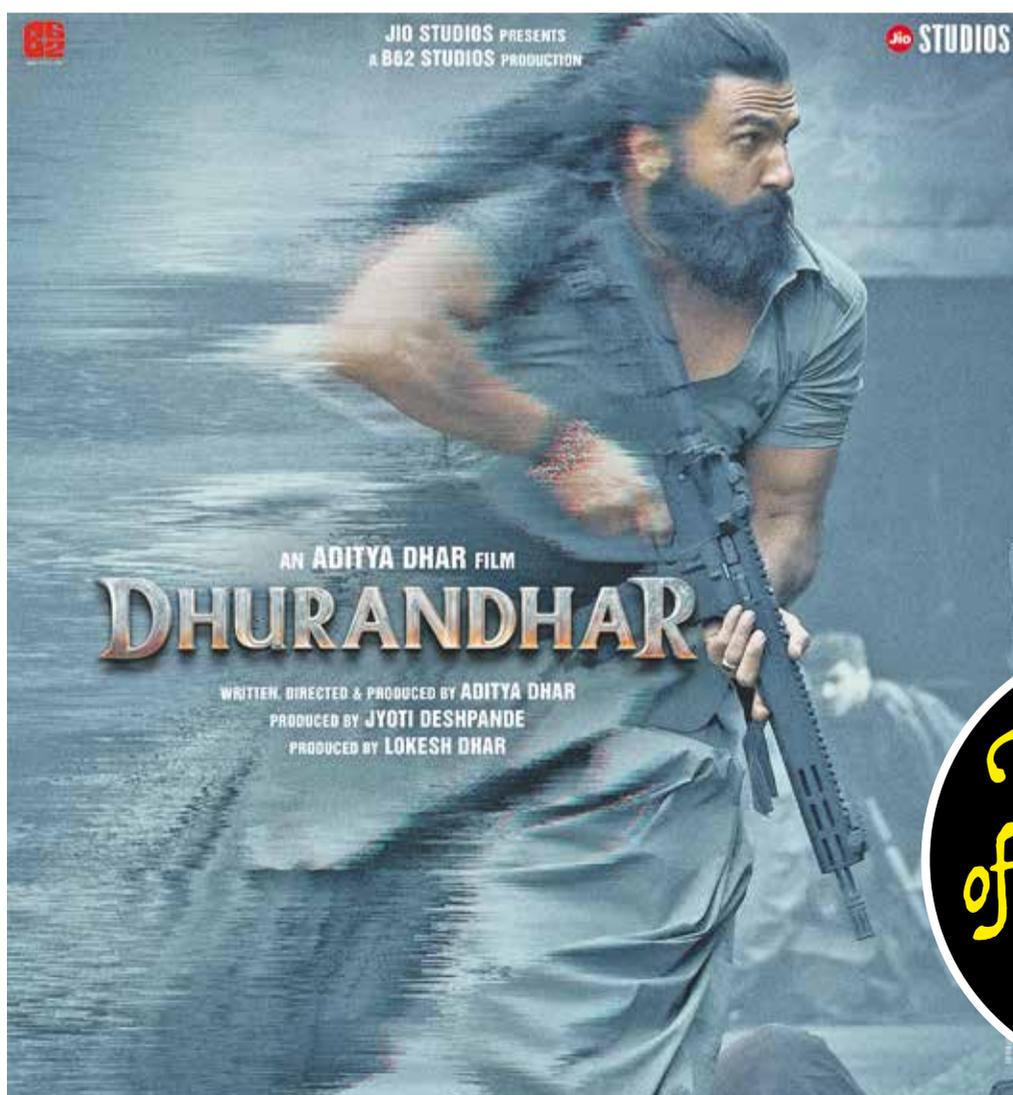
Street Fighter is positioning itself as one of the most anticipated action films for next year. It is set to release in October 2026.





DHURANDHAR:

Viral music, fan frenzy and smashing box office records



In a whirlwind few weeks that has gripped audiences across the globe, Dhurandhar has transformed from a highly anticipated winter release into a full-blown cultural moment.

What began with the explosive trailer drop on 18 November - racking up more than 50 million views in record time - has spiralled into a frenzy of fan edits, music mania and unprecedented box office momentum ahead of the film's 5 December worldwide release.

At the heart of Dhurandhar lies a high-stakes story that straddles the worlds of espionage, organised crime and political betrayal.

Led by Ranveer Singh in

what early reviews describe as one of his most commanding performances to date, and supported by Akshay Khanna, Sanjay Dutt, R. Madhavan and Arjun Rampal, the film marks a bold expansion of Indian cinema's action-spy genre.

Ranveer Singh stars as a fiercely unpredictable operative whose past and present violently collide when a covert mission exposes a powerful criminal syndicate working deep within the country's power structures.

What begins as a routine intelligence operation spirals into a dangerous cat-and-mouse chase across borders, forcing him to confront a master strategist known only as "The Dhurandhar" — a phantom-like figure who stays several moves ahead of everyone else.

As alliances fracture and loyalties shift, the protagonist is drawn into a labyrinth of deception involving a rogue intelligence faction, global weapons networks, and a conspiracy capable of destabilising entire governments. Akshay Khanna, Sanjay Dutt, R. Madhavan and Arjun Rampal each play key figures orbiting this shadowy world - some allies, some enemies, and some impossible to categorise.

Their motivations intertwine in ways that keep the narrative taut and unpredictable.

Dhurandhar blends large-scale action with psychological depth, exploring themes of identity, sacrifice and the blurry line between protector and predator.

With every revelation, the film pushes its hero closer to the truth, and deeper into danger, culminating in a showdown that tests not only his skills but his moral boundaries.

The result is a gritty, emotionally charged thriller that marries blockbuster spectacle with a layered, character-driven narrative, anchoring its adrenaline-fuelled set pieces in a story about how far one man will go when the cost of justice becomes personal.

With an overseas weekend of £3.45 million and a total India £12.57 million, Dhurandhar has already cemented itself as a global phenomenon.

Written, directed and produced by Aditya Dhar, and produced by Jyoti Deshpande and Lokesh Dhar, this Jio Studios, B62 Studios, Saregama collaboration appears poised to redefine the December box office landscape.

The rise of a new-age action epic

Flash, fury and a flying carpet

Prince Naseem's incredible rise hits the big screen

Starring: Pierce Brosnan, Amir El-Masry, Toby Stephens, Katherine Dow Blyton
Executive Producer: Sylvester Stallone **Written & Directed:** Rowan Athale
Release Date: 9/1/2026

He swaggered into the ring on flying carpets, taunted his rivals with his hands down and knocked out world champions with jaw-dropping ease.

Now, the outrageous life of British boxing icon Prince Naseem Hamed is set to explode onto cinema screens in 'Giant' - a gritty, high-octane biopic charting the rise, glory and fallout of one of sport's most controversial superstars.

Released in UK cinemas this month, Giant tells the astonishing true story of how a sharp-tongued, lightning-fast teenager from Sheffield became a global sporting sensation... and one of the most talked-about figures British boxing has ever produced.

At the centre of the film is a powerhouse performance from Amir El-Masry, who transforms himself into the fearless featherweight champion.

With bleached-blond hair, defiant grin and explosive footwork, El-Masry captures not just Naz's athletic brilliance but the bravado that divided opinion and packed arenas around the world.

But this is not just a tale of belts and bravado.

Giant digs deep into the emotional heart of Hamed's journey - particularly his complex, often volatile relationship with legendary trainer Brendan Ingle, played with surprising tenderness by Pierce Brosnan.

Ingle, the softly spoken Irishman who discovered Hamed as a child, helped mould him into a champion - even as fame, fortune and ego threatened to tear them apart.

Growing up as the son of Yemeni immigrants in 1980s Sheffield, Hamed faced racism, suspicion and low expectations.

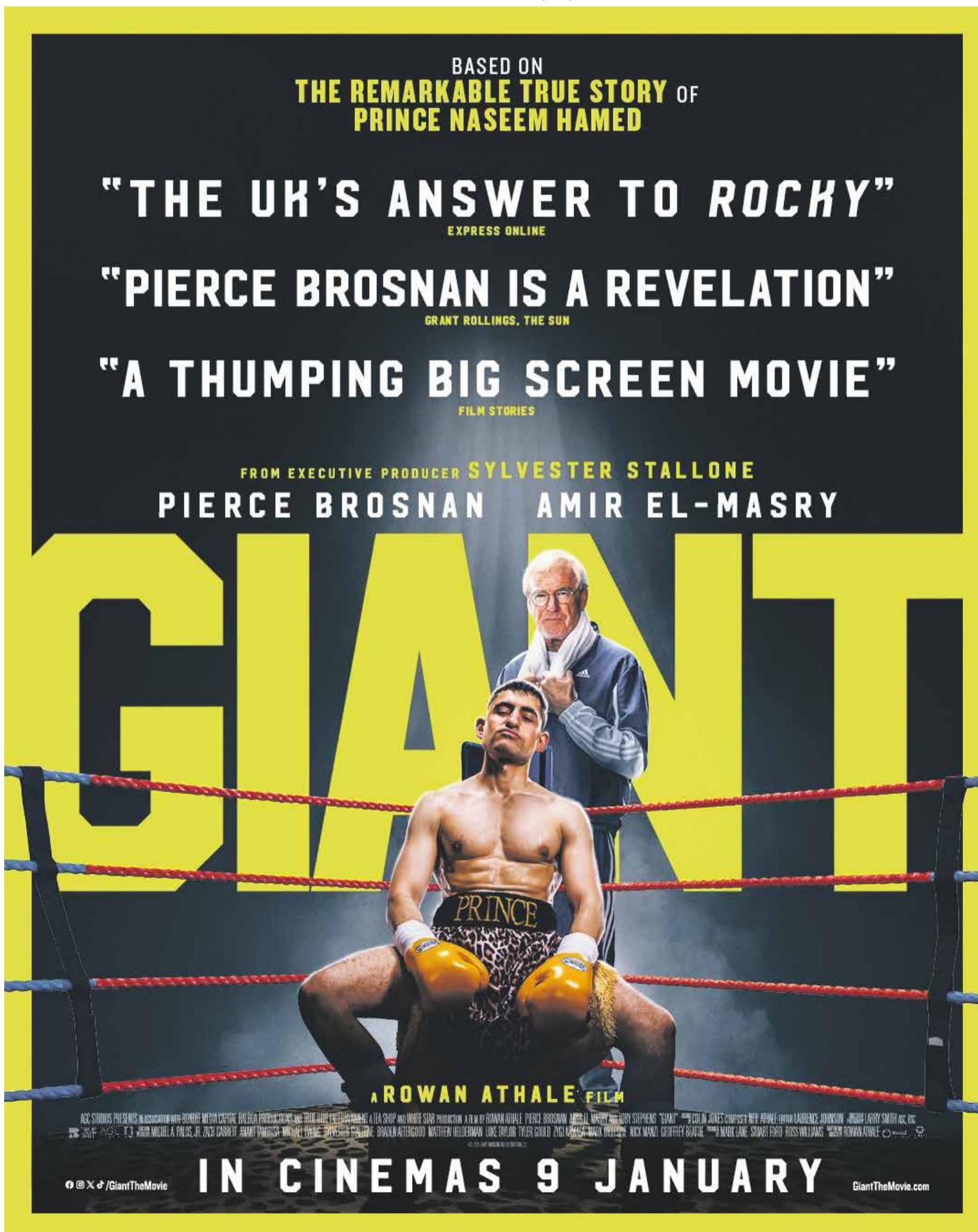
Boxing became his escape - and his weapon. The film traces his journey from cramped gyms to sold-out Vegas arenas, showcasing the dazzling knockouts, the mind games, and the showmanship that made him impossible to ignore.

Yet behind the leopard-print shorts and gravity-defying entrances, Giant also explores the personal cost of superstardom.

As Naz's profile soared, cracks began to appear - in his discipline, his relationships and his once-unbreakable bond with Ingle. The film does not shy away from the darker moments, offering a more human portrait of a man who lived fast, loud and unapologetically.

Directed by Rowan Athale, and filmed across Yorkshire, Giant blends brutal, bone-crunching fight scenes with raw emotional drama. Executive producer Sylvester Stallone lends heavyweight credibility to a story that feels tailor-made for the big screen.

Loud, flashy and emotionally charged, Giant is as bold as its subject - a film that celebrates a sporting rebel who redefined boxing entertainment and forced Britain to sit up and watch.



WHAT'S ON

in cinemas this month

Avatar: Fire and Ash

Starring: Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana, Stephen Lang, Oona Chaplin, Cliff Curtis, Giovanni Ribisi, Sigourney Weaver, Joel David Moore

Director: James Cameron

Cert: TBC

Genre: Action/Family/Fantasy

Release Date: 19/12/2025

Avatar: Fire and Ash arrives as the year's most commanding cinematic event, pulling audiences back into Pandora with the force and spectacle only James Cameron can deliver.

Thirteen years after the Na'vi first captured global imagination and two years after the ocean-lit majesty of The Way of Water, Cameron's third chapter shifts gears once again – this time plunging deep into the volcanic heart of Pandora, where ancient rivalries, elemental power, and a new clan's fiery traditions collide in a story pulsing with danger, emotion and breathtaking world-building.

Set several years after the Sully family's escape to the Metkayina reefs, Fire and Ash follows Jake and Neytiri as they confront a new threat born not just of human militarism, but of Pandora itself.

When seismic tremors start cracking open the planet's volatile interior, the couple are forced to seek refuge – and unlikely alliance – with the Ash People, a fiercely territorial, lava-forged clan whose worldview challenges everything Jake and Neytiri believe.

Where the Metkayina were fluid, spiritual and ocean-bound, the Ash People are hardened by survival, shaped by fire, and suspicious of outsiders. Their crimson armour, volcanic forges and black-rock temples add an entirely new visual language to the saga, expanding Pandora in ways fans have spent over a decade hoping to see.

But survival, as Cameron loves to remind audiences, comes at a cost. As Jake struggles with the consequences of war and fatherhood, and Neytiri reckons with grief and rage that continue to reshape her identity, Fire and Ash becomes the series' most emotionally mature chapter yet. New Na'vi characters take centre stage, while returning villains and morally grey human scientists complicate the boundaries between ally and enemy.

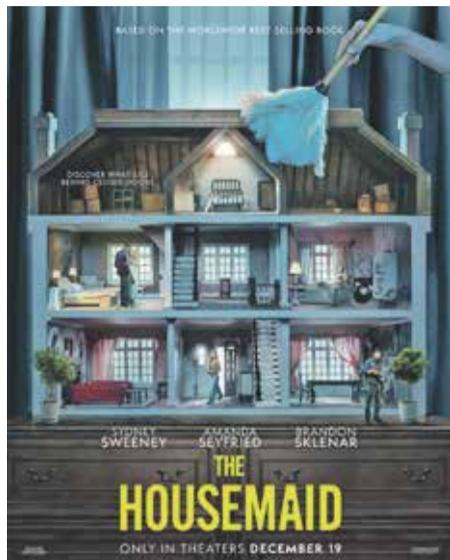
The franchise's long-standing environmental themes evolve too: this time the threat isn't only human extraction, but Pandora's own volatile ecosystems reacting to imbalance – a metaphor that feels chillingly contemporary.

Visually, Cameron pushes the limits of performance capture and 3D cinematography, giving audiences spectral lava flows, glowing obsidian caverns, and airborne ash storms that blur the line between beauty and catastrophe.

The action sequences – particularly the mid-film siege on the Ash People's stronghold and a climactic battle that unfolds across magma riverbanks – are already being described as some of the most technically impressive moments in modern cinema.

With its blend of mythic storytelling, raw emotion and state-of-the-art spectacle, Avatar: Fire and Ash isn't just a sequel – it's a world-expanding chapter that deepens the lore, raises the stakes and sets the stage for the franchise's next evolution. Whether you return for the artistry, the adventure or the environmental allegory, Cameron's latest epic proves one thing: Pandora still has countless secrets to burn and reveal.





The Housemaid

Starring: Sydney Sweeney, Amanda Seyfried, Michele Morrone, Brandon Sklenar

Director: Paul Feig **Cert:** 15

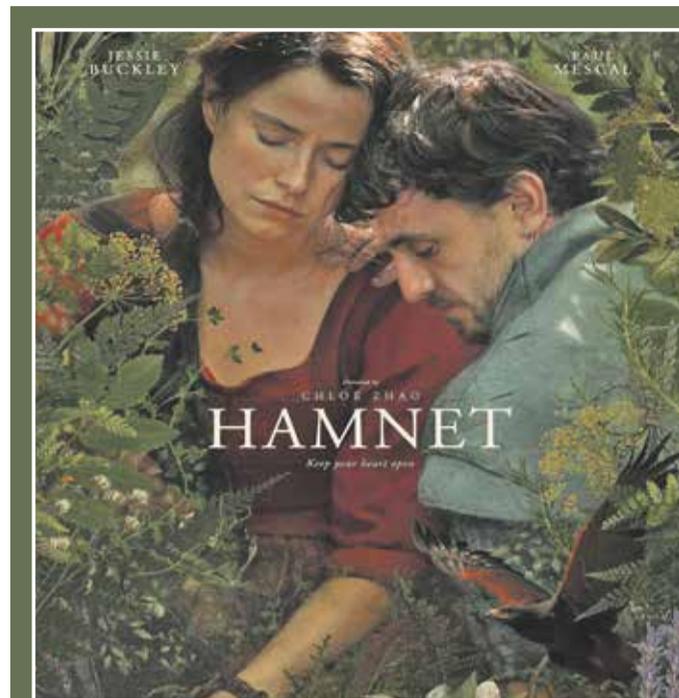
Genre: Thriller **Release Date:** 22/12/2025

The Housemaid is a wildly entertaining thriller starring Sydney Sweeney and Amanda Seyfried, based on the best-selling book. From director Paul Feig, the film plunges audiences into a twisted world where perfection is an illusion, and nothing is as it seems.

Trying to escape her past, Millie (Sweeney) accepts a job as a live-in housemaid for the wealthy Nina

(Seyfried) and Andrew Winchester (Brandon Sklenar).

But what begins as a dream job quickly unravels into something far more dangerous - a sexy, seductive game of secrets, scandal, and power. Behind the Winchesters' closed doors lies a world of shocking twists that will leave you guessing until the very end.



Hamnet

Starring: Emily Watson, Paul Mescal, Joe Alwyn, Jessie Buckley

Director: Chloe Zhao

Cert: 12A **Genre:** Biography

Release Date: 9/1/2026

Grief, genius and a love that shaped a legend - Hamnet brings Shakespeare's greatest loss to the big screen.

It is one of literature's most enduring mysteries - what pain lay behind William Shakespeare's greatest tragedy? Now Hamnet offers a haunting, emotionally rich answer, transforming private grief into cinematic poetry.

Directed by Oscar-winner Chloé Zhao, the film reimagines the domestic life of the world's most famous playwright, focusing not on fame or fortune, but on devastating loss. Adapted from Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell, the story centres on the death of Shakespeare's 11-year-old son - a tragedy long believed to have inspired Hamlet.

Paul Mescal stars as William Shakespeare, portraying a man emotionally adrift, while Jessie Buckley delivers a quietly electrifying performance as Agnes, his fiercely intuitive

wife. It is Agnes who anchors the film - a woman attuned to nature, motherhood and sorrow, whose grief is raw, physical and unrelenting.

Set in 16th-century England, Hamnet unfolds as an intimate portrait of marriage, parenthood and mourning. Zhao's trademark lyrical style turns everyday moments into something sacred - the brush of hands, the stillness after loss, the unspoken distance between two people grieving the same child in different ways.

Rather than a traditional period drama, Hamnet is tender, restrained and emotionally devastating. It is a film about how art is born not from ambition, but from heartbreak - and how love, even in loss, endures.

Quietly powerful and beautifully acted, Hamnet is shaping up to be one of the most talked-about prestige films of the season.



Mercy

Starring: Chris Pratt, Rebecca Ferguson, Kali Reis, Annabelle Wallis, Chris Sullivan, Kylie Rogers

Director: Timur Bekmambetov **Cert:** 12A

Genre: Sci-Fi **Release Date:** 23/1/2026

Mercy is a tense, futuristic courtroom thriller starring Chris Pratt as Detective Chris Raven, a once-lauded cop now fighting for his life in a world where artificial intelligence governs justice.

Set in the near future, Raven is accused of murdering his wife and has just 90 minutes to prove his innocence before an advanced AI judge - played by Rebecca Ferguson, decides his fate.

The twist? This Judge is built on the very system Raven once championed, turning his belief in the technology

into a haunting liability. Trapped in a high-tech chair and racing against the merciless clock, he must uncover buried truths, navigate digital scrutiny and outsmart the very machine designed to dispense justice.

With its taut pacing, claustrophobic energy and timely questions about AI and fair trials, Mercy blends sci-fi spectacle with gripping emotional stakes, making it one of January's most compelling releases.

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XPENG G6: The Chinese EV that wants to eat Tesla for breakfast



If XPENG's UK debut earlier this year felt like a polite knock at the door, the new G6 arriving in early 2026 is the brand walking straight in, kicking off its shoes and saying: "Right then, let's get serious." And judging by the numbers, this thing is serious.

XPENG has unveiled its fully refreshed G6 line-up for the UK, starting at £39,990 and topping out with the new AWD Performance Black Edition - a stealthy, dual-motor, 358kW electricity cannon that will punt you from 0-62mph in 4.1 seconds. Yes, that's family-crossover-with-a-supercar-complex territory.

Here's where it gets silly. The G6's

next-generation 80.8kWh LFP battery (free of cobalt, nickel and manganese) can swallow electrons at up to 451kW. XPENG claims a 10%-80% top-up in just 12 minutes. That's not "fast for an EV." That's "finish scrolling Instagram and you're done" fast.

This is helped along by the brand's Full-Domain 800V SiC architecture - essentially wizardry that keeps the volts flowing and the heat low. There's also a standard-fit heat pump, meaning winter range won't nosedive the moment the temperature drops below "slightly chilly."

Continued on page 40

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Almost half of UK drivers risk damaging their car with defrosting habits

Nearly half of motorists risk causing damage to their cars when scraping ice off their windcreens, and a third (34%) could even be fined for their typical winter morning behaviour, according to research from eBay, the UK's leading online marketplace for vehicle parts and accessories.

Following the UK's first winter cold-snap with vehicles frosting up across the country, eBay's research revealed one in five (19%) motorists have admitted to using boiling water from a kettle despite the fact it can crack the glass. Almost a third (30%) said they used their wipers to clear ice, which could damage the wiper blades and electric motor.

While the data found the most common ways drivers use to clear their windscreen was ice scrapers (32%) and de-icer spray (26%), it also revealed the more unusual methods including bank cards, CDs, CD cases, a paint scraper, cold water, and even the hot water bottle 'trick' made viral through social media.

As well as risking damage to their car, drivers could be fined for how they defrost their car. Nearly one in five (19%) were unaware that it was illegal to drive their vehicles without fully defrosted windows. This can result in a £60 fine and three points on your license according to rule 229 in the Highway Code.

Some motorists (18%) also said they were comfortable leaving their car running to fully defrost their car, with 15%

aiming to make the most of their busy morning while the vehicle runs outside. This is also technically illegal under rule 123 in the Highway Code and can result in a fine of up to £80.

The attitude to clearing all car windows differs across the generations, with just over half (52%) of Gen-Z motorists saying they would fully defrost all windows before setting off on their journey, compared with over four of five (85%) Boomers.

The top tool for clearing frost differed across car owners. Renault drivers were the top ice scraper supporters with 90% of them choosing it as their preferred method, while Škoda owners were the top users of de-icer (88%).

Meanwhile, Lexus drivers were the main users (56%) of a windscreen cover.

Abir Tewari, UK Director of Commercial Operations, Parts & Accessories at eBay, said: "Following the first cold snap of the season, we're seeing motorists use a range of methods to clear their windcreens - some more effective and safer than others. It's vital drivers prepare their vehicles properly for challenging winter conditions. That's why eBay offers a wide selection of tried, tested and safe solutions to make cold mornings simpler and safer."

This winter, eBay is offering customers up to 20% off winter vehicle essentials until 20 February 2026, including ice scrapers, de-icer, windscreen covers and more.

Continued from page 39

The AWD Black Edition arriving in the UK for the first time gets 20-inch black alloys, smoked trim, black callipers, and an interior with grey suede-effect upholstery. It looks like it should pull up outside a cyberpunk nightclub.

Underneath, XPENG has retuned the chassis, steering, powertrain and NVH, claiming over 20,000 incremental tweaks. The result, they say, is sharper handling, better refinement and more confidence on Britain's broken, pothole-added roads.

Design: Less bubble, more blade

Outside, the G6 gets a full-width Starlight LED light bar, now stretching an impressive 1,942mm, plus cleaner wheel arches, a tidier rear diffuser, and

a new spoiler that adds a touch more stance. Aerodynamics remain impressive at 0.248 Cd, and buyers can now choose Stellar Purple, which sounds like a colour invented by a 90s boyband but looks rather good.

Inside, XPENG has added new wood-grain trim, suede-effect ceilings and upgraded wireless chargers. The front seats now heat, cool and massage, while the rear seats recline across 12 levels, making long journeys slightly more bearable for grumpy teenagers. Storage remains cavernous, with 571 litres in the boot and 1,374 litres with seats folded.

The infotainment system also gets a bump. The XOS cockpit is faster, smoother and boasts a more intuitive voice assistant that can now take commands from four zones in the cabin. The new 9-inch digital inner rear-view

mirror on upper trims feels pleasingly sci-fi.

Safety: Built Like a Bunker

The battery pack sits inside a 4-3-4 structural safety cage with ballistic-grade shielding capable of surviving 1,000°C and 80 tons of pressure. XPENG will happily tell you this is "bulletproof-level protection." Whether you're planning a heist is your business.

The full XPILOT ASSIST suite brings adaptive cruise, lane centring, automated parking, surround cameras, and seven airbags. Nothing groundbreaking, but comprehensive and well executed.

A sub-£50k dual-motor EV with 450kW charging and 4.1-second pace? If XPENG wanted to ruffle feathers at Tesla, Polestar, Hyundai and the rest, consider them thoroughly ruffled.

XPENG G6: The Chinese EV that wants to eat Tesla for breakfast

The XPENG New G6 lands in Q1 2026 at:

- £39,990 for RWD Standard Range
- £44,990 for RWD Long Range
- £49,990 for AWD Performance Black Edition

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Kia at

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The past, the present
and one outrageously
slick concept car
stealing the show

Kia doesn't do quiet birthdays. So for its 80th, the brand didn't just blow out candles – it lit up its entire history, rolled out 17 of its most iconic machines, and then dropped a concept car so futuristic it makes a VR headset look analogue.

The celebrations took place at Kia Vision Square in Yongin, Korea, the brand's employee training and strategy hub, which for one night became part museum, part design lab and part high-gloss stage set for Kia's next era.

Around 400 guests filled the hall – a mix of current and former Kia employees, designers, engineers, global partners and senior industry figures.

At the front row sat some familiar heavy hitters: Hyundai Motor Group Executive Chair Euisun Chung, Vice Chair Jaehoon Chang, and Kia President & CEO Ho Sung Song, joined by the rest of Kia's executive leadership team. If you ever wondered what it looks like when several decades of corporate decision-making gather in one room, this was it.

But the real headline wasn't the speeches, the violins or the archive film montage celebrating eight decades of hustle – it was the Vision Meta Turismo, the concept car Kia whipped the covers off like a magician pulling a hyper-modern rabbit out of a carbon-fibre hat.



This thing is Kia's love letter to 1960s grand touring, reimagined through the glare of AR displays, sculpted digital interfaces and a cabin closer to a boutique hotel lounge than a car interior.

The exterior is classic Opposites United – soft curves meeting sharp geometry – with the confidence of a brand that knows its designers are on a decade-long hot streak.

Inside, the big flex is the steering wheel. Yes, the steering wheel. Kia has transformed it into a digital interface that lets drivers toggle between Speedster, Dreamer and Gamer modes, each layering augmented-reality graphics onto the windscreen.

Specs remain under wraps, but given this is the same brand that stuffed supercar levels of power

into the EV6 GT, don't expect mild manners.

Away from the concept-car theatrics, guests were treated to an immersive 80th Anniversary Exhibition, showcasing 17 vehicles across eight zones – from the humble 3000-Liho bicycle and K-360 three-wheeler to icons like the Pride, Soul and Stinger, and ending with the EV6 GT and PBV future concepts.

A solo performance by Kia Ambassador Clara-Jumi Kang added a dash of cultural finesse to a ceremony already heavy on nostalgia.

If birthdays are about reflection, Kia's 80th is really about expectation. The Vision Meta Turismo isn't just a concept – it's a statement. Kia has done a lot in eight decades, but judging by what rolled out in Yongin, the wildest stuff is still to come.

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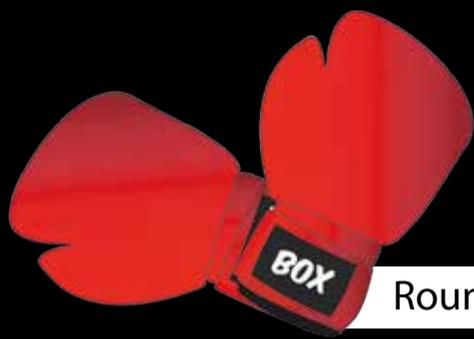
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Asian Express

SPORT



Round up of all your local, national and international sporting news

“A moment for our communities to shine”



Entries open for Unity 5K as Birmingham invites public to run European Championships course

Entries have opened for a new mass participation race that will give thousands of runners the chance to take to Birmingham's city-centre streets on the final day of the Birmingham 2026 European Athletics Championships.

The Unity 5K, which takes place on Sunday 16 August, will allow members of the public to run the same route used by Europe's elite marathon runners just hours after the championship medals are decided.

Continued on page 46

Asian Express

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Round up of all your local, national and international sporting news



“A moment for our communities to shine”

Entries open for Unity 5K as Birmingham invites public to run European Championships course

Organisers say the event will turn the closing day of the championships into a city-wide celebration of running, with amateurs, families and first-timers sharing the atmosphere usually reserved for top-level sport.

Once the elite marathon concludes in the morning, the closed-road course will be reopened for the Unity 5K, offering what is being billed as a rare “medal moment” for everyday runners.

The race will start on Broad Street and finish in Victoria Square, bringing participants through the heart of the city before the championships’ final track action later that evening at the Alexander Stadium.

Alongside the headline 5K, organisers have also launched a Unity 1K fun run, open to everyone aged three and over. Children under 13 can take part for free, with the aim of drawing families, schools and community groups into the championships atmosphere and encouraging younger people to experience the buzz of a major international sporting event.

Jack Buckner, chief executive of UK Athletics and a former European 5,000m champion, said the races were designed to put the public at the centre of the championships.

“How often do you get to run on a European championship course?” he said.

“This is about joy, togetherness and celebrating this incredible event with the people who make the West Midlands what it is.”

Great Britain and Northern Ireland will arrive at Birmingham 2026 aiming to extend their position as the most successful nation in European championships history. Organisers say the Unity races are intended to complement that elite ambition by giving local communities a chance to share the stage, rather than simply watch from behind the barriers.

Sharon Thompson, deputy leader of Birmingham City Council, said the addition of the Unity 5K and 1K would help ensure the championships leave a lasting legacy.

“These events give residents the opportunity not just to witness elite sport, but to experience it themselves, right here on Birmingham’s streets,” she said.

The West Midlands mayor, Richard Parker, said the region’s sporting history made the initiative particularly fitting. Citing athletes such as Dame Denise Lewis and Matt Hudson-Smith, he described the Unity Challenge as “a moment for our communities to shine”, whether participants are chasing sporting dreams or simply looking for motivation to be more active.

The Unity 5K is open to runners aged nine and over, with younger children required to stay within arm’s reach of a designated adult. The Unity 1K is open to all ages, with free places for under-13s. Organisers expect strong demand, with full details and registration available via the championships website: www.Birmingham26.com.

Pedals



In 2022, the club became the first cycling group in the world to complete the historic route from Mecca to Medina, and have completed the challenge several times

Cycling club leader awarded MBE after raising £2.2m for women and children overseas

Back page story continued

In 2022, the club became the first cycling group in the world to complete the historic route from Mecca to Medina. Since then, the challenge has been repeated several times, with Abdin and his team preparing to embark on their fifth Hijrah Ride at the end of January 2026.

The most recent expedition, held earlier this year, raised funds for Little Hearts, Muntada Aid’s flagship programme supporting children born with congenital heart defects. Cyclists endured a gruelling three-day journey through desert terrain, facing headwinds and temperatures reaching 40C.

The Hijrah Ride is one of several major campaigns delivered by the club. Each year, members complete

an annual ride from London to the south coast, alongside the long-running Global Cycling Challenge, which has seen riders travel through 55 European cities across 22 countries over the past 12 years.

Beyond the fundraising totals, supporters say the club has also become a lifeline for many of its members, promoting mental and physical wellbeing, strengthening community ties and bringing families together around a shared humanitarian purpose.

Abdin grew up on a council estate in Bethnal Green and worked a series of jobs in fast food outlets and call centres before securing a junior role at a stockbroking firm.

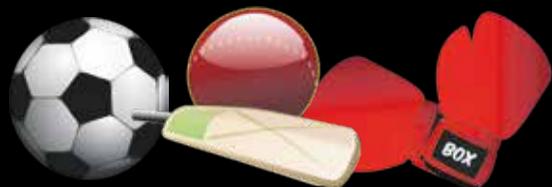
His introduction to cycling came when a colleague encouraged him to commute by bike, an experience he

credits with transforming his health and outlook. Weekend rides with friends soon evolved into a structured club that now operates on a national scale.

Reacting to the honour, Abdin said the MBE belonged to the collective effort behind the club. “This recognition truly belongs to everyone involved in H&K Cycle Club. What we’ve achieved together over the last 10 years shows the power of community, purpose and perseverance,” he said.

“As we prepare for our fifth Hijrah Ride, we remain committed to supporting causes across Asia and Africa and helping as many people as possible. None of this would be possible without our members, partners and my family, who have supported me every step of the way.”



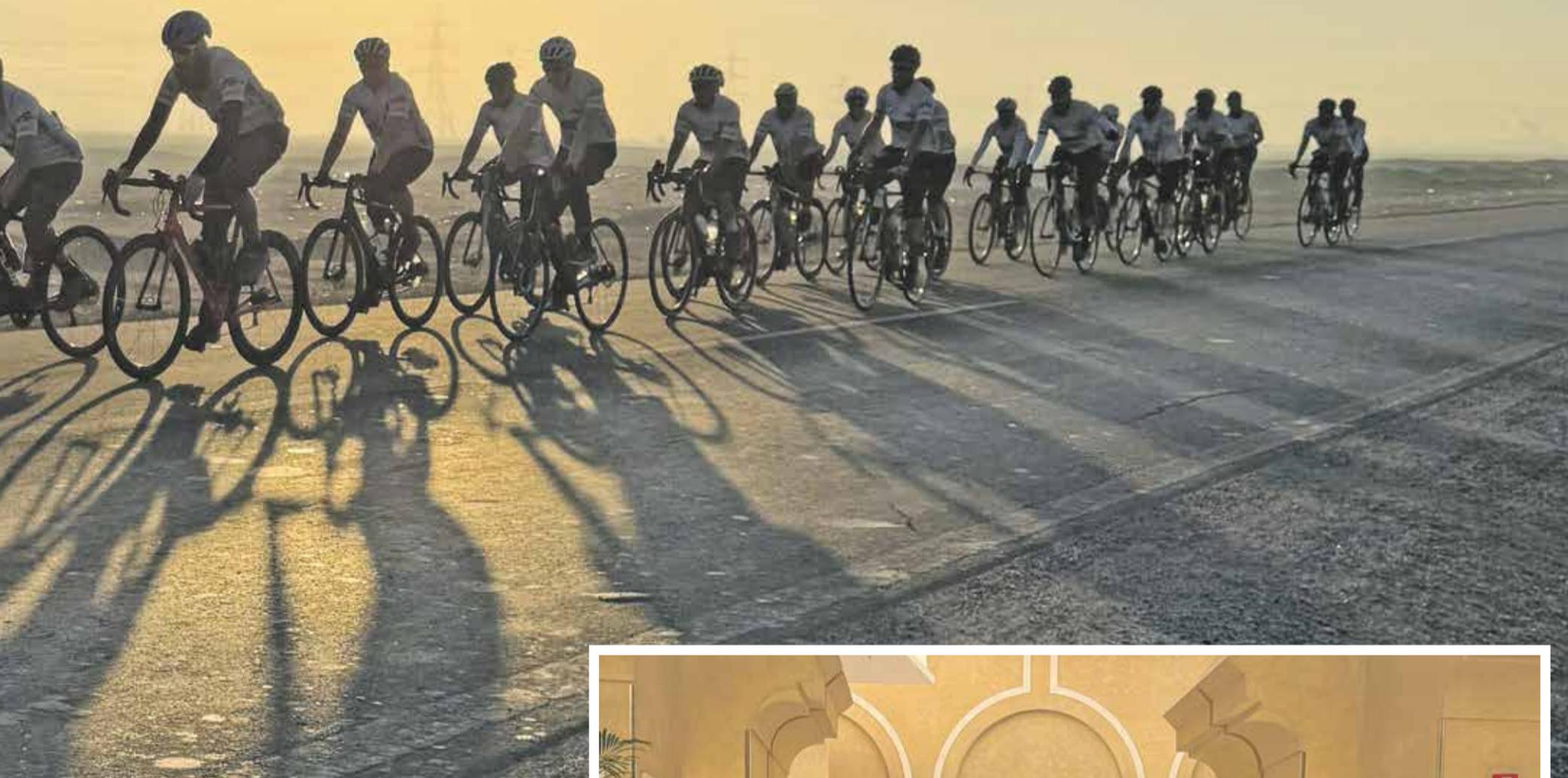


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What the miles have delivered

Funds raised by H&K Cycle Club have helped to deliver:

- A maternity clinic and 52 refugee homes in Syria
- Solar-powered water stations in Africa serving more than 20,000 people
- Schools in Ethiopia and Mali
- A deaf and blind school in Somalia
- Funding for 300 life-saving heart operations for children
- More than 1,000 cataract operations restoring sight



Asian Express

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Round up of all your local, national and international sporting news



The head of a community cycling club that began as a modest support network for men in east London has been awarded an MBE after raising more than £2.2m for humanitarian causes supporting women, children and vulnerable communities across Asia and Africa.

Shamsul Abdin, a tax reporting analyst, father of four and founder of H&K Cycle Club, was recognised in the King's honours for a decade of charitable fundraising and grassroots leadership that has combined endurance sport with international aid.

Established in 2013, H&K Cycle Club was originally formed as a social outlet for men in east London. Under Abdin's leadership it has grown into one of the UK's most active charitable cycling communities, with more than 200 members and an annual programme of long-distance rides designed to test physical limits while raising funds for life-changing projects overseas.

Among its most ambitious undertakings is the Hijrah Ride, organised in partnership with international aid charity Muntada Aid.

Continued on page 55

Cycling club leader awarded MBE after raising £2.2m for women and children overseas

Founder of H&K Cycle Club Shamsul Abdin



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