

Chief Minister Lalduhoma lays foundation stone for 24 MW Tuirini Small Hydro Power Project

Aizawl, Jan 19: Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma today laid the foundation stone for the 24 megawatt Tuirini Small Hydro Electricity Power Project on the banks of the Tuirini River at Sesawng, marking another step in the State's effort to strengthen its power generation capacity. The foundation stone-laying ceremony was attended by Home Minister Pu K. Sapdanga as the Guest of Honour. Minister for Power and Electricity Pu F. Rodinglana chaired the programme. Minister for Information and Public Relations Pu B. Lalchhanzova and local MLA Lt. Col. Clement Lalhmingthana were also present on the occasion. The 24 MW Tuirini Small Hydro Power Project will be implemented as an externally aided project at an estimated cost of Rs. 676.98 crore. The project will be funded through a loan from the New Development Bank, with its headquarters in Shanghai. Once completed, the project is expected to add a significant amount of clean and renewable energy to the State's power grid. Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Lalduhoma appreciated the dedication and hard work of the Power and Electricity Department. He specifically acknowledged the efforts

of the Power Minister and departmental officials in pushing forward important power generation projects in the State. He said such commitment was necessary to ensure long-term energy security for Mizoram. The Chief Minister also spoke about other ongoing and upcoming power projects in the State. He recalled that the 10 MW Thenzawl Solar Power Plant was inaugurated last month. He added that work on the 5 MW Solar Power Plant at Sumsuih is currently underway and about 20 per cent of the construction has already been completed. He noted that both the Thenzawl and Sumsuih solar power plants are fully owned by the Government of Mizoram, reflecting the State's focus on developing its own power assets. Speaking on major hydro power initiatives, the Chief Minister shared details about the Tuivai Hydro Electric Project. He said the Central Water Commission had originally designed the project with a capacity of 210 MW. However, since the reservoir would submerge certain areas in Manipur, the project was considered sensitive and the capacity was later revised to 132 MW. He informed that the Department of Economic Affairs under the Ministry of Finance has approved the preparation of the Detailed



Project Report, the selection of a suitable private developer, the tender process, and the signing of necessary agreements by the State Government. For this purpose, an amount of Rs. 2.3 crore was sanctioned for appointing a transaction adviser, and the globally reputed firm Ernst & Young LLP has been engaged. The Chief Minister said the DPR has now been completed, and once the financial arrange-

ments are finalised, construction work on the Tuivai dam can begin. He also updated the gathering on the Tlawng Hydro Project, stating that the DPR for the project is currently under review by the Central Water Commission. He said the crucial geological investigation work, known as drifting work, has already been entrusted to a local firm through a work order issued on January 3, 2023. The DPR for the Tlawng project is expected to

be completed by September 2026. The Chief Minister said that projects like the Tuirini Small Hydro Power Project will play an important role in meeting Mizoram's growing power needs and reducing dependence on power purchases from outside the State. He expressed hope that the project would be completed on time and would benefit the people in the long run by providing reliable and clean electricity.

MGNREGA renaming opposed by APCC

Itanagar, Jan 19: The Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) on Sunday strongly opposed the Centre's decision to rename and restructure the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), warning that the move weakens the legal rights of rural workers and dilutes the original spirit of the scheme. Addressing the MGNREGA Bachao Sangram outreach programme at Roring in Lower Dibang Valley, APCC president Bosiram Siram demanded an immediate rollback of the renaming of MGNREGA as VB-G RAM G. He described the change as "political, ideological and dangerous" and alleged that it was aimed at erasing the legacy associated with Mahatma Gandhi. Siram said the employment scheme was passed by Parliament as a rights-based law and cannot be altered at the will of any government. "MGNREGA is not the personal property of any ruling party.

It is a legal right given to the rural poor," he said, according to a party statement issued here. The APCC chief further claimed that recent structural changes have weakened the legal guarantee under the scheme. He pointed out that earlier, workers had a clear legal right to demand 100 days of employment in a year. "Today, employment depends largely on budgetary allocation. Where is the guarantee? Where is the right?" he asked.

PM Flags off 2 Amrit Bharat Trains from Assam

Guwahati, Jan 19: In a significant milestone for strengthening railway connectivity in the Northeast, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday flagged off two Amrit Bharat Express trains from Assam. The two newly introduced services are the Dibrugarh - Gomti Nagar (Lucknow) Amrit Bharat Express and the Kamakhya - Rohtak Amrit Bharat Express. The trains were flagged off virtually from Kaliabor in Nagaon district of Assam in the presence of several distinguished dignitaries, including Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and Union ministers Sarbananda Sonowal and Pabitra Margherita. The new Amrit Bharat trains will substantially enhance long-distance rail connectivity between Assam and key destinations across Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Haryana and adjoining regions, directly benefiting lakhs of passengers including students, traders, working professionals and families from the Northeast. The trains are designed with a focus on enhanced passenger comfort, safety and affordability, featuring modern coaches, improved riding quality and passenger-friendly amenities, making long-distance travel more accessible for the common man. The Dibrugarh-Gomti Nagar Amrit Bharat Express will provide improved access from Upper Assam to major educational, medical and commercial centres in North India, while the Kamakhya-Rohtak Amrit Bharat Express will strengthen connectivity from Guwahati to important industrial and administrative hubs in Haryana and the National Capital Region. Enroute, these services will cater to numerous important stations, ensuring broad based socio-economic benefits across the regions they traverse. The landmark event marks the introduction of the first non-AC Amrit Bharat Express train service from the region.

Assam Govt Raises Upper Age Limit for Police Recruitment to 26; Relief for Disabled ADRE Candidates

Guwahati, Jan 19: In a move aimed at expanding employment opportunities for youth, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday, January 18, announced a revision in the age eligibility criteria for Assam Police recruitment. The announcement was made during a Facebook Live address. According to the Chief Minister, the upper age limit for applying to the Assam Police has been increased to 26 years, while the minimum age remains unchanged at 18 years. The revised age criteria will apply to upcoming recruitment drives and is expected to benefit thousands of aspirants who were previously ineligible due to age restrictions. Sarma said the decision was taken after considering long-standing demands from candidates and the need to create wider employment avenues in the state.

The move is also seen as part of the government's efforts to strengthen the Assam Police by attracting a larger and more di-

verse pool of applicants. Detailed recruitment notifications outlining post-wise eligibility and timelines are expected to be issued soon. In a separate announcement during the same interaction, the Chief Minister also declared special relief measures for persons with disabilities who have qualified in the Assam Direct Recruitment Examination (ADRE). He said candidates with disabilities who have cleared the written stage of the ADRE will be given a second opportunity to appear for the medical examination, with the aim of removing procedural barriers and ensuring that deserving candidates are not denied employment due to technical or medical assessment constraints. Emphasising the government's commitment to inclusive governance, Sarma said no qualified candidate should suffer due to limitations in the existing system. He added that detailed guidelines regarding the second medical examination will be issued shortly by the concerned departments.

Tinsukia auditions of 'Sur Sangam' witness participation from 22 tea garden model schools

Tinsukia, Jan 19: District-level auditions for Sur Sangam - Tea Garden Student Talent Hunt were held on January 16 and 17 at the Senairam H.S. School in Tinsukia, as part of a collaborative initiative by the Department of Education (Secondary), Government of Assam, and The Hans Foun-

dation, North East to nurture musical talent among students from tea garden communities. A total of 63 students participated in the Tinsukia district auditions, with students representing all the 22 tea garden model schools from the district. These students were shortlisted through preliminary school-level

selections conducted under the structured music education programme being implemented across tea garden model schools. "Sur Sangam" forms part of The Hans Foundation's Utam Xikhya programme, implemented in partnership with the Department of Education (Secondary), Government

of Assam, with a focus on strengthening holistic education in model schools located in tea garden areas. The initiative integrates formal music education into the school curriculum through the engagement of dedicated music teachers, enabling students to develop creative skills alongside academic learning.

Assam electoral roll revision enters final phase

Guwahati, Jan 19: The Special Revision of electoral rolls in Assam has entered its final phase, with just a few days left for voters to submit claims, objections, or corrections. The Assam Chief Electoral Officer has reminded citizens that January 22, 2026, is the last date for completing all related formalities. An official notification issued on Sunday, January 18, stated that eligible voters who have not yet checked their details or submitted applications should do so without delay. The Special Revision is being carried out as per instructions issued by the Election Commission of India through a notification dated November 17, 2025. According to officials, the revision process allows citizens to apply for inclusion of new names, deletion of incorrect or duplicate entries, correction of personal details, and change of residence within the same constituency. These steps are meant to ensure that the electoral rolls are accurate and up to date before future elections.

Arrogance will meet its end in 2026: APCC president Gaurav Gogoi

Guwahati, Jan 19: Congress president and Lok Sabha MP Gaurav Gogoi today launched a sharp attack on Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, accusing his government of arrogance, misuse of power, land-related irregularities, and attempts to influence the electoral process ahead of the 2026 Assam Assembly elections. Addressing the media at Rajiv Bhavan in the Balukdubi area of Goalpara, Gogoi said history has repeatedly shown that arrogance in power always leads to downfall. Referring to the historic Battle of Saraighat, he said the defeat of the Mughals remains a lesson that no ruler, however powerful, can survive for long if disconnected from the people. "Just as arrogance led to the fall of the Mughals at Saraighat, the same arrogance of the present Assam government will face defeat in the 2026 elections," Gogoi said. Earlier in the day, Gogoi paid floral tributes to the statues of former Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi and noted Assamese singer Zubeen Garg at the Congress office.

After the tribute, he spoke at length on what he described as serious concerns faced by indigenous communities in the state. Gogoi accused the BJP-led government of claiming to protect indigenous people while allegedly allowing large-scale transfer of tribal land. He specifically mentioned the Rabha community, alleging that a significant portion of their land has been taken during the BJP's rule. "The BJP government has turned indigenous land into a business. A land syndicate is op-



erating under the leadership of the Chief Minister, along with ministers and MLAs," Gogoi alleged. He claimed that Congress would soon place more facts before the public and urged people to remain alert and aware. Stressing that land protection is a core issue, Gogoi said Congress has a clear stand on safeguarding indigenous land rights. "Whether it is land along highways or land in char and riverine areas, Congress alone has the strength and intent to protect indigenous land if voted to power," he said.

The Congress leader also raised serious concerns over the ongoing Special Revision of electoral rolls in Assam. He alleged that the BJP was afraid of a fair and transparent election. According to Gogoi, genuine voters in some areas are being excluded, while names from other states are allegedly being added to voter lists. "If the BJP has done such good work, why is there a need to interfere with voter lists?" he asked, adding that any attempt to weaken electoral integrity would be strongly opposed.

In Brief

Wolf Attacks Endanger Traditional Gayal Rearing in Mizoram

Aizawl: Repeated wolf attacks in Mizoram's Serchhip district are severely impacting gayal rearing, a practice integral to Mizo culture. These attacks primarily target newborn and young calves at night, disrupting the traditional free-ranging system. Since 2019, around 300 young gayals have been killed, leading to a decline in rearing families and animals. Villagers express difficulty in protecting the calves and highlight delays in compensation from authorities. Despite losses, farmers remain committed to gayal rearing, viewing it as vital to their identity and heritage.

PM Flags off 2 Amrit Bharat Trains from Assam

Guwahati: Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched two Amrit Bharat Express trains from Assam, marking a significant boost to railway connectivity in the Northeast. The trains, Dibrugarh - Gomti Nagar and Kamakhya - Rohtak, were flagged off virtually from Kaliabor in the presence of dignitaries including the Assam Governor and Union ministers. These services will improve long-distance rail connectivity to key regions including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Haryana, benefiting students, traders, and families. Designed for comfort and safety, the trains feature modern amenities and aim to enhance accessibility for passengers. This event also signifies the introduction of the first non-AC Amrit Bharat Express service from the region.

Candlelight vigil held in memory of Kuki woman

Guwahati: A candlelight vigil took place in Tui-buong, Manipur, on Saturday to honor a 20-year-old Kuki woman who died from injuries sustained during a sexual assault in January 2023. Organized by the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF), the event attracted many participants advocating for justice. The victim was assaulted after being kidnapped amid ethnic clashes in May 2023 and succumbed to her injuries on January 10, 2026. This incident has raised serious concerns about women's safety and public security in Manipur, prompting calls for a thorough investigation and accountability. The Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU) expressed deep sorrow regarding the victim's death, highlighting systemic failures in protecting her and ensuring justice for her case.

Assam voters urged to verify names

Guwahati: The Assam Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) has called on eligible citizens to register to vote by January 22, 2026, as part of the Special Revision of electoral rolls. Voters can apply for new registration using Form 6, while Form 7 is for objections or deletions, and Form 8 is for personal detail corrections. Applications can be submitted offline through Booth Level Officers or Electoral Registration Officers, or online via the ECINET app or voters.eci.gov.in.

Nagaland: CCRC Fathers Association holds 4th general session at Chetheba

Dimapur, Jan 19: The 4th general session of Chakhesang Christian Revival Churches Fathers Association (CCRC-FA) held at the Local Ground, Chetheba Town, culminated on Sunday. The two-day programme was hosted by CRC Chetheba Town under Phek district. Delivering greetings during the Sunday morning service, advisor for CAWD and Taxes, Kudecho Khamo, reminded that fatherhood carries immense responsibility and that fathers are regarded as God’s deputies within the family.

He said fathers play the role of pastors in their households and challenged them to be rooted in Christ—with faith as the foundation, mission of the Gospel. Speaker of the service, Rev. Zaseyi Veswuh, chairman of the Council of Chakhesang Christian Revival Church (CCRC), exhorted believers to be models of faith, quoting Proverbs 20:7. He emphasized honesty, uprightness and integrity, stating that faith without action is dead.

He urged fathers to lead by example, love their neighbours, and live peaceably, citing Noah’s life of faith and obedience as a model. The service was led by Vetacho Nienu, president of CCRCFA, with invocation by Rev. Veshoseyi Rhakho, pastor, CRC Thenyizu. Special songs were presented by CRC Chetheba Town, Khezhakeno CRC Fathers Fellowship and CRC Yoruba Fathers Fellowship. Scripture reading was done by Vetsuto Dozo, pastor, CCRC Jalukie Zangdi. The Sunday evening valedictory service was addressed by Rev. Senuto Ringa, general secretary, NCRC, and led by D. Kemvu Koza, advisor, CCRCFA. On



Saturday evening, Rev. Z. David Koza, executive secretary, CCRC, was the speaker. Choral competitions were also held on Saturday with Veshuduyi Tetseo, Music Secretary, Chetheba Town Baptist Church; Nusakholu Dawhuo, Music Secretary, Thenyizu Baptist Church; and Phisa Nienu, Music Director, Chozuba Town Baptist Church, as judges. Meanwhile, a new team of the Chakhesang CRC Fathers Association led by Joshua Koza was installed by Rev. Zhouhuyi Nyekha, chairman, Ordination Board.

NE is now not far from ‘Dil’ and ‘Dilli’: PM

Imphal, Jan 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the North East was no longer distant from the nation’s heart or the national capital, as he dedicated two new Amrit Bharat Express trains from Assam to other parts of the country at Koliabor. Stating that the region’s greatest challenge for decades had been distance—both physical and emotional—Modi said people of the North East long felt development was happening elsewhere, leaving them behind and eroding trust. He asserted that this perception had changed under the present dispensation, with the Union and state governments prioritising the region’s development. Modi said simultaneous efforts were undertaken to improve connectivity in Assam through roadways, railways, airways and waterways. Emphasising the importance of rail connectivity for social and economic growth, especially in the North East, Modi criticised the Congress for neglecting the sector, noting that Assam received only about Rs. 2,000 crore annually for railways during its tenure at the Centre. In contrast, he said, the allocation had increased nearly five-fold to around Rs. 10,000 crore per year under the current government. He said the enhanced investment had resulted in large-scale railway infrastructure development, including new lines, doubling and electrification projects, which in turn improved capacity and passenger facilities. Modi announced the launch of three new train services from Koliabor, describing it as a major expansion of Assam’s rail network. He said the Vande Bharat Sleeper Train would connect Guwahati with Kolkata, offering greater comfort for long-distance travellers, while two Amrit Bharat Express trains would serve key stations across Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, benefiting lakhs of passengers.

St. Mary’s CC and NBC commemorate their platinum anniversary

Dimapur, Jan 19: Ngozübomi Baptist Church (NBC) and St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Lakhuti—celebrated their Platinum Jubilee, commemorating 75 years of faith and service to the community.

Gracing the NBC platinum jubilee as special guest on Sunday, advisor, Land Resources Department, G. Ikuto Zhimomi, said Jubilee was not confined to organizational mandates or guidelines framed by associations such as SBAK, NBCC, CBCNEI or World Baptist Convention, but was essentially a divine promise rooted in the scriptures.

Meanwhile, St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Lakhuti, celebrated its Platinum Jubilee from January 16 to 18, 2025 under the theme “Thy Kingdom Come, O Lord” (Mt. 6:10). The jubilee concluded with a solemn Holy Mass on the final day, with Rev. Dr. James Thoppil, Bishop of Kohima Diocese, as the main celebrant.

The three-day celebration was observed as a call for forgiveness, reconciliation and unity, reminding the faithful of their pilgrimage as members of the Catholic Church. On the opening day, Rev. Fr. N.K. George blessed the jubilee site, followed by the release of a commemorative postal envelope by Echungthung Yanthan, Asst. Director of Postal Services. The second day featured Holy Eucharistic Celebration led by Rev. Fr. Abraham Lotha, the first priest from Lakhuti village, and a Eucharistic Procession around the village. On the final day, Bishop Thoppil presided over the Holy

Mass and blessed the new church building and Platinum Jubilee monolith. The monolith was unveiled by Yanjo Veronica Yanthan, wife of pioneer Yantsao Lucus Yanthan, while the ribbon-cutting and opening of the church door were performed by Abraham Santsuo Humtsoe, son of pioneer Shanpano Zechariah Humtsoe. In his homily, Bishop Thoppil congratulated the Catholic community of Lakhuti on completing 75 years of faith and recalled the sacrifices of pioneers who embraced Catholicism despite opposition and prejudice. Quoting Romans 8:35–39, he emphasized that nothing can separate believers from the love of Christ. He described Lakhuti as a beacon of hope, blessed with faith, sacraments, the Word of God and fellowship, noting that the Catholic Church in Nagaland was first established in Lakhuti before spreading to neighbouring villages.

The Bishop urged the faithful to remember the past with gratitude, live the present with renewed commitment, and look to the future with hope. He reminded that the jubilee was not merely a remembrance of the past but a call to renew faith and commitment in today’s world. The celebration concluded with a felicitation programme chaired by Jonas Yanthan, with speeches from Dr. Johnny Ruangmei, outgoing president of the Catholic Association of Nagaland, and Mhathung Yanthan, advisor to the Government of Nagaland. The vote of thanks was delivered by Elias T. Lotha.

Tripura government is dedicated to bolstering infrastructure of education

Ratan Lal Nath, Minister of Power

Agartala, Jan 19: Quality education is essential for creating a healthy, transparent, and corruption-free society, said Education Minister Ratan Lal Nath. He emphasized that the state government is prioritizing comprehensive reforms in the education sector to achieve this vision. Nath made the remarks while inaugurating the newly constructed building of Mohanpur’s Madhu Choudhury Para Higher Secondary School. He also virtually inaugurated new facilities at Tarapur, Gopalnagar, and Berimura Higher Secondary Schools. The event was attended by Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha and held at the Madhu Choudhury Para school premises. Power Minister highlighted the government’s commitment to realizing the vision of “Ek Tripura, Shrestha Tripura” and “Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat.” He stressed that fundamental changes in education are crucial to achieving these goals, noting that both the state and central governments are working together “If we want a corruption-free society, quality education is indispensable. The classroom is where the nation’s future is shaped,” he said. The minister further stated that today’s students will lead the country tomorrow, and the government is working tirelessly to make them self-reliant. He pointed to significant progress



in education under the current administration, noting that the number of pre-primary schools has risen from just nine before 2018 to 180 today. Since 2018, twelve Vidya Jyoti schools have been established, while vocational education has been introduced in 478 schools. He also highlighted the launch of the Super 30 program and the expansion of English-medium schools, which have grown from 111 to 422, to strengthen the education system. School supplies.

NGT Takes Cognisance Of Environmental Degradation At Deepor Beel In Guwahati

Guwahati, Jan 19: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has taken suo motu cognisance of reported environmental degradation at Deepor Beel, the Ramsar-listed wetland in Guwahati, and sought remedial measures from the concerned authorities. The matter was taken up by the NGT’s Eastern Zone Bench, headed by Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava along with Expert Member Ishwar Singh, based on a local media report dated April 22, 2025.

During the hearing, the tribunal referred to violations highlighted by the Assam Pollution Control Board (APCB). A report submitted by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) on July 18, 2025, indicated that several water quality parameters at Deepor Beel exceeded permissible limits. The report recorded high levels of faecal coliform and faecal streptococci, pointing to serious pollution in the wetland. The tribunal expressed dissatisfaction with the re-

sponse filed by the Assam State Wetlands Authority on August 23, 2025, describing it as brief and lacking consideration of the findings of the CPCB and APCB. The authority has been given four weeks to carry out remedial measures and submit a detailed status report. As a respondent, noting its role in addressing urban pollution impacting the wetland. The case has been listed for further hearing on March 23.

Manipur: 10 Acres Of Illicit Poppy Crops Destroyed In Churachandpur

Agartala, Jan 17: A joint team of security forces and the Forest Department, with support from the district administration, destroyed around 10 acres of illegal poppy plantations in the Suangkong hill range of Manipur’s Churachandpur district on Thursday, officials said. The operation was conducted in the Behiang police station area under the supervision of an Executive Magistrate, reflecting the administration’s intensified drive to curb illicit drug cultivation and dismantle supply chains linked to the narcotics trade. During the operation, authorities also seized and destroyed materials used for poppy farming, including salt, urea, spraying equipment and other cultivation tools found at the site. Officials said the action is part of a sustained enforcement strategy targeting poppy cultivation in remote and forested



hill areas, which have emerged as major hubs of illegal drug production. The destruction of the plantations, they added, is intended to send a strong deterrent message to

those involved in narcotics-related activities. The district administration reiterated its commitment to continue coordinated operations involving multiple agencies to pro-

tect forest land, restore ecological balance, and prevent the spread of drug networks that pose serious threats to public health and national security.

NE is now close to “Dil” and “Dilli”: PM



Imphal, Jan 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the North East was no longer distant from the nation’s heart or the national capital, as he dedicated two new Amrit Bharat Express trains from Assam to other parts of the country at Koliabor. Stating that the region’s greatest challenge for decades had been distance—both physical and emotional—Modi said people of the North East long felt development was happening elsewhere, leaving them behind and eroding trust. He asserted that this perception had changed under the present dispensation, with the Union and state governments prioritising the region’s development. Modi said simultaneous efforts were undertaken to improve connectivity in Assam through roadways, railways, airways and waterways. Emphasising the importance of rail connectivity for social and economic growth, especially in the North East, Modi criticised the Congress for neglecting the sector, noting that Assam received only about Rs. 2,000 crore annually for railways during its tenure at the Centre. In contrast,

he said, the allocation had increased nearly five-fold to around Rs. 10,000 crore per year under the current government. He said the enhanced investment had resulted in large-scale railway infrastructure development, including new lines, doubling and electrification projects, which in turn improved capacity and passenger facilities. Modi announced the launch of three new train services from Koliabor, describing it as a major expansion of Assam’s rail network. He said the Vande Bharat Sleeper Train would connect Guwahati with Kolkata, offering greater comfort for long-distance travellers, while two Amrit Bharat Express trains would serve key stations across Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, benefiting lakhs of passengers. Modi said the improved connectivity would link Assam’s traders to new markets, help students access educational opportunities and make travel across regions easier. He added that Assam’s progress was opening new avenues for the entire North East and strengthening the Act East Policy.

PM lays foundation for Kaziranga foundation for the elevated corridor

Guwahati, Jan 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today highlighted the success story of Kaziranga’s rhino conservation as he laid the foundation for the elevated corridor that will pass through the famed national park. The Prime Minister performed Bhoomi Pujan for the Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project, worth over Rs 6,950 crore and virtually flagged off two new Amrit Bharat Express trains at

Kaliabor in Assam’s Nagaon district. Addressing a public meeting, he underscored that Kaziranga National Park, recorded zero incidents of rhino poaching in 2025. Describing Kaziranga as the soul of Assam, PM Modi said the sharp decline in rhino poaching since 2016 when the BJP government came to power in the state is a major conservation success. He accused the previous Con-

gress governments in the state of doing precious little to curb rhino poaching in Kaziranga. The 86-km-long Kaziranga Elevated Corridor Project is aimed at ensuring safe wildlife movement. The project includes the four-laning of the Kaliabor-Numaligarh section of NH-37 (New NH-715) and approximately 34.45 km of elevated corridor, along with bypass-

es at Jakhalabandha and Bokakhat. The project also aims to improve regional connectivity while ensuring protection of the park’s rich biodiversity. The project will pass through Nagaon, Karbi Anglong and Golaghat districts and will significantly improve connectivity to Upper Assam, particularly Dibrugarh and Tinsukia. The elevated wildlife corridor will ensure

uninterrupted movement of animals, reduce human-wildlife conflict. It will also enhance road safety, reduce travel time and accident rates, and support growing passenger and freight traffic. As part of the project, bypasses will be developed at Jakhalabandha and Bokakhat that will help to decongest towns, improve urban mobility and enhance the quality of life for local residents.

Assam will not bow to 'Pakistani Agents': Assam CM

Guwahati, Jan 19: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma today launched a strong political attack on Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi and said that Assam would not bow to what he described as “Pakistani agents” or “unknown forces”. The remarks were made while he was addressing a public gathering during the inauguration of the Kaziranga Elevated Corridor project in Nagaon district, in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Speaking from the stage, Sarma said Assam has undergone a major transformation in recent years and that the people of the state are now confident and self-reliant. Referring to the opposition voiced by Gogoi against the Kaziranga Elevated Corridor project, the Chief Minister said such resistance reflects an attempt to slow down Assam’s progress. “Assam has changed. No Assamese will surrender before any Pakistani agent or unknown people. This is a new Assam,” Sarma said. Sarma further claimed that incidents of rhino poaching in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve have stopped due to stronger conservation measures and firm enforcement of the law.

Candlelight vigil held in memory of Kuki woman who died after sexual assault

Guwahati, Jan 19: A candlelight vigil was held on Saturday evening at Tuibuong in Manipur’s Churachandpur district to pay homage to a 20-year-old Kuki woman who died on January 10 from injuries she sustained during a brutal sexual assault in 2023. A large number of people, including women, participated in the candlelight vigil and decided justice for the victim. The Indigenous Tribal Leaders’ Forum (ITLF) organized the event in her memory and to express solidarity with survivors of sexual violence. She suffered grievous wounds when she was sexually assaulted after being kidnapped by a group of men from Imphal just after the Meitei-Kuki ethnic clashes broke out in May 2023. She was treated at Apollo Hospital in Guwahati but succumbed to her injuries on January 10, 2026. The case has reignited public concern over law and order and women’s security amid the prolonged social and political unrest in Manipur, with renewed calls for a thorough investigation and institutional accountability. Organisers stated that the event aims to honour her memory and draw attention to the urgent need for justice and accountability. The Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU) expressed profound sorrow and anguish over her demise, stating that her death is a damning indictment of a system that failed to protect her, heal her wounds, and bring her perpetrators to justice.



Kokborok Language Day rally in Tripura briefly disrupted over Roman script demand

Agartala, Jan 19: The 48th Kokborok Language Day rally in Tripura witnessed brief tension on Sunday after members of indigenous students’ organisations raised protests demanding the adoption of the Roman script for the Kokborok language, an issue that has remained unresolved for many years. The rally began in front of Rabindra Shatabarshiki Bhavan and was organised to mark Kokborok Language Day. Students, teachers, and representatives from different schools and social organisations took part in the programme. The rally was led by MLA Rampada Jamatia and former MLA Dr Atul Debbarma, who is also the convener of the Script Selection Committee formed for the development of the Kokborok language. Soon after the rally started, members of the Tipra Students Federation (TSF) and Tipra Indigenous Students Federation (TISF) reached the venue and began raising slogans. The protesters demanded that the government adopt the Roman script for Kokborok. They alleged that successive governments had failed to listen to the long-standing demand of the indigenous community on the script issue. Police personnel present at the spot intervened to stop the

protest, stating that the demonstration was disrupting the official Language Day programme. The situation was brought under control after police asked the protesters to disperse. Speaking to the media, TSF vice-president John Debbarma said that while the government was officially observing Kokborok Language Day, it was not addressing the core demands of the Tiprasa people. He said the protest was organised to send a clear message that the community would not remain silent on issues related to its language and identity. He added that the demand for the Roman script had been raised repeatedly over the years, but no concrete decision had been taken. Reacting to the incident, MLA Rampada Jamatia described the disruption as unfortunate. He said the rally was a peaceful and culturally important event meant to celebrate the Kokborok language. He added that attempts to disturb such programmes should have been prevented earlier. Jamatia also said that efforts were continuing to develop the Kokborok language, work towards a standardised script, and pursue its inclusion in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

Naga group skips Home Department meet, cites MoU breach and lack of action in Ireng case

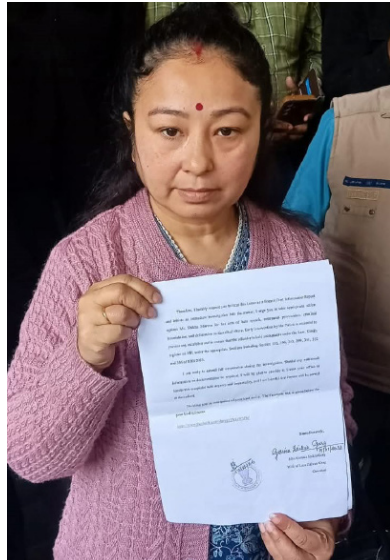
Kohima, Jan 19: The Foothills Naga Co-ordination Committee (FNCC) has decided not to attend a meeting called by the Manipur Home Department on January 19, saying the government has failed to keep earlier commitments and has not taken action in recent violent incidents. In a written communication addressed to the Commissioner (Home), Government of Manipur, the FNCC said it would not be possible for the organisation to take part in the meeting scheduled at the Manipur Secretariat in Imphal. The decision, it said, was taken after detailed discussions with joint tribes, councils and executives under its fold.

The FNCC said its main concern was the government’s failure to honour the three-point Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on August 8, 2025. According to the committee, the assurances given in the MoU have not been implemented even months after it was signed. The organisation stated that this has led to a serious trust gap between the government and the people living in the foothill areas. Another major reason cited by the FNCC was what it described as inaction against armed cadres allegedly involved in the recent Ireng incident. The committee claimed that instead of

taking firm legal steps against those responsible, the government has chosen to invite affected groups for talks. The FNCC termed this approach “unfortunate” and said it sends a wrong message. In its letter, the FNCC alleged that armed cadres of the KNF-P/UPF issued direct threats against Ireng Naga village on January 12. It said such actions amount to serious criminal offences and should be dealt with strictly under the law. The organisation listed provisions of the Indian Penal Code, including sections related to criminal intimidation, attempt to murder, promoting enmity between groups and criminal conspiracy.

Zubeen’s wife files FIR over derogatory remarks on the late singer on social media

Jan 19: Garima Saikia Garg, wife of late music icon Zubeen Garg, has filed a police complaint against one Sikha Sarma for allegedly making derogatory remarks against the deceased singer on social media. She lodged the FIR at the office of the Crime Branch of Guwahati police on Monday morning. Sikha Sarma had repeatedly posted objectionable comments on Facebook, including remarks tarnishing the image of the late singer. It may be mentioned here that a similar FIR has also been filed by the Zubeen Garg Fan Club at the Dispur Police Station in Guwahati. Guwahati police arrested Sikha Sarma hours af-



ter Zubeen’s wife Garima Saikia Garg filed an FIR against Sarma accusing her of making vile remarks against her deceased husband on social media. A team of Crime Branch of Guwahati Police arrested Sarma from her rented accommodation at the Narengi area of Guwahati.

Rodent outbreak in Mizoram raises scrub typhus fears



Aizawl, Jan 19: Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma today laid the foundation stone for the 24 MW Tuirini Small Hydro Electricity Power Project on the banks of the Tuirini river at Sesawng in Aizawl district. K Sapdanga, Home Minister, attended the event as the Guest of Honour, while F. Rodingliana, Minister for Power and Electricity (P&E) chaired the foundation stone-laying programme. B. Lalthanzova, Minister for I&PR, and Lt. Col. Clement Lalthmingthana, MLA, accompanied the Chief Minister. The power plant will be implemented as an externally aided project at a total cost of Rs. 676.98 crore, funded through a loan from the New Development Bank (NDB), Shanghai. In his address, the Chief Minister highly appreciated the dedication and commitment of the Power Minister and the officials of the P&E Department in advancing the State’s power generation sector and expressed his gratitude to them. He recalled that in the previous

month, the 10 MW Thenzawl Solar Power Plant was inaugurated, and a 5 MW Solar Power Plant at Sum-suih is currently under construction, with about 20 per cent of the work already completed. Both the Thenzawl and Sumsuih solar plants are fully owned by the Government of Mizoram. On February 5, 2024, the P&E Department submitted the proposal for the Tuirini project to the State Government under the Externally Aided Project (EAP) framework. It was examined and approved by the State Level Screening Committee on April 4, 2024. The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) Screening Committee approved external funding on February 28, 2025. The project will be funded by the New Development Bank, with 80 per cent of the project cost as loan, to be borne by the Central Government, and 20 per cent to be contributed by the State Government. The total project cost is Rs 676.98 crore, and the project is planned to be completed within five years.

Wolf Attacks Endanger Traditional Gayal Rearing in Mizoram Villages

Aizawl, Jan 19: Repeated wolf attacks have begun to seriously threaten the traditional practice of gayal rearing in remote villages of Mizoram’s Serchhip district, causing heavy losses to farming families and endangering an activity deeply tied to Mizo culture. In the forested villages of Sailulak and Leng, near the Myanmar border, villagers say packs of wolves have been attacking gayals—locally known as sial—mostly during the night. New-born and young calves have been the most frequent targets, disrupting the semi-domesticated rearing system that depends on free forest grazing. Gayal (Bos frontalis) are traditionally allowed to roam across large forest tracts, feeding on natural vegetation and returning instinctively to familiar grounds. While this free-ranging method defines gayal rearing, it has also left the animals highly vulnera-

ble to predators. Vanlalruata, a farmer from Sailulak village, said around 40 families are currently rearing nearly 250 gayals. The practice began in 2017 with just five families and about 50 animals, but repeated wolf attacks have caused major setbacks. “We knew it would be difficult, but we never imagined losing so many calves,” he said. Villagers estimate that since 2019, nearly 300 young gayals have been killed by predators, with wolves identified as the primary threat. Protecting newborn calves round the clock has become nearly impossible, farmers said. The problem is equally severe in neighbouring Leng village, where only 11 families now rear about 55 gayals, down from over 180 animals earlier. Farmer Tlanghmingthanga said repeated attacks have discouraged many families from continuing gayal rearing. The State Animal Husbandry

and Veterinary Department began promoting gayal domestication in 2019 by providing fencing materials, shelters and water ponds. However, officials say full fencing is impractical because the animals range over vast forest areas, sometimes crossing into Myanmar’s Chin State. Farmers have also raised concerns over delayed compensation from the Environment, Forests and Climate Change Department, saying timely payments are crucial for recovery after losses. For the Mizo people, gayals are more than livestock—they symbolise prosperity and social status and play an important role in cultural and religious ceremonies. Despite mounting losses, farmers say they are unwilling to abandon the practice, which they see as an essential link to their identity and heritage.

Manik Saha lays base for extension project of Tripura bhavan in New Delhi

New Delhi, Jan 19: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Monday laid the foundation stone for the Extension Project of Tripura Bhavan at Bir Tikendrajit Marg, New Delhi, marking an important step towards strengthening infrastructure for the people of the state in the national capital. Under this project, six rooms and two hall rooms will be constructed, with an estimated cost of Rs 2.95 crore. “This will strengthen Tripura Bhavan’s infrastructure and enhance facilities for our people visiting the national capital for medical facilities, education, cultural and business development. Committed to modern, efficient infrastructure for Viksit Tripura,” the

Chief Minister took to social media to inform. The foundation-laying ceremony was graced by the presence of Deputy Speaker of the Tripura Legislative Assembly, Ramprasad Pal, Rajya Sabha member, Rajib Bhattacharjee, Minister for Social Welfare Tinku Roy, Minister for Higher Education Kishor Barman, Minister for Industries and Commerce Santana Chakma, Minister for Tribal Welfare, Bikash Debbarma, Minister for Scheduled Caste Welfare, Sudhangshu Das, MLA Bhagaban Das, CRC Manoj Kumar along with several other distinguished dignitaries. The initiative aims to enhance accommodation and support facilities for Tripura residents, government



officials, and visitors travelling to the national capital. The project reflects the commitment to ensuring comfort, dignity, and efficient services for the people of the state while reinforcing Tripura’s presence in New Delhi, sources claim.

Assam voters urged to verify names, make corrections in draft electoral rolls

Guwahati, Jan 19: The Assam Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) has requested eligible citizens to submit their applications for new voter registration on or before January 22, 2026 – the final deadline for filing claims, objections and corrections – under the Special Revision (SR) of electoral rolls, which is currently carried out in accordance with the directive of the Election Commission of India (ECI). According to the guidelines under the SR process, voters can submit applications for inclusion, deletion, correction of entries, or change of residence within the stipulated timeframe. “Eligible citizens seeking new voter registration must apply using Form 6, while Form 7 is designated for objections or deletion of names. Form 8 can be used for corrections in personal details or shifting of residence within the constituency. All such applications must be completed and submitted on or before January 22, 2026,” a notification issued on Sunday said. According to the CEO’s office, applicants can submit their forms offline by approaching their respective Booth Level Officers (BLOs) at designated polling stations, or by contacting the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) or Assistant Electoral Registration Officer (AERO). Alternatively, voters may opt for the online mode by using the ECINET mobile application or visiting the official portal, voters.eci.gov.in. “There is no legal restriction on the number of Form 7 applications an elector may submit in their constituency, provided the objections comply with the law,” the notification said. The Chief Electoral Officer’s office has also appealed to citizens to verify their names in the draft electoral rolls and take immediate corrective steps if required. “All citizens are requested to ensure that every eligible voter is duly enrolled in the electoral roll of their respective constituency on or before January 22, 2026,” the notification read. For assistance or clarification, voters can contact their nearest Booth Level Officer or dial the toll-free helpline number 1950, it added.

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Editorial

Bangladesh’s renewed democratic chance

When I began researching my new book, Democracy’s Heartland: Inside the Battle for Power in South Asia, I thought I knew the Bangladesh story—partition, language struggle, liberation war, military rule, the long duel between Awami League and BNP. But what I discovered in the process was more hopeful: a people who, time and again, have reclaimed democracy from those who tried to close it off. Bangladesh’s democratic instinct runs deep. The 1952 language movement, when students gave their lives defending Bangla, turned a linguistic demand into a national awakening, so much so that the world now marks February 21 as the International Mother Language Day. The 1971 Liberation War, triggered by the denial of an electoral mandate, produced a constitution that spoke the language of secularism, social justice, and people’s sovereignty. For a moment, the world saw a poor, war-torn, Muslim-majority nation proving that democracy and faith could coexist. The decades that followed were uneven—coups, military rule, and political revenge scarred the system. Yet each time it seemed sealed shut, people forced it open again: against Ershad in 1990, during the caretaker crisis of 2007-08, and most recently in 2024, when students and young job-seekers poured into the streets demanding fairness and dignity. From an election manager’s perspective, Bangladesh has been both a warning and an inspiration. Few countries have experimented so boldly with electoral design. The caretaker government system, introduced in the 1990s, was an ingenious attempt to ensure credible polls when parties distrusted each other. It worked for a while. The 1991, 1996, and 2001 elections are still cited as the fairest in memory. But the very need for such a mechanism was also a warning that when politics becomes a zero-sum war, no legal framework can compensate for the absence of mutual trust. Once that system was scrapped in 2011, old mistrust resurfaced. The 2014, 2018, and 2024 polls were widely criticised as one-sided. By mid-2024, public frustration had reached a boiling point. The year’s student protests were not just about job quotas; they were about the belief that the system had stopped listening. When the army refused to fire on demonstrators and the Hasina government fell, the spirit of 1952 and 1971 seemed to return. The interim administration led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus has by now opened a small but crucial window. It cannot solve everything, but it can help rebuild faith. For that, the basics must come first. Elections must be credible—whether through the renewed caretaker model, a stronger Election Commission, or a hybrid approach that all parties sign on to. The state machinery—police, bureaucracy, and lower judiciary—must be freed from partisan control. Civic space must reopen: journalists, NGOs, and student unions should be able to operate without fear. And Bangladesh must protect its minorities; how it treats them will show whether it still honours its founding promise of inclusion. Bangladesh’s economic story has been extraordinary. From famine to food security, from “basket case” to global garment hub, it is now the world’s second-largest garment exporter and a regional leader in female employment and social progress. But “development first, democracy later” is a risky bargain. Authoritarian efficiency works until, suddenly, it does not. Growth without accountability creates brittle success. What makes Bangladesh remarkable is that the demand for change came from its youth. A generation raised in an era of growth and global connection is now insisting that prosperity without dignity is not enough. They are the true heirs of the language martyrs and freedom fighters; their protest is democratic renewal in action. South Asia, as I argue in Democracy’s Heartland, is not a democratic periphery; it is the democratic core of the world. Nearly 40 percent of all people living in democracies are South Asian, and Bangladesh lies at the heart of that story. From the ballots that delivered independence in 1970-71 to the ballots that must now restore trust in 2026, it has shown that democracy here is not imported. It is indigenous and hard-earned. The path ahead will be difficult. The temptation to return to one-party dominance will persist; political vendettas may return. But Bangladesh has a rare advantage: it has overthrown authoritarian rulers before without descending into civil war. That memory can be its compass again. If it can now combine economic dynamism with fair elections, stronger institutions, and an inclusive national identity, Bangladesh will not just repair its own democracy; it will also inspire a region struggling with democratic fatigue. For a country born of language, liberation, and people’s power, there could be no better second act.

US reportedly considers granting asylum to Jewish people from UK

Discussions are reportedly under way within Donald Trump’s administration about the US possibly granting asylum to Jewish people from the UK, according to the Telegraph, citing the US president’s personal lawyer. Trump lawyer Robert Garson told the newspaper that he has held conversations with the US state department about offering refuge to British Jews who are leaving the UK citing rising antisemitism. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment from the Guardian. Garson, 49, said he felt the UK was “no longer a safe place for Jews”. He added that recent events – namely an Islamist attack on a synagogue in Manchester and what he described as widespread antisemitism following the Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October 2023 – had led him to believe that British Jews should be given the option of sanctuary in the US.

Some supporters of Israel in the UK cast mass demonstrations there against the Israeli response to the 2023 attack, in which tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians were killed in Gaza, as motivated by antisemitism. In a US television interview in late 2023, Garson himself called protesters in New York and Los



Angeles who opposed the Israeli response “marauding mobs” and accused them of “masquerading as protesters” to shout “antisemitic chants baying for Jewish blood”. In the new interview with the Telegraph, Garson said he could see “no future” for Jews in the UK and placed much of the responsibility on to British prime minister Keir Starmer, accusing him of allowing antisemitism to grow. Garson, a former British

barrister who practiced in London before relocating to the US in 2008, told the Telegraph: “The UK is no longer a safe place for Jews. I have spoken to the state department as to whether the president should be offering British Jews asylum in the US.” He went on to say that such a proposition is attractive because “it is a highly educated community”. It was a populace “that speaks English natively, that is educated

and doesn’t have a high proportion of criminals,” Garson said. He added: “When I look at what is going on with Jews in Britain, and when I look at the changing demographics, I don’t believe – and I have discussed this with people in the Trump administration – that there is a future for Jews in the United Kingdom.” For me, that is particularly sad,” Garson said he raised the idea of the US acting as a refuge for British

Jews with Trump’s special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism, Yehuda Kaploun, in his role as a board member of the US Holocaust Memorial Council. Trump appointed Garson to the council in May after dismissing board members who had been appointed during Joe Biden’s presidency. Trump previously hired Garson to pursue a \$50m lawsuit against investigative journalist Bob Woodward that was dismissed. A 2025 survey conducted by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research found that feelings of safety in the UK’s Jewish community have declined sharply in recent years. It found 35% of Jews felt unsafe in Britain in 2025, compared with 9% in 2023 before the Hamas attacks and the protests in Britain against the Israeli assault on Gaza.

Perceptions of antisemitism had also intensified, with 47% of British Jews seeing it as a “very big” problem – up from just 11% in 2012. In October, the Trump administration had announced that it planned to restrict the number of refugees it admits into the US in 2026 to just 7,500 – and those spots would be mostly reserved for white South Africans. It wasn’t immediately clear how British Jews would factor into that figure should the US grant them refuge.

Why the conflict between Pakistan and the Taliban will be protracted

A 48-hour ceasefire between Pakistan and Afghanistan was agreed upon on Wednesday. This came after the intense clashes erupted along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border following the Pakistani airstrikes on Afghan territory, including in the capital, Kabul, earlier in the week. What is significant is that the Pakistani airstrikes coincided with the first visit to India by a Taliban leader, Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, which resulted in an announcement by India to upgrade relations. This has no doubt caused concern in Islamabad.

Afghan Claims Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid claimed that Taliban forces killed 58 Pakistani soldiers in the attacks, while only nine from the Taliban side died. The Taliban government’s Defence Ministry said its forces had conducted “retaliatory and successful operations” along the border. “If the opposing side again violates Afghanistan’s territorial integrity, our armed forces are fully prepared to defend the nation’s borders and will deliver a strong response,” said the ministry. Speaking at a press conference in Delhi while on an official visit to India, Muttaqi denied that Afghanistan was giving shelter to TTP fighters.

“There is no safe haven for TTP in Afghanistan,” he said. As aforesaid, Mut-

taqi said the situation along the Afghan-Pakistan border was now “under control” and that allies Qatar and Saudi Arabia had reached out to “express that the war should stop”. “Afghanistan has the right to keep its territory and its borders safe, and so it has retaliated to the violation,” he said. “We achieved the objective of our retaliatory mission ... so from our end, we have stopped.”

Though he sent a strong message to Pakistan, the dialling back of rhetoric and a bid to reduce tensions seem to be due to diplomatic pressure and statements from Saudi Arabia and Qatar urging de-escalation. Pakistan’s Response Following Pakistan’s retaliatory strikes—including gunfire and ground raids on Afghan Taliban positions along the border—the military’s media wing reported that 23 soldiers were killed and 29 others wounded in the attacks. Pakistanis claimed that 200 “Taliban and affiliated terrorists” from the Afghan side were killed in their retaliatory strikes and that terrorist training camps had been dismantled. They also accused the Afghan Taliban of launching attacks to “facilitate terrorism”. “Exercising the right of self-defence, the alert armed forces of Pakistan repelled the assault decisively all along the border and inflicted heavy casualties on Taliban forces,” said the statement. Ish-

aq Dar, who is Pakistan’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, said on X that the “Afghan strikes” marked “a serious provocation”. He said Pakistani forces had struck Taliban infrastructure and militant groups operating in Afghanistan.

Adding to it, he said, “We will not tolerate the treacherous use of Afghan soil for terrorism against Pakistan ... the state of Pakistan will not rest until the menace of terrorism emanating from Afghanistan is completely eliminated.” Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said he “strongly condemns provocations” by Afghanistan. “There will be no compromise on Pakistan’s defence, and every provocation will be met with a strong and effective response,” Sharif said in a statement, accusing Taliban authorities in Afghanistan of allowing their land to be used by “terrorist elements”. The clashes have led to the closure of two key crossings between the two countries.

“The north-western Torkham and south-western Chaman crossings have been shut since 2 am (local time) Sunday for all kinds of movement until further order due to the ongoing tense situation at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border,” an official said on condition of anonymity due to restrictions on speaking to the media. Habib Bangalzai, Deputy Commissioner of Chaman, confirmed

the closure of the Chaman crossing. Bangalzai told reporters that additional security force contingents have been deployed on the border due to the ongoing hostilities. Afghanistan’s private broadcaster Tolo News also confirmed that the Torkham and Chaman-Spin Boldak crossings were closed.

Pakistan and Afghanistan share eighteen border crossings, with Torkham and Chaman serving as the key points for trade and people’s movement. Resurgent Violence Militancy has increased in north-western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since the withdrawal of USled troops from Afghanistan in 2021, which saw the return of the Taliban government. But Taliban 2.0 has not panned out the way Taliban 1.0 did as far as its relationship with Pakistan is concerned. There is no doubt that relations between the two countries have deteriorated dramatically in the four years since the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban forces.

The vast majority of attacks are claimed by the Pakistani Taliban (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan), which is a separate group but allegedly retains links with the Afghan Taliban, and Islamabad claims the group operates from Afghan soil with impunity. Pakistan and Kabul tried to reset their relationship. In April, Pakistan’s Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq

Dar visited Kabul, with senior leadership on both sides holding a series of meetings, often mediated by China. That process led to upgraded diplomatic ties and a brief lull in violence over the summer. Conclusion The situation along the 1,600-mile (2,600 km) rugged and mountainous border between the two countries, known as the Durand Line, which is contested by Afghanistan, has now become volatile. Since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021, the Pakistan government has accused them of giving shelter to the TTP, who are behind a deadly rise in insurgent attacks in Pakistan’s border region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Whereas the Taliban maintain that Pakistan itself is responsible for its own crises.

Relations have deteriorated, with both sides accusing the other of violating sovereignty and harbouring militants. In keeping with this, Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid on October 12, accused Pakistan of sheltering IS fighters from multiple countries in West Asia and said Pakistan based IS elements were behind the attacks in Russia and Iran. Pakistan unfortunately must face the reality that a sword can cut either way. But the clashes signal a new low in Afghan-Pakistan relations, which have become increasingly hostile. Saudi Arabia, with whom Paki-

stan has just signed a mutual defence agreement, stated on X, “The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia follows with concern the tensions and clashes witnessed in the border areas between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the State of Afghanistan.”

For Pakistan which is besieged by an ongoing uprising in Balochistan an unrest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or (KP), as well as the latest troubles in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) the clashes with Afghanistan add to its fault lines which are not being addressed and have the potential to spiral out of control. It is imperative for Pakistan to therefore put its own house in order. Michael Kugelman, a South Asia analyst based in Washington DC, described the border situation as “precarious”.

He emphasised that while the cashstrapped Taliban in Afghanistan “lacks the capacity to fight the Pakistani military head-on”, he said that; “The risk is that its recent strikes in Afghanistan will galvanise TTP to carry out reprisals, which could invite further and perhaps more intense Pakistani operations in Afghanistan,” said Kugelman. Although US President Donald Trump, speaking to reporters as he departed for the Middle East, claimed he is “good at solving wars”, there appear to be no easy long-term solutions despite the mediated pause between the two nations.

Time to open railway tracks to private freight operators

Bangladesh’s export economy now moves faster than its railways can carry it. Factories, ports and private logistics firms have modernised to meet global demand. However, rail freight remains stuck in a system designed for a smaller, slower economy. Container trains bound for Chattogram are delayed, cancelled or pushed aside for passenger services. Inland container depots (ICDs) clog up. Highways choke. Ports feel the strain. In an earlier article, I argued that ICDs cannot become engines of export growth unless freight trains are reliable, predictable and commercially driven. That warning has only grown more urgent. Bangladesh Railway is expected to support a rapidly expanding export economy while operating under rules that prioritise passenger trains, tolerate chronic

locomotive shortages and treat freight as expendable. A container train booked for tonight must not vanish because a passenger locomotive failed elsewhere or the train was politically prioritised. Yet, freight guarantees are impossible under the monopoly system, as Bangladesh Railway lacks dedicated locomotives for freights and prioritises passengers over cargo. This is why the debate must move beyond procurement delays and management shortcomings to a deeper reform: opening Bangladesh’s railway tracks to private freight train operators. There is no compelling reason why Bangladeshi logistics firms, exporters or foreign investors should not be allowed to run their freight trains—using their own locomotives, wagons and crews—on tracks owned and maintained by Bangla-

desh Railway. This would operate under transparent, regulated access agreements. The railway would retain ownership of infrastructure, control safety and manage traffic. What it would give up is its monopoly over freight operations. This may sound radical, but globally, it is routine. India opened container train operations to private companies nearly two decades ago. Today, multiple firms run their own trains on Indian Railways’ tracks, paying access charges while investing billions in wagons, terminals and networks. Across Europe, public and private freight operators compete on national rail systems. In the United Kingdom, all freight trains are privately operated even though the tracks remain state-owned. Russia and parts of China allow private ownership of locomotives and wagons on public corridors.

Even Pakistan—once as closed as Bangladesh—now permits private freight trains in exchange for track access fees. None of these countries privatised their railways.

They separated infrastructure from operations. That distinction matters. Bangladesh does not need to sell its tracks or stations. It needs to use them more intelligently. Allowing third-party freight operators would transform Bangladesh Railway from a cash-strapped monopoly into a network manager earning revenue from every train that runs, regardless of ownership. The economic logic is straightforward. Bangladesh Railway struggles to procure enough locomotives for both passenger and freight services. Purchases take years. Maintenance backlogs grow. Every new passenger train further erodes

freight capacity. When private operators bring their own engines, national capacity expands almost overnight—without a single taka of public investment in rolling stock, i.e., locomotives, carriages, wagons, etc. Under this system, risk shifts from taxpayers to investors. Efficiency and innovation are rewarded. Reliability will improve even more dramatically. Private freight operators live and die by performance. A shipping line or garment exporter will not tolerate missed schedules. A private company that fails to deliver loses customers and revenue. A monopoly, particularly a government entity, does not face the same discipline. That difference alone would turn rail freight from an unreliable afterthought into a professional logistics service. Critics often warn that private trains would create

chaos or profiteering. That happens only when regulation is weak. In every successful system, the state sets the rules: track access charges, safety standards, scheduling priorities and dispute-resolution mechanisms. Bangladesh already regulates airlines, ports and telecommunications. Railways do not require immunity from modern governance. The opposite is more likely. Instead of relying on erratic freight volumes and subsidies, the railway would earn stable income from track access, signalling, yard use and workshop services. Each additional private train would generate revenue without requiring new locomotives or staff. These funds could be reinvested in tracks, signalling and bottleneck removal, thus improving the network for both passengers and freight.

BCCL IPO lifts confidence as Coal India eyes more listing



New Delhi: The strong investor response to the initial public offering of Bharat Coking Coal Ltd has boosted confidence within CIL and provided positive momentum as the company evaluates the listing of its other subsidiaries, Chairman-cum-Managing Director B Sairam said.The IPO of Bharat Coking Coal Ltd (BCCL), an arm of Coal India Ltd (CIL), got fully subscribed within minutes of opening for bidding on January 9.“As directed by the government, we would step into the market and look forward to unlock the true potential of our companies. We will closely study and assess the market dynamics for listing the companies,” Sairam said in an interview with PTI.BCCL is slated to list on the bourses on Monday.Referring to the BCCL IPO issue, Sairam said the “response has been encouraging and has reinforced confidence within the miner”.“With an overwhelming response, BCCL’s IPO resulted in full subscription within minutes of the opening. The strong investor interest continued unabated till the closure of the offering, with the issue getting subscribed over 146 times. It is a true confidence booster for CIL,” the CIL chief told PTI.Sairam said the experience would be useful as Coal India considers future listings, while underlining that valuation and market conditions would remain key considerations.“For any company, it is a good idea to look at its market valuation. Stimulated by it (BCCL IPO), we expect a similar response for our other companies as well,” he added.The government has been encouraging Coal India to unlock value through the listing of its subsidiaries as part of the Centre’s broader public sector reform agenda.The coal behemoth has eight wholly owned subsidiaries, of which seven are coal-producing companies. Beyond the listing of its coking coal arm, CIL is accelerating the capital market debut of other key subsidiaries. With an overwhelming

response, BCCL’s IPO resulted in full subscription within minutes of the opening. The strong investor interest continued unabated till the closure of the offering, with the issue getting subscribed over 146 times. It is a true confidence booster for CIL, the CIL chief told PTI.Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Ltd (CMPDI), the consultancy and technical arm of Coal India, has already filed its draft red herring prospectus with the Securities and Exchange Board of India. The strong investor response to the initial public offering of Bharat Coking Coal Ltd has boosted confidence within CIL and provided positive momentum as the company evaluates the listing of its other subsidiaries, Chairman-cum-Managing Director B Sairam said.The IPO of Bharat Coking Coal Ltd (BCCL), an arm of Coal India Ltd (CIL), got fully subscribed within minutes of opening for bidding on January 9.“As directed by the government, we would step into the market and look forward to unlock the true potential of our companies. We will closely study and assess the market dynamics for listing the companies,”The proposed IPO is an offer for sale of up to 7.14 crore equity shares, representing a 10 per cent stake divestment by CIL, and is expected to be completed by March 2026.The CIL board has also granted in-principle approval for the listing of Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL) and South Eastern Coalfields Ltd (SECL), two of its largest production subsidiaries. Their listings are targeted for the 2026-27 financial year, following a specific directive from the Ministry of Coal.Coal India, which accounts for over 80 per cent of India’s domestic coal production, has multiple producing and non-producing subsidiaries. Meanwhile, the highly anticipated market debut of BCCL, has been rescheduled from its original listing date of January 16 to January 19

Why steel scrap is at the center of trade talks between India and the EU

New Delhi: Indian trade negotiators are pushing for easier access to steel scrap from the European Union as part of the upcoming trade agreement, The Indian Express has learnt. The demand comes after Indian manufacturers flagged concerns that the new levy, known as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), along with the EU’s recycling rules, is creating hurdles for metal exports. They argue that these policies are blocking exports to the 27 EU countries and also limiting the supply of EU scrap to other nations.If India gets easier access to the steel scrap, it could help reduce the impact of the EU’s new carbon-linked import tax that came into force on January 1, the IE report said.Why is India demanding easier access to EU steel scrap?Steel scrap is an important raw material for making low-carbon steel and EU is it’s largest producer in the world. Steel made in traditional blast furnaces produces the most pollution, gas-based methods create less, and scrap-based electric arc furnaces cause the least emissions.

Most Indian steel makers still rely on blast furnaces and are not fully ready to meet the EU’s new carbon rules under CBAM, the IE report said.Raising the issue at a Board of Trade meeting of the Union Commerce Ministry on November 25 last year, the Engineering Export Promotion Council said the India-EU free trade talks had highlighted a key problem. It said the EU’s carbon rules would push Indian companies to shift to arc furnace technology that needs steel scrap, but the EU’s recycling policy makes scrap hard to access. As a result, the council said, these rules effectively act as a non-tariff barrier, the report said.According to the IE report, the government plans to increase steel output by using more steel scrap and electric arc furnace technology as part of its green steel push.

The European Union’s CBAM applies extra charges on imports made using processes that



release more carbon than what EU producers are permitted to emit.

A study by the Global Trade Research Initiative warns that this measure will hit India’s exports of iron, steel and aluminium to the EU, adding an estimated 20 to 35% tax on certain products.To address this, the government wants scrap to make up half of all steel production by

2047 under the green steel initiative. According to the World Steel Association, making steel through electric arc and induction furnaces using scrap can cut carbon emissions by about 1.5 tonnes for every tonne of scrap used and reduce energy use by 75% compared to traditional blast furnace methods that rely on fresh iron ore, the report added.

RBL Bank’s price decreased by 9% compared to target price

New Delhi: Shares of RBL Bank Ltd tumbled 9 per cent in Monday’s trade after its December quarter results failed to meet expectations, as elevated credit costs continued while the bank cleaned up its portfolio. Analysts have largely cut FY26 earnings estimates by 7-12 per cent, citing higher near term provisions, retaining their ‘Buy’ call on the stock. ICICI Securities said while RBL Bank is confident of sequential growth revival, it flagged elevated card slippages likely persisting for the next two quarters. This is a slight dampener, as credit card is a high RoA business and industry AQ trends seem to be recovering.

“We believe, RBL Bank should sharpen its collection infra, cus-

tomers selection and engagement. Retain Buy; target revised to Rs 410 (vs Rs 415), based on 1.3 times FY28 ABV (vs 1.4 times FY27E ABV earlier),” the brokerage said. For Q3, Emkay Global said credit growth remained moderate at 14 per cent YoY, as unsecured loan growth was continued to be dragged by PL/Cards. It said gross slippages remained high at 3.5 per cent of loans, driven by elevated stress in credit cards due to delay in realigning collections from BAF to RBL Bank.”We trim FY26E earnings by 11 per cent, factoring in the higher provisions, in turn led by higher write offs. However, we believe the bank is likely to see gradual improvement in RoA to 1-1.3 per cent, as unsecured

retail stress eases, and the ENBD deal to boost it further as it benefits from lower CoF/higher growth. We retain BUY on the stock while keeping our target unchanged at Rs 375,” it said.

Given higher near-term provisions, MOFSL cut its earnings estimate for FY26E by 7 per cent, while maintaining its earnings estimates for FY27 and FY28. “We estimate FY27E RoA and RoE of 1.4 per cent and 8.8 per cent, respectively. Reiterate Buy with a target price of Rs 370,” MOFSL said.Meanwhile, Elara Securities suggested ‘Accumulate’ on the stock. While strategic repair is underway, it said current valuation, after 21 per cent outperformance against the banking index in the

past six months, capture the recent progress and residual risk fairly. “We await greater consistency in earnings and return ratios before turning more constructive.

We retain Accumulate with a higher target of Rs 345 from Rs 315 based on 1.0x (unchanged) P/ BV as we roll forward to December 2027E,” Elara Securities said. Asset quality improved during the quarter, with the gross NPA ratio declining to 1.88% as of December 31, 2025, from 2.32% at the end of September 2025.

The net NPA ratio also edged lower to 0.55% from 0.57% over the same period. The provision coverage ratio, including technical write-offs, stood at a healthy 93.2%.

The market value of three firms rose by Rs 75,855 crore

New Delhi: The combined market valuation of three of India’s top companies surged by Rs 75,855.43 crore last week, even as the overall stock market showed a sluggish trend during the holiday-shortened week.

State Bank of India (SBI) and Infosys were the biggest gainers among the top firms. While the Sensex slipped 5.89 points, the Nifty inched up by 11.05 points over the week.Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, an expert said that “immediate resistance is placed at 25,875, followed by 26,000 and 26,100 levels. On the downside, support is seen at 25,600 and 25,450.”“A breakdown below 25,300 could intensify downside pressure and accelerate corrective moves. Given the prevailing volatility, a cautious approach with strict stop-loss discipline is advised,” an analyst stated.Among the top companies, ICICI Bank, SBI, and Infosys recorded gains, while HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever, and Larsen & Toubro faced a combined erosion of Rs 75,549.89 crore in their market value.Interestingly, the total loss of these seven companies was still slightly less than the total m-cap addition of the three gainers.SBI emerged as the biggest gainer, with its market valuation jumping by Rs 39,045.51 crore to reach Rs 9,62,107.27 crore.Infosys also saw a strong increase, with its



m-cap rising by Rs 31,014.59 crore to Rs 7,01,889.59 crore. ICICI Bank added Rs 5,795.33 crore, taking its market value to Rs 10,09,470.28 crore. On the other hand, Larsen & Toubro’s market valuation fell by Rs 23,501.8 crore to Rs 5,30,410.23 crore, while HDFC Bank’s valuation dropped by Rs 11,615.35 crore to Rs 14,32,534.91 crore. Bharti Airtel’s m-cap declined by Rs 6,443.38 crore to Rs 11,49,544.43 crore, Bajaj Finance

saw a dip of Rs 6,253.59 crore to Rs 5,91,447.16 crore, Hindustan Unilever lost Rs 3,312.93 crore to stand at Rs 5,54,421.30 crore, and TCS’s valuation slipped by Rs 470.36 crore to Rs 11,60,212.12 crore.

After these movements, HDFC Bank remained the second most valued domestic company, followed by TCS, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, SBI, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever, and Larsen & Toubro.

CII predicts a reform tsunami as corporate confidence rises

New Delhi: Business confidence in India is steadily improving, reflecting strong domestic demand and expectations of continued reforms in the Union Budget 2026–27, according to the latest Business Outlook Survey by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on Sunday.CII’s Business Confidence Index rose for the third straight quar-

ter to 66.5 in Q3 FY26, marking its highest level in five quarters. The report showed that companies are optimistic about demand, profitability and investment conditions.Around two-thirds of firms reported higher demand in Q2 FY26, while 72 per cent expect demand to grow further in Q3 FY26, supported by GST rate cuts and festive season spending. Hiring and investment plans also remain strong, the industry body said. CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee said the steady rise in confidence highlights the industry’s ability to handle global challenges, supported by resilient domestic demand and a strong reform agenda.He added that companies expect growth momentum to strengthen further in the coming months.Looking ahead to the Union Budget, CII said it expects the government to continue its reform push to sustain India’s position as the world’s fastest-growing major economy.The industry body has proposed several

measures to policymakers to boost long-term growth and competitiveness.A key recommendation is to continue high capital spending through a revamped National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) 2.0 of about Rs 150 lakh crore.

CII said the focus should be on ready-to-execute, revenue-earning projects and faster dispute resolution to attract more private investment into infrastructure. CII has also suggested setting up an India Development and Strategic Fund to mobilise domestic and foreign capital. The fund could support domestic priorities such as MSMEs, clean energy and skill development, while also helping Indian companies make strategic overseas investments.To reduce compliance burden and improve ease of doing business, CII proposed a Rs 1,000-crore Digitisation Fund to strengthen regulatory digitisation, including unified enterprise identity, digital records, and real-time compliance systems.On innovation, CII recommended creating 10 Centres of Advanced Learning and Research, each with a budget of Rs 1,000 crore, focusing on areas such as artificial intelligence, quantum technology, clean energy and biotechnology.



ICE Arresting U.S. Citizens, Using Banned Chokeholds



Paris: A new investigation by ProPublica finds over 40 cases of immigration agents using potentially fatal chokeholds and other moves that can cut off breathing. “These arrests are playing out around the country, and often in full view of cameras and witnesses,” says ProPublica reporter Nicole Foy. She also reports that at least 170 U.S. citizens have been arrested by immigration agents. AMY GOODMAN: We begin today’s show looking at ICE’s escalating use of violence and force. Last week, an ICE agent fatally shot Renee Good, 37-year-old mother of three, in Minneapolis, sparking nationwide protests. On Thursday, President Trump threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act and send troops to Minnesota.Following the shooting of Renee Good, ICE’s violent tactics have come under increasing scrutiny. A new investigation by ProPublica documents more than 40 cases of immigration agents using banned chokeholds and other moves that can cut off breathing.In one case, ICE agents violently arrested an ICU nurse in California named Amanda Trebach while she was documenting ICE operations in the Los Angeles area. Two plainclothes, masked agents were filmed pinning her against the pavement as they knelt on her back. One agent put his knee on Trebach’s head for a brief moment AMANDA TREBACH: They came out in a convoy. They jumped out of the vehicle. As you could see, they pinned me to the ground, and they handcuffed me. They took me into an unmarked vehicle. They did not read me my rights. They didn’t tell me where I was going. They shut the vehicle. They drove me to the other side of the noncivilian side of Terminal Island. And basically, they kidnapped me. Dulce Consuelo Díaz Morales was finally released from ICE detention earlier this month. And this is how NBC4 Washington reported on her release and reunion with her 5-year-old son.MAURICIO CASILLAS: This is the moment when Dulce Consuelo Díaz Morales is once again able to embrace her son. The 22-year-old mother says she was overjoyed, and it was an incredibly emotional moment when she saw her son once again. She says she was detained by ICE agents on December 14th in front of her family near her home in Baltimore. She says ICE agents told her to get out of the car because she was being detained. She says she tried to explain to them that she was born here in Maryland, but she says they didn’t believe her.AMY GOODMAN: We’re joined now by ProPublica reporter Nicole Foy, her latest article headlined “We Found More Than 40 Cases of Immigration Agents Using Banned Chokeholds and Other Moves That Can Cut Off Breathing.” In October, Nicole also revealed how ICE detained more than 170 U.S. citizens.

I think one of the most surprising things is maybe that both — like, this is just happening around the country, and often just really in full view of cameras, whether people — whether immigration agents are arresting U.S. citizens — AMY GOODMAN: And they’re grabbing cameras.NI-COLE FOY: And grabbing cameras. I think that is really, like, as someone who is a journalist, and so, of course, as a huge advocate of the free press — it is perfectly legal to document these activities, and yet many of the U.S. citizens who have been arrested by immigration agents believe that they were arrested because they were filming, and after they were told to stop filming.AMY GOODMAN: And agents are usually masked. How can they be held accountable? You are documenting illegal actions. NICOLE FOY: I think it’s really difficult. We’re, of course, seeing a number of states and other municipalities try to find some way to allow their residents to file — to file lawsuits against officers. But that’s really difficult when not only have — are these agents masked, the government is not telling us, usually, who someone is that has committed an act of excessive force or something like that. But on top of that, the institutions within ICE and DHS that are supposed to hold these officers accountable and at least conduct some type of internal review have been just completely stripped of personnel and authority.AMY GOODMAN: I want to thank you very much for being with us. Nicole Foy is a reporter for ProPublica covering immigration and labor. We’ll link to all your recent pieces.Coming up, President Trump threatens to invoke the Insurrection Act and send troops to Minneapolis. We’ll talk about the significance of this and also speak with Mahmoud Khalil about a ruling that came down in court yesterday. Could it lead to his rearrest and possible deportation? Stay with us. Nicole Foy, welcome to Democracy Now! It’s great to have you with us. Why don’t you lay out your latest findings? Talk about these potentially lethal chokeholds — which are, in fact, illegal?NICOLE FOY: Yes. My co-worker McKenzie Funk and I, we spent of this last year documenting aggressive tactics by immigration agents. And what we found is that over the last year, immigration agents across the country have used these really dangerous and banned — by their own policy — chokehold and carotid restraints, as well as many of these also dangerous kneeling on people’s necks, kneeling on backs, like we saw with Amanda, in ways that can really restrict your breathing and your blood flow, which is one of the reasons why their own training actually highly discourages these types of arrest. But we’ve seen it across the country.JUAN GONZÁLEZ: And, Nicole, can you talk about some of the specific exam-

ples that you document — for instance, Arnoldo Bazan, a 10th grader in Texas? NICOLE FOY: Yes, he was — that’s a case that I think really sticks out, because he is a 16-year-old U.S. citizen, and he was really violently arrested with his father in a store in Houston. You can hear him in the video, as officers are putting him in a chokehold, screaming that he’s a minor, that he’s 16, he was going to school, that he’s a U.S. citizen. And yet he told us that that didn’t matter. The agent continued to use a chokehold on him, that, again, is banned unless there is a call for deadly force.And when we showed videos like this one to a number of police officers, other former immigration officials and top DHS officials, they were really appalled, and they had no idea what could have prompted this level of deadly force, especially against someone like a 16-year-old U.S. citizen, who really had really difficult and dramatic injuries to deal with in the aftermath. JUAN GONZÁLEZ: Now, there is a federal ban on chokeholds and similar tactics. Have any officers, from your reporting, who’ve used these tactics faced disciplinary measures?NI-COLE FOY: We’ve yet to find any evidence that they have. We asked the Department of Homeland Security if they have disciplined any officers, especially in cases where we showed them these videos and said, “Your own policy bans the use of a carotid restraint, the use of a chokehold. Have these officers been disciplined?” And they did not answer us, would not tell us if any had been disciplined for these tactics. And they stood very firmly behind their officers’ actions and said that they were acting with the utmost professionalism and even using a reasonable amount of forceAMY GOODMAN: I wanted to read from your piece. “Immigration agents have put civilians’ lives at risk using more than their guns. An agent in Houston put a teenage citizen into a chokehold, wrapping his arm around the boy’s neck, choking him so hard ... his neck had red welts hours later. A black-masked agent in Los Angeles pressed his knee into a woman’s neck while she was handcuffed; [she] then appeared to pass out. An agent in Massachusetts jabbed his finger and thumb into the neck and arteries of a young father who refused to be separated from his wife and 1-year-old daughter. The man’s eyes rolled back in his head and he started convulsing.” That’s what you wrote. Tell us more about these cases.NICOLE FOY: I think the case of the young father in Massachusetts is particularly disturbing, and was really disturbing for so many of the bystanders who were there witnessing it and recording it. Like you said, he refused to be separated from his young daughter, a 1-year-old, who was in the car with him in between him and his wife. Agents had come to arrest his wife, but she also didn’t want to leave her 1-year-old behind. She said that she was still breastfeeding, and she couldn’t leave the child behind. And in an effort — and we know this because we reviewed bodycam footage and bystander footage — we know that officers really wanted them, specifically this young man, Carlos, to let go, and he wouldn’t let go of his daughter or his wife.And so, you can see in the video the moment when an agent decides to reach around from the back and press his fingers and thumb into his neck. And he appears to start having a seizure. And he shakes so violently that his young daughter, who is, of course, crying, is shaking with him.He did end up getting to be released with his daughter, but he’s filed a lawsuit alleging not only excessive force, but also alleging that ICE officers delayed medical attention when he requested it on the scene. And so, it was — it’s really a difficult video to watch, but these arrests are playing out around the country, and often in full view of cameras and witnesses.JUAN GONZÁLEZ: And this issue of ICE arresting American citizens? You mentioned there have been about 130 of them, including about a dozen elected officials. Could you talk about some of those cases, especially the case of Dulce Consuelo Díaz Morales? NICOLE FOY: Yes. So, last year in October — and this count was only updated as of October 2025 — we had found that more than 170 U.S. citizens in total were arrested around the country by immigration agents. Around 130 of those were actually arrested after accusations of assaulting officers or during protests or because they were alleged to be obstructing ICE activities. But there were also many other U.S. citizens, like Dulce, who were arrested and detained because of the fact that immigration agents believed that they were not U.S. citizens. And this is despite evidence that was often presented to them at the time of arrest or afterwards by family members. I believe that is the case of what happened with Dulce, that she — they presented a birth certificate, and yet she was still detained for a number of days over the holidays, if I’m remembering correctly AMY GOODMAN: Dulce Consuelo Díaz Morales’s case first gained national attention when one of her attorneys took to the internet out of frustration with the lack of legal process and progress in the case. VICTORA SLATTON: My name is Victoria Slatton. I’m an immigration attorney. I currently have a client who is a U.S. citizen who is in ICE custody. ... They are blatantly ignoring orders from the court. They are not allowing me access to my client. And I am at a loss, and I’m incredibly angry.

Pentagon Orders Carrier Strike Group to Middle East as

Dubai: The Pentagon said Thursday it’s moving a carrier strike group toward the Middle East, as the Trump administration continues to threaten airstrikes against Iran. The USS Abraham Lincoln and accompanying warships and aircraft are currently in the Indo-Pacific region and should take about a week to reposition. On Thursday, the White House said “all options remain on the table,” as it announced new sanctions against Iran, citing the ongoing crackdown on anti-government protesters — this as the head of Israel’s Mossad intelligence service, David Barnea, is in the United States with plans to meet Trump’s Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff in Miami. At the United Nations, Iran’s deputy U.N. ambassador said any attack would be a violation of the U.N. Charter, and said his nation was prepared to fight back. Gholamhossein Darzi: “Iran seeks neither escalation nor confrontation. However, any act of aggression, direct or indirect, will be met with a decisive, proportionate and lawful response.” President Trump has threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act to send active-duty military personnel to Minnesota, where large-scale protests continue to resist the Trump administration’s surge of thousands of federal immigration agents into the Twin Cities region. Writing on his social media platform, Trump claimed “professional agitators and insurrectionists” were “attacking the Patriots of I.C.E., who are only trying to do their job.”Trump’s threat came as three children were hospitalized for tear gas inhalation, after federal agents surrounded a car carrying a family of eight Wednesday evening as they were attempting to drive to their home in north Minneapolis. Witnesses say the agents deployed concussion grenades and tear gas, with at least one device rolling under the family’s van, where it exploded, set off its air bags and began filling the vehicle with toxic smoke. Bystanders then rushed to help pull the family from the van as the children inside gasped for air. Destiny Jackson told TV station KMSP her 6-month-old infant stopped breathing and lost consciousness.Destiny Jackson: “When we did finally get out of the car, I, of course — my baby was lifeless, so I did do the CPR and mouth-to-mouth. And there were people — there was multiple people in the house who were pouring milk all over my other kids’ face and trying to get the tear gas off of them.”On Thursday, federal agents fired tear gas outside the federal building in Minneapolis where ICE detainees are being jailed. Former prisoners there say they were tightly packed into a large holding cell, denied requests for water or to use a toilet, and witnessed other prisoners with untreated injuries.Meanwhile, ICE’s actions have devastated Twin Cities businesses run by or patronized by immigrants. This is Luis Reyes Rojas, owner of Pineda Tacos.Luis Reyes Rojas: “Our last resort is to go down to the basement, to the office, and hide ourselves. That’s what we’re doing. It’s worse than war. We have a plan A, plan B and plan C, because we don’t know how much longer we can endure this.” The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a class-action lawsuit over the Trump administration’s surge of immigration agents to

was left permanently blind in one eye and narrowly avoided death, after a federal agent fired a crowd control weapon into his face during an anti-ICE protest in Santa Ana last week. Rummmler had joined protests against the killing of Renee Good by an ICE agent in Minneapolis, when a federal agent fired a “less lethal” round at close range that struck his left eye. He was then dragged by an agent across a plaza, his face covered in blood, as he complained, “I can’t breathe.” He says he pleaded for agents to call an ambulance as they mocked him about his injured eye. He ultimately underwent six hours of surgery to remove plastic, glass and metal from his face and skull, with one piece narrowly missing his carotid artery. Rummmler says doctors told him it was a “miracle” he survived.Nagham al-Fayoumi: “Last night, I’ve never seen anything like it. I’ve never seen anything like this on ordinary days. I’ve never seen anything like it. We were drowning. Our clothes that we had became wet. We have nothing to wear. We are children. We want. Our two mattresses were soaked. Our covers were soaked. Our pillows that we sleep on were soaked. Our tent is filled with water. The U.S. has withdrawn military personnel from bases in the Middle East as President Trump has repeatedly warned that the U.S. would intervene on behalf of the protesters in Iran. By Thursday morning, Iran shut down its commercial airspace for several hours. A senior Iranian official said that Iran had warned its neighbors in the region that it would hit American bases in the event of U.S. airstrikes. This comes as Iran postponed the execution of Erfan Soltani, the 26-year-old protester who was sentenced to death just days after his arrest. More than 2,500 people, including 147 security officials, have been killed since protests began on December 28, according to the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency. Iranian authorities have imposed an internet shutdown across the country, but videos of the deadly crackdown on protesters have been trickling out of Iran via smuggled Starlink terminals. In one video, at least 100 bodies held in

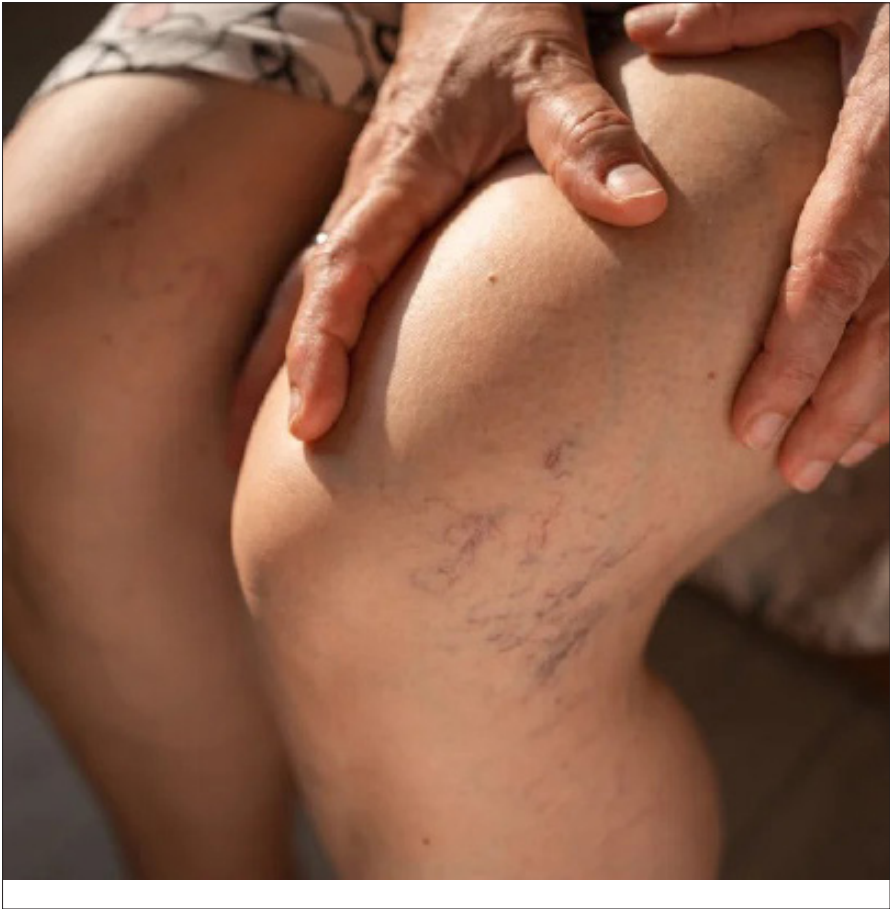
Minnesota, describing it as a mass “racial profiling campaign” resulting in “an unprecedented level of violence” against Minnesotans of color. The lawsuit reads, in part, “People targeted by ICE have been handcuffed, tackled, and beaten by federal agents. Agents have broken car windows, dragged people from their cars, and used pepper spray and tear gas against compliant, non-violent people.” The death of a Cuban immigrant who was jailed in an ICE detention camp in Texas was likely a homicide. That’s according to The Washington Post, which reported El Paso County’s medical examiner found the preliminary cause of death for 55-year-old Geraldo Lunas Campos was “asphyxia due to neck and chest compression.” Lunas Campos was arrested last July and pronounced dead on January 3 at Camp East Montana, a sprawling immigration detention tent camp at the Fort Bliss military base in El Paso. ICE claimed the Cuban father had died after “experiencing medical distress.” But El Paso officials reportedly told his daughter they will likely rule his death a homicide, pending a toxicology report. Lunas Campos is one of four immigrants who died in ICE custody during the first 10 days of this year, 2026. U.S. forces have seized another oil tanker with ties to Venezuela in the Caribbean. This is the sixth vessel to be captured by the Trump administration as part of a broader campaign to control Venezuela’s oil industry since a U.S. military strike earlier this month led to the kidnapping of President Nicolás Maduro and his wife from Caracas. On Thursday Venezuela’s interim president, Delcy Rodríguez announced she’d move to propose a reform in Venezuela’s hydrocarbon law, which would facilitate U.S. and foreign investors’ access to Venezuela’s oil. On Thursday she met in Caracas with CIA Director John Ratcliffe.This comes as protests against U.S. imperialism have spread across the region. Demonstrators in Colombia gathered outside the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá.Juan Fernando Romero: “It is an attack on all of Latin America, and therefore all of Latin America must mobilize to confront and resist this onslaught of imperialism, which, as Trump himself said, is an imperialism that only seeks profits and oil, without regard for human beings.”This comes as a federal judge in Minnesota on Thursday ordered the release of a Liberian man, ruling that heavily armed immigration agents violated his Fourth Amendment rights when they broke into his home using a battering ram, without his consent and without a judicial warrant. Newly released records from the Minneapolis police and fire departments reveal that Renee Good, the 37-year-old mother of three killed by an ICE agent last week, suffered two gunshot wounds to her chest, one to her forearm and a possible gunshot wound to the left side of her head. The records reveal Good was not breathing and had an irregular pulse when first responders — who were delayed by federal agents and had to approach on foot — finally reached her. Blood was flowing from her left ear, and her pupils were dilated. Medics performed CPR on Good until they arrived at the Hennepin County Medical Center, where she was pronounced dead.

bags await identification at a morgue in Tehran. We’ll hear from the world-renowned Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi after headlines. The State Department said Wednesday it will indefinitely halt processing visas for immigrants from 75 countries, after claiming without evidence that people from those nations often receive public benefits after arriving in the U.S. Immigrants from over a third of the world’s 193 countries will be affected by the sweeping restrictions, which are set to begin on January 21. Among the targets are Afghanistan, Brazil, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. This comes on top of total or partial travel bans on visitors from 39 countries. In Minnesota, federal agents fired tear gas, pepper balls and stun grenades at protesters who gathered late Wednesday near the scene where a federal agent shot and injured a man in north Minneapolis. Mayor Jacob Frey said after the shooting that details remain unclear, even as he once again condemned ICE’s surge of agents into the Twin Cities. Witnesses told the Star Tribune that a series of gunshots followed a car chase and foot chase involving federal agents, who reportedly ordered residents to come out of their homes with their hands up. Several people, including children, then walked out into the freezing cold. According to the Trump administration, the gunshot victim was shot in the leg after he began to resist arrest and “violently assault” an officer. it came into effect in October, according to the Gaza Government Media Office, killing more than 400 Palestinians and blocking critical humanitarian aid from entering the enclave. 20-point US proposal, initially put forward in September, also includes the establishment of a “Board of Peace” chaired by Trump and the deployment of an “international stabilisation force” to oversee security in Gaza.Last week, Netanyahu said former United Nations Middle East envoy Nikolay Mladenov would lead the board, which will be tasked with overseeing the Palestinian technocratic government governing Gaza.

Witkoff, the East Envoy

Two hours of exercise a week reduces joint pain and visits to GP

People with sore joints who exercise for two hours a week have less pain, visit their GP less and take less sick leave, a study has found. The findings are from an analysis of how 40,000 people across the UK with hip, back or knee pain fared when they did two one-hour exercise classes for 12 weeks. The impact on their lives was so great that it has led to calls for the NHS to make physical activity a standard part of treatment for the millions struggling with musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions. If the 3.7 million Britons with sore joints but without a care plan exercised for two hours a week then they, their families, the NHS and the UK economy would benefit by as much as £34bn, researchers say. Nuffield Health, Frontier Economics and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) analysed the structured exercise programme that the private gym group has offered free of charge to more than 40,000 joint pain sufferers who used their 110 gyms across the UK. They did two one-hour classes a week in a Nuffield gym, led by a rehabilitation specialist, and did exercises to boost their mobility, stability, strength and cardiovascular health. People who took part saw the following benefits: Had on average 35% less pain. Went to see their GP 29% less often. Took almost half as many sick days from work. Needed their family to look after them 21% less. “Tailored, structured exercise is one of the most effective treatments for people with long-term conditions. If movement were a pill, it would be the most powerful drug on the planet, yet it remains under-prescribed. “Integrating it as a treatment into mainstream health-care would transform lives on a scale no drug could”, said Dr Davina Deniszczyk, Nuffield Health’s charity and medical di-



rector. The analysis found that if 184,000 of the 334,000 MSK patients in Greater Manchester took up Nuffield’s offer of free exercise, that would deliver £1.7bn of “social value”. Expand this to cover the whole and that figure would rise to £34bn, the researchers said. That would be made up of £18bn of benefits of improved health, £13bn of benefits to relatives and carers, a £3bn boost to the economy and £230m in direct savings for the NHS. For example,

participants’ health-related quality of life rose by 13%, which was calculated to be worth £6,680 in financial terms. Similarly, their drop in sick days was estimated to be worth £501 while the 10% increase in their family’s life satisfaction was valued at £4,765. Nick Woolley, a manager at Frontier Economics, said at the start of Nuffield’s joint pain programme, one in four of those who attended the classes could not work and by then end of the 12

weeks, almost one in 10 were fit enough to return to work. Prof Tim Cable, the director of MMU’s institute of sport, said the research showed “the transformative role of movement” in alleviating pain among the 25 million Britons with one or more long-term health conditions and are “a blueprint” for a nationwide programme of NHS-provided exercise. The NHS should “include structured exercise programmes in best practice guidance” and encourage hospitals and GP practices to refer eligible patients to them, the analysis said. However, the chief executive of the charity Versus Arthritis, Deborah Alsina, said that while exercise improved quality of life for people with the condition, it was not the “solve-all” the analysis suggests; they could have trouble fitting exercise into their lives and often experienced “challenges in accessing effective treatment and support from the NHS, long delays to secure a diagnosis and lack of treatment options”, she said. A six-week pain reduction programme of education, exercise and self-management run by some NHS trusts in England, called Escape Pain, which 15,000 people have used, has been found to improve quality of life for people with arthritis and also save the NHS time and money. A Department of Health and Social Care spokesperson said: “We know that living with chronic pain can have a significant impact on quality of life. We will transform the NHS by shifting care from sickness to prevention to keep people healthy and independent for longer through our 10-year health plan. “We will also harness the power of technology which can help keep people active. This includes ensuring all patients with chronic pain have access to wearable technology as part of their care, especially in areas of deprivation.”

5 Bodyweight Exercises To Start You Off On Your Fitness Journey At Home

The new year brings with it a lot of resolutions and the promise of starting afresh. One of the most common promises that people make to themselves is to work out and get fit. However, somewhere along the way, motivation fades, and so does people’s attendance at the gym. On a new episode of the podcast All Things Considered on NPR, the experts spoke about how working out in a gym and lifting heavy weights are not the only ways to get fit. In fact, the experts on the podcast shared that bodyweight exercises can go a long way and are a great way to get started if you don’t feel like going to the gym. The podcast host, Juana Summer, said, “You might assume that you have to lift heavy weight to get stronger, but research shows that’s not necessarily the case. You can make real strides using just your own body weight.” Speaking on the episode, James Steele, an exercise scientist from the UK, said that if everyone did just a handful of bodyweight exercises consistently – squats, planks, push-ups, a wall sit, those types of things – that would go a long way. What are bodyweight exercises? These kinds of exercises use your own mass as resistance, building strength, endurance, and flexibility anywhere – no gym needed. They are perfect for beginners, people who don’t have time to go to the gym, or those who travel a lot. They engage multiple

muscles simultaneously for functional fitness, improve balance, and burn calories efficiently through compound movements. Here are 5 exercises that can help you to start doing bodyweight exercises at home:



Squats
Targets: Quads, glutes, hamstrings, core.
How-To: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, toes slightly out. Push hips back as if sitting into a chair, keeping chest up, knees tracking over toes (don’t let them cave in). Lower until thighs are parallel to floor. Drive through heels to stand, squeezing glutes at top. 3 sets of 10–15 reps. Beginner Mod: Partial squats to box/chair. Planks
Targets: Core, shoulders, glutes, back.
How-To: Forearms on floor, elbows under shoulders, body straight from head to heels (no sagging hips/arching back). Squeeze glutes/quads, gaze down. Hold 20–60 seconds, breathing steadily. 3 sets. Beginner Mod: Knee plank. Push-Ups
Targets: Chest, triceps, shoulders, core.
How-To: High plank position, hands wider than shoulders. Lower chest to floor by bending elbows (45° from body), body straight. Push up through palms to start. 3 sets of 8–12 reps. Beginner Mod: Incline (hands on bench) or knee push-ups.



Wall Sit
Targets: Quads, glutes, calves.
How-To: Back against wall, slide down until thighs parallel to floor (90° knees/ankles). Feet hip-width, knees over ankles. Hold 30–60 seconds, arms out or clasped. 3 sets. Beginner Mod: Shorter holds or higher position.
How-To: Step forward with right foot, lowering until both knees are 90° (back knee hovers). Front knee over ankle; torso upright. Push through the front heel to start, alternating legs. 3 sets of 10/leg. Beginner Mod: Reverse lunges or stationary split squats.

5 Weekend Getaways Perfect For The Republic Day Break

This Republic Day, urban travellers can experience a rare gift, the joy of the long weekend, and an extended holiday before the busy season. Republic Day is the perfect time to take a break from your regular schedule, slow down, and experience new places that provide space for personal growth, individuality, and a feeling of adventure. The best way to make use of this holiday time is by choosing to stay in locations that offer a combination of comfort and culture, as well as natural beauty, with moderation and travel with intention.

1. Guwahati, Assam: A Quiet Gateway to the Northeast

Many people assume Guwahati is just a pitstop due to its location on their way to another destination. However, Guwahati has so much more to offer than just being a quick layover. To experience the essence of Guwahati, one has to take time to unwind in a place where the tranquil atmosphere, the landscapes, and the food are the embodiment of its true beauty. The city is nestled between the banks of the graceful Brahmaputra River and the green hilltops of the Kamakhya Hills in Assam and has many attractions, including temples, riverside restaurants, sunset boat rides, and authentic Assamese food. The mild January weather makes visiting these attractions even better. Eco-conscious stays are beginning to shape Guwahati’s hospitality landscape, and various properties like Mayfair Spring Valley

Resort are reflecting this shift, combining open green spaces, low-impact design, focusing on local ecology, offering private pool cottages and luxury spas. The resort is spread across 35 acres, a perfect location for travellers who want to experience and stay amid nature, featuring 260 keys, which is the largest and most premium in the Eastern Region. The beauty of such eco-stays makes Guwahati an ideal introduction to the Northeast’s largely unexplored beauty, a region that rewards travellers who arrive curious rather than rushed.

2. Jawai, Rajasthan: Where Wilderness Meets Stillness

Jawai is a notable destination in Rajasthan for its natural, rugged granite hills or scrubland. While it’s popularly known for the interaction between local people and leopards, Jawai focuses on experiencing nature through such means as taking your time to quietly observe or travel. The Republic Day holiday is a great opportunity to get to know Jawai. Luxury camps like Suján Jawai’s have re-created the concept of staying at a Safari by employing low-density design and adhering to conservation-oriented experiences. The stay ensures that the experience revolves around nature through well-designed safaris, dinner in the bushes, nature walks, and spend your evening under the stars. The camps here have been designed thoughtfully and tend to focus on conservation, the employment of the local population, and avoiding environmental disturbance to ensure this experience is

both responsible and unforgettable. The Republic Day weekend can be best enjoyed at Jawai as it allows one to move at one’s own pace.

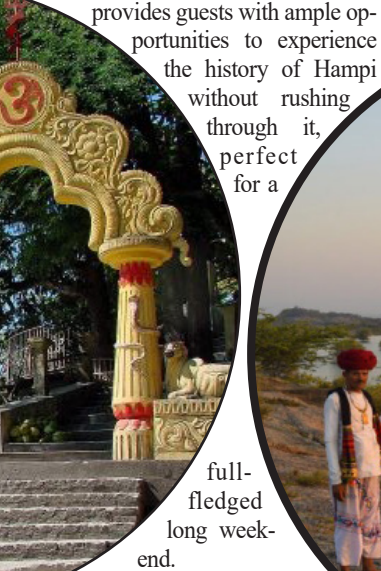
3. Hampi, Karnataka: History at a Human Pace

Walking through Hampi feels like stepping into a living museum.



The ruins of the Vijayanagara Empire stretch across a dramatic landscape of boulders, temples, and riverbanks, best explored slowly and on foot. Hampi’s climate in January is an advantage to explorers, with mild temperatures allowing for long, uninterrupted days of walking. You can cycle between monuments, watch the sun rise over Hemakuta Hill, or just sit by the river, and all of these experiences will provide you with unique perspectives on the land.

Hotels such as Evolve Back Hampi take you back on time reflecting the architecture of the Vijayanagara period, along with providing modern amenities. The resort’s concept of villas, cultural experiences, and heritage experiences provides guests with ample opportunities to experience the history of Hampi without rushing through it, perfect for a



4. Ziro Valley, Arunachal Pradesh: A Winter Pause in the Hills

The quietness of Ziro Valley and its deep cultural heritage make it inviting to travellers who appreciate these two aspects. The valley is home to the Apatani Tribe and consists of rice fields, pine forests, and many other traditional aspects of life. The crispness of the winter months provides a wonderful opportunity for outdoor hiking and visiting the villages. The emphasis of the homestays located around Ziro Valley is on the sustainability and the development of community relationships so that visitors can live a more authentic experience when they are travelling in Ziro. Stays like Ziro Eco Camp are more focused on being sustainable.

pace travel, have quality time away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, and develop deep bonds with other people in a relaxed, comfortable, and authentic manner.

5. Alibaug, Maharashtra: Coastal Calm Close to Home

Just a short journey from Mumbai, Alibaug remains a favourite for good reason. Beyond its popular beaches lie quiet villages, coastal roads, and heritage forts that reveal the town’s slower side. The month of January is an excellent time of year to take a walk on the beach, cycle along the coastal roads, and indulge in the abundant seafood found in many of the local seafood restaurants. There are many luxurious hotels and resorts, such as the Radisson Blu Resort & Spa Alibaug, which offers amenities such as large property space, sea-view rooms, and health clubs that are ideal for a stay of this duration. In addition to the local charm, there are many boutique villas and eco-sensitive resorts that provide a retreat that will allow you to enjoy your weekend without the excessive distractions of the city.

The Republic Day break is less about ticking destinations off a list and more about choosing places that allow breathing room, both physically and mentally. From Guwahati’s green hills to Ziro’s cultural quiet, from Jawai’s wilderness to Hampi’s history and Alibaug’s shores, these getaways share one quality: they invite travellers to slow down.

Korean Kanakaraju, an Indo-Korean film directed by Varun Tej

Mumbai: The film’s title, “Korean Kanakaraju,” has been revealed by the producers of filmmaker Merlapa-ka Gandhi’s upcoming Indo-Korean horror comedy, which was formerly known as #VT15 and stars Telugu actor Varun Tej.In honor of actor Varun Tej’s birthday on Monday, the production company First Frame Entertainments made the news via their X handle.The production company posted, “[VT15 is #KoreanKanakaraju,” along with a link to a title glimpse video.#KOKAGlimpse is now available. @IAmVarunTej, happy birthday. Prepare yourself for a thrilling and exciting ride in theaters this summer of 2026. On his X page, Varun Tej posted the title preview link along with the caption, “Meet Korean Kanakaraju.” I’ll see you all in theaters in the summer of 2026.The title peek begins with an Indian photographer being subjected to torture by Korean authorities. The police want the photographer to provide them with information about the whereabouts of someone they know as Kanakaraju. The photographer first finds it difficult to comprehend because he is not fluent in the language. He claims he has no idea where Kanakaraju is when an interpreter (Ritika Nayak) arrives and communicates what the police want from him. However, a possessed Kanakaraju (Varun Tej) en-



ters the station on a full moon night and uses a Samurai sword to kill the Korean police officers. The photographer remarks, “This Kanakaraju isn’t our Kanakaraju...” as he chuckles eerily and declares, “I’m back” in Korean.Since the project’s announcement, fans and movie enthusiasts have had high expectations for the movie.Fans are excited to watch how the joint Indo-Korean film will be made, and they are delighted that an Indian actor will be collaborating on it.S Thaman, one of the best music directors in South Indian cinema, wrote the music for the movie. Paneer Selvam is in charge of art direction. As you

may remember, Varun Tej departed for Korea in mid-June of last year to film the movie. The unit completed its Ananthapur program during the third week of May.Following an auspicious pooja ritual in Hyderabad, the team shot in Ananthapur, where they used a variety of locations, including the famous KIA grounds and charming village settings. A visually spectacular song scene that was filmed was one of the highlights of the Ananthapur program.Korea’s schedule was the third. The Korean schedule had more thrilling and exciting scenes, whereas the prior two schedules’ scenes were more humorous and thrilling.

AR Rahman says the younger generation “gaslit” him



Mumbai: In a recent interview, AR Rahman, who made headlines for his contentious “communal” statement, asserted that he had been “gaslighted” by a generation that believed he was not producing enough quality work. Rahman asserted in a different interview that he had put a lot of effort into reaching out to a younger generation over the past few years. He added that between 2019 and 2025, he wrote music for between 20 to 30 movies. His assertion that his work had slowed down during the previous eight years contrasts sharply with this statement. “To be honest, the ‘90s generation has a certain nostalgia and fondness for your music when they come to you over the past six years. This also applies to people born in the 2000s and the next decade. They come to deceive you. “You did Roja in the ‘90s,” they say (1992). That music is excellent, sir! It seems like you’re not making excellent music anymore, don’t you? When you’re not feeling well, it truly affects how you think,” Rahman said. “I wondered what would happen if I went on a frenzy and continued making movies, song after song. As a result, every filmmaker who approaches me now remarks, “You did such a great sequence in Mani (Ratnam) sir’s movie Thug Life.” Thus, all of the current instances are from the last six years. In the past six years, I’ve worked on twenty to thirty films. I’m safe now, then. For the next generation, I have enough. That was deliberate,” Rahman continued.Rahman and Oscar winner Hans Zim-

mer worked together to write the soundtrack for Nitesh Tiwari’s film Ramayan. He stated that he wants to push the boundaries for himself and does not want to be complacent. “I adore those stuff, but I need to prove myself and regain my confidence and self-worth. The best thing is what I’m going to do next. Instead than relying on the past and saying, “Oh, I’ve won two Oscars and 33 Filmfare Awards,” You are exhausted by that thinking. You have no desire to do anything. It might be a hardship. I don’t have an Oscar, Grammy, or anything else in my Instagram or Twitter bio. 2026 is a new year,” Rahman continued. “Dear friends, music has always been a means for me to honor, celebrate, and connect with a culture. India is my home, my teacher, and my source of inspiration. I am aware that intentions might occasionally be misinterpreted, but my goal has always been to use music to uplift, honor, and serve. Rahman stated, “I hope my sincerity is felt because I have never wanted to cause pain.”The explanation follows Rahman’s statement that his work in the Hindi film industry has slowed down recently, which he attributed to “shifting power dynamics” during the previous eight years and perhaps to what he called “a communal thing” in a recent interview. “People who are not creative have the power to decide things now, and this might have been a communal thing also, but not in my face,” the composer continued, elaborating on that change.

Winner of Bigg Boss Kannada 12

Mumbai: Colors Kannada and JioHotstar broadcast the Bigg Boss Kannada Season 12 grand finale on Sunday night. Fans watched to see if their favorite competitor, Gilli Nata, would win and whether their prediction would come true. As he raised the prize, the winner of the reality show hosted by Kichcha Sudeep appeared overwhelmed.Many people predicted that Gilli would win the show hours before the finale aired based on unofficial polls on social media and other websites, as well as the response after polling was closed. Rakshita Shetty won first runner-up, and the YouTuber raised the award as expected. During the final round, Dhanush

Gowda, Mutant Raghu, and Kavya were eliminated in sixth, fifth, and fourth positions, respectively, while Ashwini Gowda placed second. During the Bigg Boss Kannada 12 grand finale, Sudeep raised Gilli’s hand to declare him the winner. A brand-new Maruti Suzuki Victoris and ₹50 lakh in cash were awarded to the YouTuber. Rakshita won ₹25 lakh in prize money as the second runner-up. Gilli’s comedic timing, which frequently extended into altercations, helped him gain popularity early in the season. The competitor was so well-liked at one point that Sudeep was subjected to internet harassment for not giving him enough credit.

For Shraddha Kapoor, Monday is the new Sunday

Mumbai: The most recent Instagram post from Shraddha Kapoor is quite relatable. The actress declared Monday to be her personal Sunday on January 19 and posted a few selfies on the social media site. Fans quickly reacted to the post after it attracted attention. Shraddha didn’t hold back however, responding to some of the comments with her trademark humor.The Stree 2 actress is seen grinning at the camera while lying on a couch in the photos. She has earphones around her neck and is wearing comfortable lounge-wear, including a beige shirt. In addition, Shraddha keeps her hair loose and sports a pair of printed spectacles. “3 saal

baad puraana chashma pehno toh naye mein count hota hai (If you wear old glasses after 3 years, they count as a new one)” was Shraddha’s appropriate response to a user who asked if she was wearing “naya chashma (new glasses).” In terms of her career, Shraddha Kapoor most recently starred with Rajkummar Rao in Amar Kaushik’s Stree 2. In 2024, the popular horror-comedy made its debut. In the Hindi adaptation of Zootopia 2, she also provided the voice of Judy Hopps, an animated character.The 2018 horror drama Tumbbad’s predecessor, Pahadpangira, is said to feature Shraddha Kapoor.

What to Expect From Dhurandhar Part 2, According to Sara Arjun

Mumbai: At the box office, both domestically and internationally, Dhurandhar is still shattering records. The Aditya Dhar-directed sequel starring Ranveer Singh will hit theaters in precisely two months. Sara Arjun will reappear as Yalina Jamali, with Ranveer Singh as Hamza Ali Mazari, an Indian intelligence agent who goes deep undercover in Pakistan’s Lyari. With Dhurandhar, Sara Arjun—a well-known child star from movies like Deiva Thirumagal, Saivam, Ek Thi Daayan, and the Ponniyin Selvan films—became a lead actor. Actor Sara Arjun discusses her character Yalina Jamali, the much awaited second part of Dhurandhar, and her forthcoming Telugu movie Euphoria in an exclusive interview.Everyone has been taken aback by Dhurandhar’s unexpected success at the box office. After 46 days in theaters nationwide, the spy action thriller has earned over Rs 1,300 crore worldwide. Like fans, Sara Arjun is eager to know how viewers will respond to Dhurandhar Part 2 on March 19. “After part one, viewers already have high expectations, but you can just anticipate much more of everything you like in part one, including the action and the plot. The 20-year-old actor stated, “There is a lot more of all that coming in part two.”In Dhurandhar, Sara Arjun portrays Yalina Jamali, the obstinate daughter of cunning Pakistani politician Jameel Jamali (Rakesh Bedi), who eventually marries Hamza after falling in love with him. In order to better understand her character, Sara Arjun claimed she went to seminars for a while. She also mentioned that she used to talk to Aditya Dhar about her arc. “I truly admire the way she simply follows her instincts.

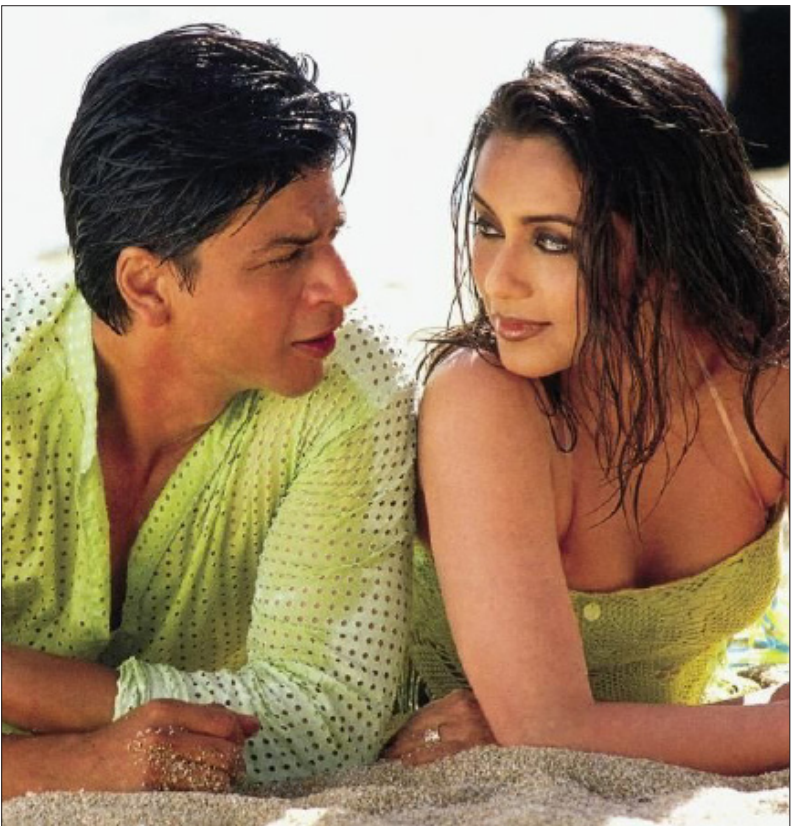


This girl is incredibly strong, yet she is also deeply enamored and acting on her emotions. You’ll witness Yalina’s actual power... My character’s true breadth is primarily in part two. Before beginning, we had a lengthy conversation.”We kept speculating about what kind of person she might be. We tried to portray her as a very joyful and optimistic person. Later on in the movie, when she travels through it, the suffering will be more understandable. Yalina and I are somewhat similar in general. I therefore clung to those (similarities). Ideally, every character should be important to the plot and not only a prop. To be honest, I consider it to be their minimum.The actor will appear in Gunasekhar’s film Euphoria before to the release of Dhurandhar Part 2. Sara Arjun will play a starring part in her first Telugu film, which is scheduled for release on February 6.According to the actor, Euphoria tells the tale of kids who run afoul of the law. “I portray Chaitra, a little child who is somewhat ensnared

in the system. It is a very resilient and powerful character. Before Dhurandhar, I signed this movie. I was eighteen at the time because I was so enthralled with the film’s plot and content that I felt compelled to contribute to its presentation,” she continued.After the publication of Dhurandhar Part 2, what will happen to Sara Arjun? The actor from Mumbai claimed that she no longer views movies in terms of the north versus south division. “At this point, it’s all simply pan-India. I have not yet made a decision regarding my next course of action. After March, I don’t know what I’ll do. And I mean that in a very positive sense.Because it keeps me on the receiving end, I truly enjoy this ambiguity. She stated, “I would really like to strive for something that has a lot of emotional depth and scope for me as an actor, but the stories I would like to go for have to be really strong.” Despite having a lot of attention with the success of Dhurandhar, Sara Arjun is living each day to the fullest.

Rani Mukerji on receiving the National Award alongside Shah Rukh Khan

Mumbai: When actors Shah Rukh Khan and Rani Mukerji won their first National Awards at a ceremony in Delhi last year, they set significant BFF goals. In retrospect, Rani said that receiving the honor alongside Shah Rukh, whom she has looked up to since the beginning of her career, made the occasion genuinely memorable for her.Rani recently participated in a podcast called Spotlight Sessions. The star went back to the time she and Shah Rukh shared their first National Film Award.Ramesh Thilak are among the other actors in the movie. As an actor, a professional, and a person, Shah Rukh taught me so much. He’s been in the business for 35 years, and I’ve been in it for 30, so winning it that day seemed even more important. We’ve always wanted to give our films our all, whether or not they won National Awards. In the Chinese calendar, I am a horse. I don’t look left or right, therefore I think I keep my blinkers on. I constantly think forward and concentrate on what’s coming up,” she continued. In movies like Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham, Chalte Chalte, Paheli, Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna, and Veer-Zaara, Shah Rukh and Rani have offered viewers memorable moments, making them one of Bollywood’s most adored on-screen couples. In addition to their careers, Shah Rukh and Rani have a close friendship.For her 2023 film Mrs. Chatterjee vs. Norway, Rani received her first National Film Award in her thirty-year career last year. Shah Rukh’s performance in Atlee’s movie Jawan earned him the Best Actor



prize. Following the 71st National Film Awards, Rani said in a statement that she was overwhelmed and wanted to dedicate her honor to moms. “I dedicate my National Award to all the amazing mothers out there. Nothing compares to a mother’s love and her fierce defense of her own. I was profoundly moved by the tale of this Indian immigrant mother who sacrificed all for her child and took on a country. A mother’s love for her child is unwavering. When I had my own, I realized this. This victory makes

the movie feel very intimate and sentimental. A woman has the power to change the world and move mountains for her children. “This movie attempted to depict this,” she remarked. Ashima Chibber is the writer and director of the 2023 legal drama film Mrs. Chatterjee vs. Norway. The real-life tale of Anurup Bhattacharya and Sagarika Chakraborty, an Indian immigrant couple whose children were abducted by Norwegian authorities in 2011, served as the basis for the movie.

Ram Gopal Varma Forecasts the Success of Dhurandhar 2



Mumbai: Dhurandhar, directed by Aditya Dhar, is still going

well at the box office. The Ranveer Singh-starring movie is shattering records even six weeks after it was released. Filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma has now predicted the enormous success of its sequel due to its extraordinary success.In a lengthy post on X, the director explained what “stardom” really means, calling it the largest multi-starrer film in Indian cinema history.”Dhurandhar 2 will be the biggest multi-starrer ever, in the history of cinema, because each and every character in the first film has become enormously huge in the audience’s mind, in terms of both their value and impact, which is what true stardom is really about,” he wrote. “In the 1st part, the characters could have been small or big, but now all of them have become gi-

ant superstars, and hence #Dhurandhar2 will be the BIGGEST MULTI STARRER ever,” he added. Ram Gopal Varma has already commended Dhurandhar for its potential. The director sent a lengthy message detailing the epic action thriller’s quest to become the biggest Hindi picture ever a few days after it debuted in theaters on December 5. “Whenever a pathbreaking and monstrous hit like Dhurandhar comes, the industry people will wish to ignore it because they will feel threatened by it due to their inability to match its standards,” he wrote in a post on X, highlighting how the film challenges various narratives in the industry. They will therefore perceive it as a nightmare that will end when they awaken in their own movies. “This is even

more true of all the so-called pan-India biggies, which are currently under various stages of production,” he went on. The exact opposite of what they all thought would be successful, they were all written and mounted, based on the films produced before to Dhurandhar. Even more concerning is the fact that #dhurandhar is the most talked-about movie of the past 50 years in addition to being an enormous hit. At the domestic box office, Dhurandhar has brought in Rs 871.90 crore. It appears to have no intention of stopping, demonstrating Bollywood’s hegemony over pan-Indian cinema. Sara Arjun, R Madhavan, Sanjay Dutt, Arjun Rampal, Gaurav Gera, Rakesh Bedi, and others play significant parts in the movie.

Kaziranga continues to see tiger deaths



Guwahati, Jan 19: On Sunday, a female Royal Bengal tiger’s carcass was found in the Kathpora region of the West range of Bagori in Kaziranga National Park. It has been hypothesized that the tiger’s death was caused

by tiger-to-tiger fighting. In the past five months, Kaziranga has seen three tiger deaths as a result of infighting. The female tiger’s carcass was found on Sunday afternoon, according to a forest authority. According to the official, a

committee was established to perform the post-mortem and dispose of the carcass in accordance with the National Tiger Conservation Authority’s standard operating procedure. A female Royal Bengal tiger was discovered dead in the nation-

al park a few weeks prior to this case. Fighting was the cause of death in this instance as well. According to a different forest officer, infighting was common among tigers and mostly occurred during territorial expansion.Two tiger carcasses were discovered in Kaziranga in August of last year, one in Bagori and the other in Burapahar. According to officials, the tiger in Burapahar died from infighting, while the one in Bagori perished from old age.The one-horned rhinoceros’ famous home is the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR), which is well known around the world. It has made headlines due to the amazing achievement of having a healthy tiger population. With an astounding population of 18.65 tigers per 100 square kilometers, the reserve reported 148 tigers in 2024.

After losing the ODI series, Gautam Gambhir was grilled

New Delhi: In 2026, everyone in India was waiting for 37-year-old Virat Kohli to deliver the game-winning blow against New Zealand on Sunday in Indore. The right-handed hitter met expectations by hitting 124 runs while pursuing 338, but he was unable to lead India to victory. The main cause of India’s loss was that Kohli was fighting alone, with only fleeting assistance from half-centuries from Nitish Kumar Reddy and Harshit Rana.India lost the three-match ODI series against the Kiwis 1-2, and New Zealand won their first-ever ODI series in India. Because captain Shubman Gill, Rohit Sharma, Shreyas Iyer, and KL Rahul were unable to play significant innings to back Kohli, it was a team effort.Former India batsman Krishnamachari Srikanth praised Kohli for his never-say-die mentality following the loss, but he also chastised veteran all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja for his lack of zeal. “The silent killer at the 2023 World Cup was Ravindra Jadeja. It’s true that he doesn’t seem to be as excited as he was throughout that competition. However, Kuldeep Yadav is also being brought to the cleaners. I’m sorry for Virat Kohli. How



many games will he score in? How many games can India win if Kohli is the only one who scores? On his YouTube account, Srikanth stated. “India relies on a single player to win games. To be fair, New Zealand isn’t a very good bowling team. But take a look at Jayden Lennox’s bowling performance: 10 overs, 42 runs, and two vital wickets. Although costly, Foulkes claimed wickets. Shubman Gill was dismissed by Kyle Jamieson’s lethal delivery. Kristian Clarke is also a good bowler. He continued, “It’s a third-string attack.” Notably, Jadeja’s performance against New Zealand in the ODIs was unmemorable. He gave up 41 runs in six overs without taking a wicket in the third game. Scores of 4, 27, and 12 with the bat have cast doubt on his future in the ODI squad.

The ‘No Salary’ Vow of the Rajasthan District Collector



New Delhi, Jan 19: A district collector from Rajasmand, Rajasthan, has made the decision to withhold his pay until the impoverished in his district are registered for benefits under three major government initiatives aimed at reducing poverty.There are two ways to do tasks, according to Arun Kumar Hasija. “I could have encouraged my district officials to work or I might have cracked the whip and put pressure on them to do their assignment. He told, “I have made this commitment to inspire them so we can finish our enrollment work in the district on time.”The Rajasmand district is home to over 30,000 impoverished individuals. These primarily consist of recipients of the National Food Security Act’s free ration or wheat; children who have lost parental support and are eligible for the Palanhar Yojana; and individuals who receive social security pen-

sions, such as elderly people, widows, and single women. Government assistance in the form of these programs is essential to many people’s survival.”We encounter numerous challenges if our salary is even ten days behind schedule. Everybody’s life cycle is connected to their income: credit card bills, school fees for children, EMIs, and other costs. I wanted my employees to know how a ten-day salary delay may affect their lives. However, consider those impoverished individuals who get just Rs 1,500 a month from the government. It is simply unfair if that sum is postponed for three months due to problems with verification,” Hasija stated.In barely 48 hours, Hasija’s move is starting to pay off. Eighty-eight percent of the 1,90,440 social security pension beneficiaries have already enrolled, while 1,67,688 and 22,752 are still awaiting verification.

The Villains Behind India’s ODI Series Setback Against New Zealand

New Delhi: New Zealand won the three-match match 2-1 to defeat India at home, despite India’s victories in the ODI series against Australia and South Africa. It was the hosts’ first home series defeat in three years. The Australian team was the last to defeat India in India, winning a three-match series 2-1. The outcome sparked a lot of discussion, from Ravindra Jadeja’s shortcomings as a batsman and bowler to Rohit Sharma’s inefficiency at the top of the batting order. We examine the “villains” responsible for the series loss as the Indian team management attempts to start over in order to address the obvious shortcomings that New Zealand revealed.Typically the team’s main aggressor, the former India captain turned into a key “villain” in the batting order. Rohit battled with fluency in all three games and was unable to deliver the explosive starts that have been his signature. The Hitman seemed “short on cricket,” according to Ryan ten Doeschate, assistant coach. Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli were under tremendous pressure as a result of his frequent withdrawal from his usual high-intent approach. Jadeja, who was formerly India’s most reliable all-rounder, was largely to blame for the series’ failure due to his lack of impact with both bat and ball. In the middle overs, Jadeja failed to produce the breakthroughs required to halt the flow of runs, particularly from the Kiwi studs Glenn Phillips and Daryl Mitchell. In the final ODI, he gave up 41 runs in just 6 overs without taking a wicket, a performance that encapsulated his inefficiency throughout the series.Even if Jadeja’s lackluster performances were too bad to ignore, players like Kuldeep Yadav and others should have done more to support the left-arm finger spinner. Scores of 4, 27, and 12 with the bat without undoubtedly cast doubt on his future in the ODI squad. In the series, the real Ravindra Jadeja was “missing.” The middle order’s collective failure bears the majority of the blame, even though individual players like Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul struggled to deliver in the last ODI.

Coco Gauff Wins the Australian Open Opening Round Despite Early Serve Wobbles



New Delhi: After starting her Australian Open title bid with a straight-sets victory on Monday, third seed Coco Gauff acknowledged she had to “erase” her early serving wobbles. On a hot and sunny Rod Laver Arena, the 21-year-old easily defeated Kamilla Rakhimova of Uzbekistan, who was born in Russia, 6-2, 6-3. In round two, the American takes against Olga Danilovic of Serbia, who defeated Venus Williams. “I tried not to put too much pressure on

myself,” stated Gauff. “I’m hoping to win this competition. I am pleased of myself regardless of how I do, but I am only content if I win.” The two-time major winner acknowledged that she had used her return serve as a powerful weapon against the 93rd-ranked player in the globe. “It’s the great thing of being a good returner, you have a good chance of breaking in every game,” she stated.Gauff, whose greatest Melbourne result was a semi-final in 2024, displayed

“Helps Economically Disadvantaged”: Oxfam Applauds India’s Political Quota

New Delhi, Jan 19: Rights organization Oxfam on Monday pointed to India’s reservation system as a “compelling” example of how common people might gain political power while denouncing billionaires’ usurpation of the political landscape worldwide.

According to Oxfam International’s annual inequality report, which was presented today on the first day of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, which is attended by wealthy and influential people from all over the world, billionaires are 4,000 times more likely than regular people to occupy political office.Oxfam argued that in a political system where political, institutional, and social factors enhance their ability to influence decision-making despite structural inequalities, ordinary people become strong. This is known as “the power of the many.” This occurs when ideological commitments, collective organization, effective governance, political incentives for responsiveness, and institutional inclusivity all line up.In the report titled “Resisting the Rule of the Rich: Protecting Freedom from Billionaire Power,” Oxfam stated that “non-state actors such as CSOs, grassroots movements, and trade unions are natural allies of states in building greater political engagement from under-represented communities, and ensuring access for all to meaningful participation in policymaking.”It stated that there are several striking instances of advancements in this important area. “In India, for example, political reservations (quotas) for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other marginalised groups create opportunities

for economically disadvantaged and socially excluded communities to gain legislative representation and push redistributive policies,” stated Oxfam.According to their demographic, India offers reserves in legislatures for SCs, STs, and a few other groups. More recently, it announced 33% for women. There exist reserves for other marginalised and disadvantaged groups in government employment and education in addition to these categories. Additionally, Oxfam gave the example of Brazil’s Participatory Budgeting, which first appeared in the 1990s and had substantial growth in the 2000s.”Its most prominent example was the city of Porto Alegre, whose experience became an international reference in participatory democracy by allowing citizens to directly decide on portions of the municipal public budget,” stated Oxfam. According to the paper, in order to increase the political power of the many, governments must ensure an enabling civic space in accordance with international legal frameworks, norms, and guidelines. For citizens, movements, journalists, and organizations to be able to organize, speak out, and protest, Oxfam urged governments to openly pledge to and take action to defend and promote freedom of expression, assembly, and association (including online).Additionally, it promoted establishing accountability and openness about the maintenance of these standards, assuring this through frequent reporting and scrutiny by both state and non-state actors, and providing individuals and organizations with access to resources and information.

Shubman Gill responds bluntly when asked about Rohit Sharma’s poor form



New Delhi: Rohit Sharma, who had a terrible batting performance in his team’s 2-1 loss to New Zealand in the three-match ODI series, was supported by India skipper Shubman Gill. After defeating the Men in Blue handily in the final ODI at the Holkar Cricket Stadium on Sunday, New Zealand made history by winning their first-ever ODI series in India. Sharma had a terrible batting performance in the third ODI, chasing a difficult total of 338 runs while hitting 11 runs off 13 balls, including two fours. The seasoned opener averaged 20.33 while scoring 61 runs in three innings. In the series, Sharma was unable to score a fifty. Gill stated that Sharma has been in excellent form since the Australia series during the news conference

held after the game. Gill did point out that during the New Zealand series, the seasoned opener was unable to convert his starts.”I believe Rohit Sharma is in excellent form, starting with the Australia series and continuing into the South Africa series. As I mentioned earlier, I believe you won’t always be able to convert the starts you receive. In this New Zealand series, I believe Rohit also received a few starts. As a batsman, your constant goal is to turn those starts into hundreds of runs. However, it can’t be done every time. However, that’s something you constantly try to achieve,” Gill remarked.In the do-or-die encounter

against India in Indore, New Zealand was set to bat first and managed a difficult score of 337/8 in 50 overs.In the series, Daryl Mitchell scored his consecutive century. With 15 fours and one six, the right-handed batsman scored 137 runs off 131 pitches.With nine fours and three sixes, Glenn Phillips scored an incredible 106 runs off of 88 deliveries. New Zealand finished at 337/8 in 50 overs thanks to skipper Michael Bracewell’s undefeated 28 off 18 deliveries, which included four boundaries. Arshdeep Singh (3/63) and Harshit Rana (3/84) both claimed three wickets for India with the ball.Virat Kohli’s amazing lone warrior century and his 99-run partnership with lower-order batsman Harshit Rana, who made his first ODI fifty, were in vain during the chase. Ten fours and three sixes were part of Kohli’s valiant innings of 124 runs off 108 deliveries. With eight boundaries, Harshit Rana amassed 52 runs off of 43 balls.India was dismissed for 296 in 46 overs, losing the match by 41 runs despite Nitish Kumar Reddy scoring 53 off 57 deliveries, two fours, and as many sixes. The best bowlers for New Zealand were Kristian Clarke (3/54) and Zakary Foulkes (3/77), while Jayden Lennox bowled an outstanding spell of 2/42.

In the midst of the EVM debate, Bengaluru will hold civic polls using ballot papers

New Delhi, Jan 19: The Greater Bengaluru Authority elections are expected to take place after May 25 and will use vote papers, according to the Karnataka Election Commission. The usage of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), which were employed in the last Bengaluru civic elections, has been the subject of ongoing criticism from the Congress party at both the state and federal levels.GS Sangreshi, the chief election commissioner for Karnataka, explained the commission’s position on voting

procedures and ballot paper usage. He stated, “We are also doing the same process only for this SIR,” in reference to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) for the GBA elections. We are updating the list, names, and information. Sangreshi stated, “These GBA polls will be conducted through ballot papers,” on the choice to use them. Additionally, the Supreme Court has ruled that using ballot papers is acceptable. There is a provision to use it in GBA as well.He went on to say that the State Election Commission

has the same ability to make decisions as the Election Commission of India. “The State Election Commission and the ECI both make their own decisions. It will be a complete success,” he declared. Additionally, Sangreshi noted that ballot paper voting is accepted in many developed nations and is not forbidden. “This is not prohibited. We’re carrying it out. Ballot papers are used in elections even in developed nations like the United States. EVMs are only used for MLA and MP elections, he stated.

Indian Shuttlers’ Eye Improvement Against Difficult Draw

New Delhi: At the USD 500,000 Indonesia Masters, which begins on Tuesday, Indian shuttlers will be looking for a significant improvement following last week’s poor home run. Lakshya Sen lost in the men’s singles quarterfinals of last week’s India Open in New Delhi, and no Indian made it past the round of eight in any category as Lin Chun-Yi of Chinese Taipei and world number one An Se Young of Korea won the men’s and women’s singles titles, respectively. The attention now turns to Jakarta, where Indian shuttlers will have to contend with a difficult

lineup in the first rounds, including a number of difficult matches against opponents rated higher. After Lin ended his run at the India Open in the round of eight, seventh seed Lakshya, who won the Australia Open the previous year, will be in pain.When he begins his campaign against Singapore’s Jia Heng Jason Teh, he hopes to get off to a strong start. Meanwhile, HS Prannoy will be put to the test against Malaysia’s former world No. 2 and bronze medallist from the Paris Olympics, Lee Zii Jia.Japan’s Koki Watanabe will face former world No. 1 Kidambi Srikanth, who

advanced to the finals of the Syed Modi International and Malaysia Masters last year, while Tharun Mannepalili will face Japan’s Yushi Tanaka.Third-seeded Jonathan Christie of Indonesia, who advanced to the India Open finals, was drawn with US Open champion Ayush Shetty. The 20-year-old will have another difficult match after a poor first-round elimination at the India Open. Fifth-seeded PV Sindhu, who began the season recuperating from a foot ailment, will take on Manami Suizu of Japan to start her campaign in the women’s singles.

Jurgen Klopp is “not excited” about Real Madrid’s interest

New Delhi: Jurgen Klopp, a former manager of Liverpool, stated that Xabi Alonso’s departure from Real Madrid was both unexpected and expected given the European powerhouses’ reputation for making ruthless coaching choices. After being outplayed in a 3-2 loss to Barcelona in the Spanish Su-



per Cup, former Real Madrid midfielder Alonso left the team by “mutual agreement” after less than eight months in the Bernabeu dugout. “I had mixed feelings when I learned about Xabi Alonso. Yes, I was taken aback. In Leipzig, Klopp told AFP and other reporters, “And no, I wasn’t surprised.”

India’s poor start highlighted, Gavaskar urges youngsters to emulate Kohli’s winning mindset

Gavaskar praises Kohli’s mindset, urges consistency

New Delhi: Former captain Sunil Gavaskar says India’s failure to make good starts cost them the ODI series against New Zealand and the team’s batters should take a leaf out of Virat Kohli’s book to understand how an innings should be paced while chasing difficult targets. India went down in the third and final ODI in Indore by 41 runs to lose their first ever 50-over home series against New Zealand, continuing the trend of recent underwhelming results. Kohli top-scored with a 108-ball 124 but could not get a stable partner to steer the challenging chase of 338. Unless Virat Kohli got substantial support, it was always going to be difficult, and he got very little of it. The real problem for India throughout the series has been the starts. As they say, well begun is half done,”Gavaskar said on ‘Amul Cricket Live’ on JioStar. ”India never began well, and that’s one of the main reasons they weren’t able to chase these big scores,” he pointed out. India had lost half the side at 159, which severely dented their chances. ”...when you lose someone in good form like KL Rahul, and you have Nitish Kumar Reddy, who hadn’t really done justice to his ability until this innings of 53 runs and then Harshit Rana, someone you are never quite sure what you are going to get, it becomes an uphill climb. That’s exactly what India found,” Gavaskar ex-



plained. The legendary former batter lauded Kohli for trying till the end and urged the others to emulate his mindset and consistency. ”The thing about him is that he’s not tied down to an image. A lot of batters and bowlers are constrained by how they’re perceived, and they feel they must live up to that image. Virat isn’t like that,” he said. ”He’s tied to the job at hand, and that job is to score runs. Sometimes, that means starting watchfully and then opening up. Sometimes, it means attacking early and then spreading the field and picking up ones and twos. He’s not governed by expectations of how he should play,” he added. “That temperament is the key. He doesn’t think, ‘I’m expected to hit a six.’ He plays according to the situation. He never gives up. Even till the end, he was trying. For youngsters, that’s the biggest lesson, don’t live up to an image. Play the situation, and you’ll be far more consistent than you ever imagined.” On Harshit Rana’s lower-order half century that raised hopes of an unlikely win, Gavaskar said he was impressed by his ability to stay in the moment and not let past failures affect him mentally. ”It was a very good innings by Harshit Rana. He batted exactly like a lower-order batter should, without worry and without expectations...What impressed earliVirat Kohli at the other end,” he said.

Lalremsiami credits HIL growth

New Delhi: Shrachi Bengal Tigers forward Lalremsiami reflected on her side’s runners-up finish in the Women’s Hockey India League (HIL) 2025-26, calling the season a valuable learning experience both personally and collectively, while expressing confidence that the team will go one step further next year. ”It was a very good season for us and I got a lot to learn from it. Of course, we wanted to win the title and become champions, but as a team I think we performed really well. Sometimes the final result is not in your control, but overall, I really liked the Hero HIL this time. We enjoyed it a lot and learned a lot together,” Lalremsiami said. The Tigers were involved in multiple high-pressure encounters that went down to penalty shootouts, including the Final against SG Pipers. Reflecting on those moments, the Indian veteran said the team focused more on backing their own strengths rather than overthinking the outcome. In our matches against the Pipers earlier, one game went to a shootout after we conceded late, and in the other we dominated most of the match but couldn’t score. had let them slip layed. announced that its agreed.

Barcelona’s 11-game winning streak ends in 2-1 Spanish league defeat at Real Sociedad

Barcelona remain one point clear after Madrid victory

Madrid: Disallowed goals, hitting the woodwork five times, and great saves. It was just too much for Barcelona to overcome on Sunday as it lost 2-1 to Real Sociedad in the Spanish league to see its 11-game winning streak come to an end. Barcelona had three goals disallowed — as well as a penalty-kick call reversed by video review — in the first half alone. It had five attempts hit the woodwork, including an 84th-minute header by Jules Koundé from close range, and Sociedad goalkeeper Álex Remiro made a series of impressive saves. Disappointed, we created a lot of opportunities. The result does not reflect our game,” Barcelona coach Hansi Flick said. “Sometimes it’s like that. At the end, there are some days you invest a lot of energy and at the end you are unlucky. I appreciate a lot what I saw.” The loss left the Catalan club one point ahead of second-place Real Madrid, which beat Levante 2-0 at home on Saturday. It was the second consecutive win for Sociedad, which moved to eighth place. Three amazing points,” said Remiro. He made one terrific close-range save off a header by Robert Lewand-



owski in the second half. Mikel Oyarzabal put the hosts ahead with a volley by the far post in the 32nd minute. Barcelona equalized with a header from Marcus Rashford in the 70th but a minute later Gonçalo Guedes put Sociedad ahead again with a shot from inside the area. Barcelona had plenty of chances throughout the match. It thought it had taken the lead a few minutes into the game when Fermin López scored with a low shot from outside the area, but the goal was disallowed by video review for a foul by Dani Olmo on Sociedad’s Takefusa Kubo in the buildup. Barcelona also had a goal by Frenkie de Jong called back for offside in the 21st and another by Lamine Yamal in the 27th. Yamal was awarded a penal-

ty in first-half stoppage time but the call was reversed because he was offside. We played well, had many scoring opportunities,” De Jong said. “We deserved to win. We need to be able to capitalize on these chances.” Sociedad’s Carlos Soler was sent off in the 88th for a hard foul. Barcelona had won 11 in a row across all competitions in a streak that included a 2-1 victory over Real Madrid in the final of the Spanish Super Cup in Saudi Arabia last weekend. It hadn’t lost since a 3-0 road defeat against Chelsea in the league phase of the Champions League. Its last Spanish league loss had been a 2-1 defeat against Real Madrid in the first clasico of the season at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in October. Barcelona forward Raphinha was

Australian Open: Turkish player’s swift aid to fainting ball girl earns global admiration

New Delhi: Turkiye’s Zeynep Sonmez progressed to the second round of the Australian Open after a dramatic first-round encounter that saw her provide immediate assistance to a ball girl who collapsed during the match. In a contest marked by soaring temperatures in Melbourne, Sonmez, ranked 112th in the world, stopped play in the second set to help the unwell ball girl, drawing widespread appreciation from both the crowd and the tennis community. The Turkish player ultimately prevailed over Russia’s 11th seed, Ekaterina Alexandrova, with a 7-5, 4-6, 6-4 scoreline, becoming the first woman from Turkiye to reach the second round of the year’s opening Grand Slam. As play paused, spectators watched as Sonmez ran towards the ball girl when she fell beside the chair umpire. The girl tried to regain her



footing but stumbled again. Sonmez placed the girl’s arm over her own shoulder and guided her to a seat for medical attention. The intervention was met by applause from the crowd, who witnessed both competitive spirit and sportsmanship. Despite the interruption and losing the second set, Sonmez kept her composure to secure the match. Her reaction to the incident was clear. “I always say it’s more important to be a good human being than a good

tennis player. It was just my instinct to help her and everyone would do the same. I’m happy I got to help,” told Sonmez to BBC. Organisers later confirmed the ball girl had returned home after treatment. Sonmez’s victory capped a milestone moment, as she waved to supporters and left the court wrapped in the Turkish flag, with fans celebrating her achievement in the stands of the 1573 Arena at Melbourne Park. When asked about the ball girl, Sonmez added, If I see

her tomorrow or later in the tournament I’d love to speak to her.”She was really struggling. She said she was fine but it was really obvious she was not fine,” and, “So I went to grab her and said ‘sit down and drink something, you’re not fine’. As we were walking she fainted so luckily I grabbed her. She was really shaking.” Sonmez’s performance followed a strong 2025 season, during which she reached the third round at Wimbledon, marking the best Grand Slam result for a Turkish woman in the professional era, and also advanced to the second round at the US Open. Her Australian Open campaign now adds another chapter to her country’s tennis history. “If I see her tomorrow or later in the tournament I’d love to speak to her.” something, you’re not fine’. As we were walking she fainted so luckily I grabbed her shaking.

RCB aim to continue dream run from Navi Mumbai to Vadodara

New Delhi: Royal Challengers Bengaluru Women head into their next Women’s Premier League fixture against Gujarat Giants Women brimming with confidence after an impressive start to the season. RCB remain unbeaten with four consecutive wins, their most recent victory coming by eight wickets against Delhi Capitals, driven by Smriti Mandhana’s superb 96. Their all-round strength has been a defining feature of the campaign so far, with both bat and ball clicking in tandem to keep them firmly placed near the top of the points table. Gujarat Giants, by contrast, have shown flashes of resilience but have struggled to build sustained momentum, particularly against high-quality opposition. RCB will also carry a clear psychological edge into the contest, having defeated the Giants earlier this week. That win was highlighted by Radha Yadav’s maiden WPL fifty and Shreyanka Patil’s five-wicket haul, performances that underlined RCB’s depth and versatility. The Giants, however, began their campaign on a high note, opening with back-to-back wins, including a thrilling four-run, last-ball victory over Delhi Capitals, where Sophie Devine’s blistering 95 and solid support from Ashleigh Gardner put them among the early contenders. Momentum has since stalled. Gujarat have slipped to two successive defeats—first against Mumbai Indians, despite posting 192 for five 5, and then against RCB. With two wins and two losses, the Giants sit mid-table, showing promise but lacking consistency. As the action shifts to Vadodara, they will be eager to rediscover their early rhythm, while RCB look to extend their dominant run in WPL 2026. Shreyanka Patil’s five-wicket haul was pivotal in Royal Challengers Bengaluru’s (RCB) 32-run victory over Gujarat Giants in the WPL 2026. Her exceptional bowling dismantled



the Gujarat Giants’ batting lineup, maintaining pressure throughout their chase and making a comeback after a 14-month injury layoff even more remarkable. In RCB’s third consecutive win, Patil took 5 for 23, while Radha Yadav’s maiden WPL fifty helped set a challenging total for the opposition was pivotal in Royal Challengers Bengaluru. In RCB’s third consecutive win, Patil took 5 for 23, while Radha Yadav’s maiden WPL fifty helped set a position. Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) have established a commanding lead in the WPL 2026 standings, thanks to their unbeaten streak at the start of the tournament. By securing four consecutive victories, RCB have positioned themselves firmly at the top of the table, creating a significant gap between themselves and their nearest competitors. RCB’s early dominance has been highlighted by key performances, such as Smriti Mandhana’s batting and Shreyanka Patil’s five-wicket haul against the Gujarat Giants. This winning run, including decisive victories over strong teams like the Delhi Capitalsand UP Warriorz, has built their momentum and given them a psychological edge in the league. Analyses note that while RCB’s top order has consistently provided strong starts, their versatile bowling attack and depth in the squad have been central to their unbeaten streak and rise to the top of The WPL 2026 standings. as Gujarat Giants fought back, reducing RCB to 43 for four in just over five overs.

Senegal wins Africa Cup after protest, chaos over Morocco penalty decision



Rabat: Senegal has won the Africa Cup of Nations in dramatic fashion. Pape Gueye scored in extra time for the Teranga Lions to beat host Morocco 1-0 in a chaotic final on Sunday which at one point saw fans trying to storm the field and Senegal’s players walking off the pitch to protest a penalty decision deep into second-half stoppage time. It appeared unclear if the game could continue as fans battled with stewards. We all saw what happened at the end of the match but we took the decision to come back onto the pitch and give everything,” Gueye said. Play resumed after a stoppage of 14 minutes, only for Senegal’s Édouard Mendy to easily save Brahim Diaz’s attempt at a Panenka penalty when he lobbed the ball straight into the goalkeeper’s arms with the last kick of normal time. Gueye then scored the winning goal in the

fourth minute of extra time when he swept the ball into the top right corner with his left boot. The 69,500-capacity Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium emptied quickly after the final whistle. Few were left to see the Senegalese players lift the trophy.It’s Senegal’s second Africa Cup win. The Teranga Lions won the 2021 edition after a penalty shootout against Egypt. There was chaos before extra time after Morocco was awarded a controversial stoppage-time penalty just after Senegal had what seemed a good goal ruled out at the other end. Senegal’s goal in the second minute of stoppage time was ruled out for a foul by Abdoulaye Seck, but TV replays showed little contact on Morocco defender Achraf Hakimi, who fell before Seck headed the ball off the post. Moussa Niakhaté headed in the rebound. Then Morocco claimed a penalty for a pull by El Hadji Malick Diouf on Brahim, and it was awarded after Congolese referee Jean-Jacques Ndala checked replays. The decision led to fights between some of the Moroccan substitutes and their opposing players with Morocco coach Walid Regragui also involved, possibly

in a bid to calm the situation. Anger spilled over among the organized group of Senegalese fans, with many jumping down among the photographers and trying to storm the field from behind one of the goals. At least one threw a chair onto the field. They were mostly held back by a long line of police. There were also fights in the press box — possibly involving Moroccan and Senegalese fans masquerading as journalists to get accreditation — while tempers flared. ”The image we gave of African football was rather shameful,” Regragui said. Senegal coach Pape Thiaw led his team off the field while Moroccan fans celebrated the penalty decision and whistled the ongoing fighting on the field. The players returned some 14 minutes later and Brahim — Morocco’s star and the tournament’s top scorer with five goals — missed the chance to end Morocco’s 50-year wait for the trophy. Football sometimes is cruel and today we lost,” Regragui said. “We know in a final you need to take the few your way. The Senegal players made it back to the field only after being convinced by captain Sadio Mane and his effort.

McIlroy lies fifth in Dubai Invitational as Elvira maintains strong lead over field

Dubai: Nacho Elvira took a two-shot advantage as he stayed steady in breezy conditions on the third day of the final round of the 2026 Dubai Invitational. The Spaniard shared the overnight second-round lead with Shane Lowry at five under, and he negotiated an early bogey with four birdies to card a steady 68 on Moving Day at Dubai Creek Resort. Elvira is seeking his third DP World Tour title after successes at the 2021 Cazoo Open supported by Gareth Bale and the 2024 Soudal Open. At eight under, he leads by two from a stellar chasing pack at seven under, with Dylan Frittelli sharing second place after a sparkling 66 alongside Lowry and Englishman Marcus Armitage. Rory McIlroy (68) was Tied-fifth at 5-under total for 54 holes. McIlroy opened with a birdie before dropping a shot at the fourth on a steady front nine, but gains at the tenth, 13th and 16th took him into contention. Frittelli was bogey-free in his 66 thanks to a hat-trick of birdies from the third before further gains at the 11th and last. Armitage rolled in a birdie effort from 21 feet at the 18th to climb alongside Frittelli at six under. (ANI) (This content is sourced from a syndicated feed and is published as received. The Tribune assumes no responsibility or liability for its accuracy, completeness, or content.) Md Nawab of Patna came



up with an even-par 72 in round two to total one-under 143 and thus win Pre-Qualifying I of the PGTI Qualifying School 2026, being played at the in Ahmedabad.Kensville Golf and Country Club From a total field of 141 in Pre-Qualifying I, the top 27 players qualified for the Final Qualifying Stage as the cut was declared at six-over 150. Forty-five-year-old seasoned professional Md Nawab (71-

72), who was overnight tied second and two shots off the lead, mixed three birdies and three bogeys in round two. After two late bogeys, Nawab managed to finish the round well with a chip-in birdie on the 18th. Nawab said, “My chipping and putting stood out over the last two days. I was also quite accurate with my iron shots. My chip-in from the bunker for a birdie on the closing 18th today summed up the week for me. McIlroy lies fifth in Dubai Invitational, Elvira leads - Nacho Elvira shot a 3-under 68 to move to 8-under (205). - He led by two shots over Shane Lowry, Marcus Armitage, and Dylan Frittelli. - Rory McIlroy was solo fifth at 5-under, after recovering from a poor second round with three birdies on the back nine. - Elvira maintained composure, carding a final-round 69 to finish at 10-under. This win elevates his profile on the DP World Tour, proving he can compete under Pressure. Despite strong recovery play elite golf.