

Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma Pushes for Reform and Innovation in Aquaculture

Nagaon, Dec 09: On Monday, Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma emphasized the significance and requirements of the aquaculture industry, which has recently become one of the most dynamic sectors, greatly contributing to rural development, food security, and the creation of livelihoods.

Maintaining this achievement requires a consistent supply of disease-free, genetically sound, and healthy fish seed. High-quality seed lowers input costs, boosts ecological balance, increases output, and promotes aquaculture systems' long-term resilience. To increase scientific understanding, Dr. Sarma wrote to fish producers. Additionally, Dr. Sarma asked fish farmers, researchers, practitioners, and aspiring entrepreneurs to investigate the scope, potential, and methods for producing high quality fish seeds through scientific fish farming and adoption of modern fish farming technologies that will not only increase the yield but also conserve the ecosystem and the environment. He also urged fish farmers to participate in a three-day national level training cum awareness on "Quality Fish Seed Production for Enhancing Aquaculture Productivity. The training program



included more than 200 participants from Assam and the other Northeastern states. ICAR-CIFE (Central Institute of Fisheries Education), Mumbai, and Kalong-Kapili collaborated to organize the program. Dr. N P Sahu, Director of ICAR-CIFE, Mumbai, stated at the program's launch that CIFE will help Kalong-Kapili advance. He claimed that there are few high-quality fish seeds available nationwide. By using a variety of scientific methods, including the creation and application of improved varieties like Jayanti Rohu and Maha Magur, species including rohu,

catla, and mrigal can reach up to 5 kg in a single year. He emphasized that Andhra Pradesh leads India in fish production, with Assam coming in at number four. He emphasized the importance of boosting national fish production while concentrating on per capita fish consumption. In order to boost fish production over the next fifty years, he again underlined the necessity of a long-term strategy. Scientific fish farming techniques, such as the use of high-quality fish seeds and intensive systems like Biofloc and RAS, must be implemented in order to boost farmers'

income. He emphasized the significance of producing feed and preserving fish health. Additionally, Dr. Sahu stated that the Bank of India will provide financial assistance to farmers who obtain training at Kalong-Kapili. Farmers and other stakeholders will receive training thanks to today's opening of the training hall built at the Aqua Techno Park of Kalong-Kapili with assistance from UJJIVAN SFB Bank, according to Dr. Debajit Sarma, Principal Scientist and Head, Division of Aquaculture, ICAR-CIFE, Mumbai. He emphasized that, in contrast to

Andhra Pradesh, which has a better environment for fish farming, Assam's soil is acidic and needs liming. He continued by saying that with high stocking density, stunted fingerlings can develop in three to four months, which can result in better growth and increased fish production. According to Jyotish Talukdar, director of Kalong-Kapili, fish farming is one of the ethically and environmentally acceptable enterprises in Assam. Referring to his experience in aquaculture, he stated that while agricultural or industrial activity is impractical in many areas, aquaculture is a popular choice for livelihoods. Dr. Pradip Chandra Bhuyan, Dean of the College of Fisheries, Raha; Gauri Sankar Das, Director of Fisheries, Assam; Loken Das, Chief General Manager, NABARD, Regional Office, Guwahati; and Chandan Buragohain, Cluster Head, Ujjivan Small Finance Bank, all attended the session. During the initiative, a bilingual manual called "Quality Fish Seed Production for Sustainable Aquaculture Growth" was also made available. Fishing nets, fish seeds, and certificates were given to the farmers as the program came to a close.

In Brief

Assam Govt Inducts 672 new recruits

Guwahati: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma distributed appointment letters to 672 newly recruited personnel in the Housing & Urban Affairs Department to enhance employment and urban governance. The recruits will support various urban bodies, increasing efficiency in administrative operations, urban planning, and public service delivery. This initiative aims to expedite key urban infrastructure projects and improve waste management across the state. The total number of state government jobs now stands at 141,866, reflecting a commitment to transparent recruitment.

3.25 lakh families receive PMAY-G sanction letters

Guwahati: A significant advancement in Assam's rural housing initiative occurred when Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma distributed home ownership permission letters to beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana Gramin (PMAY-G) at an event in Boko. This initiative, backed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aims to provide housing for over 3.25 lakh families, with an investment of Rs. 4,228 crore. Each family will receive approximately ₹1.3 lakh, along with assistance for toilet construction to ensure holistic development. The CM emphasized that all initial applicants are included and that a geotagging process will identify an additional 30 lakh eligible families. This distribution reflects Assam's commitment to equity, dignity, and sustainable development, bringing 3,25,234 families closer to secure housing.

Wild Animal attacks

Boko: A tragic incident in Mouchoa village resulted in the death of 65-year-old farmer Ranjit Rabha, who was killed by a wild elephant while protecting his paddy field. Authorities promptly recovered his body. Concurrently, a rabid fox attacked several children in Ghoramara, injuring six, including 3-year-old Hafiza Khatun, who was sent to Guwahati Medical College Hospital for advanced treatment. The community now fears for their safety and is demanding immediate government intervention.

ABSU Conducts Discussion on ST Status Demand

Kokrajhar: In a gathering hosted by the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) at Bodoland University, 25 Bodo organizations discussed the recent approval of Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for six communities in Assam. They opposed the Assam government's decision to expand ST status, expressing concerns over its potential negative impact on existing tribal communities' rights and benefits.

Meghalaya CM hands over school bus to Khliehriat HS School

Shillong, Dec 09: Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on Monday handed over a school bus to Khliehriat Higher Secondary School under the Chief Minister's Special Development Fund. Khliehriat MLA Kyrmen Shylla, teachers, students, and senior district officials were also present on the occasion.

During the programme, the Chief Minister briefly interacted with the students, who raised questions on the education scenario in the state, drug abuse and trafficking, his personal approach to handling criticism, and the need for digital libraries.

MNF ahead in early LADC counting as mixed results emerge across Mizoram

Aizawl, Dec 09: Counting of votes for the Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC) elections in Mizoram continued through Monday morning, showing a close contest in several constituencies. However, based on the counting trends till late morning, the Mizo National Front (MNF) appeared to be ahead in a number of seats, while Congress and BJP also showed early gains. Officials said the final picture would be clear only after all rounds of counting are completed. So far, MNF has taken leads in four constituencies. Congress is ahead in two seats and the BJP has secured one win. The Zoram People's Movement (ZPM), which fought a visible campaign, is yet to open its account. Counting officials said that the trend could still change in some places as a few rounds remain. In Bazar Bial, MNF candidate Glory Lalropuia Chinzah secured 633 votes, finishing ahead of Congress candidate J. Rohlupaia who received 568 votes. The ZPM candidate Rev Vanlalzaava secured 190 votes. In Diliang South Bial, MNF's H.C. Lalthawmliana polled 821 votes, while ZPM's F. Lallungual was close behind with 752. Congress candidate Vanlalnghaka got 522 votes. In Sangau East, the BJP managed a win, with its candidate BN Thangpuia receiving 823 votes. ZPM

candidate Lianhrangvela got 609 votes. Meanwhile, Lawngtlai Vengpui showed an early advantage for the Congress, as C. Ngunlianchunga secured 1,022 votes. MNF's V.L. Hmuaka got 584, and ZPM's Lalawmsanga received 211 votes in this constituency. In Chawngte P, Congress candidate H. Lalengkima secured 754 votes, followed by MNF's Andrew Lalanzara who received 504. ZPM's S. Lalnunsanga got 235, and BJP candidate Vanlalhruii Vandr secured 67 votes. In Channari Bial, MNF candidate C. Lalsawmzuala crossed 953 votes, while independent candidate Hrilisangzuala received 823 votes and ZPM's F. Lalluia got 356 votes. Another MNF lead was visible in Sangau South where J.B. Vanhawi secured 779 votes. ZPM's K. Pathiaua received 664 votes. Counting officials stated that several rounds were still left in some counting centres and therefore final results would take more time. Election observers in Mizoram said the results indicate a mixed response from voters, with different political parties showing strength in different areas. They also said that the picture was not the same across all bials and that the results would likely vary till the last round is completed.

Manipur state transport buses set to operate on key routes after hiatus

Imphal, Dec 09: Manipur State Transport (MST) bus services are set to resume on key routes after a long hiatus as part of an initiative to restore normalcy and make public commuting convenient following prolonged suspension of operations amidst the volatile situation in the strife-torn state. "Initiatives are being taken to ensure security of passengers and gradually expand bus connectivity in the state," Anurag Bajpai, Additional Chief Secretary (Transport/TCI), Government of Manipur, stated this on the inaugural day of the three-day Refresher Course for Manipur State Transport drivers and conductors held in Imphal East on Monday.

Bajpai said MST buses are being prepared to resume operations on routes after several years and that a refresher course has become necessary as systems, technology and public expectations have since evolved. "The refresher course has been designed to make MST services more passenger-friendly, efficient and responsible. With evolving traffic patterns and introduction of technologies such as GPS-based fleet monitoring, automated ticketing and electric buses, the operating staff need to be updated and confident in their duties," he said. He emphasised that safety would be the foremost priority and that the training was designed to strengthen safe

driving habits, defensive driving, and effective emergency response. He also highlighted the important role of conductors in managing passengers, maintaining order, and shaping the overall travel experience. The first day of the programme featured technical sessions on "Traffic Regulations, Signs and Penalties"; "Motor Vehicle Mechanisms, Functions and Troubleshooting" and "Road Safety and Drivers' Responsibilities for Safe Driving". Deputy Director (Transport), Manipur, Samson Huidrom, along with officials of the Transport Department, staff, drivers and conductors attended the inaugural day's programme.

Gaurav Gogoi urges govt to bring home bodies of three Assamese youths killed in Goa fire

Guwahati, Dec 09: Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi on Tuesday urged Assam and central governments to support the families of three youths killed in the Goa nightclub fire. The three men, Rahul Tanti, Manojit Mal, and Digambar Patir were among 25 people killed in the Birch by Romeo Lane blaze on December 7.

Gogoi highlighted the recurring hardships families face when Assamese youth die far from home. In a social media post, he urged authorities to ensure a swift and dignified repatriation.

"Local communities repeatedly urge administrations to bring back the mortal remains of our sons. We request the government to help," he wrote. Families live in remote, flood-prone

areas of Kathal Grant, Silcoorie Grant, and Jonai.

They said arranging the last 200-400 km journey home is costly and difficult. Many feared delays if ambulances and hearses were not provided free of cost. Civil society groups in Silchar and Dhemaji urged administrations to deploy dedicated vehicles immediately. The three men worked at the nightclub. Reports suggest electric firecrackers during a performance triggered the blaze. Assam mourns three more youths lost while seeking livelihoods outside the state. Gogoi said bringing Assamese youth home for their final farewell should never become an ordeal for families.

BJP MLA Khemchand makes rare visit to Kuki villages in Ukhrul, calls for peace ahead of Christmas

Imphal, Dec 09: BJP MLA and former Rural Development Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Monday visited Kuki-inhabited areas in Manipur's hill districts, in what many residents described as a rare development since the ethnic unrest that began in May 2023. The visit marks the first such public outreach by a prominent Meitei leader to Kuki villages after more than two years of tension. According to persons who accompanied him, the MLA travelled to two villages in Ukhrul district

and interacted with several local residents. They said the purpose of the visit was mainly to build confidence and open communication between communities that have remained sharply divided due to the prolonged conflict. Khemchand began his tour from Litan, a remote settlement near the India-Myanmar border. Villagers briefed him about their situation after the violence started and spoke about daily challenges that continue even now. One of his major stops was the relief

camp located at the Litan Sareik-hong Baptist Church where displaced families are still staying. Addressing the people gathered there, the MLA said that the state could move forward only when every community feels secure. He said that this was not the time to avoid each other and called on everyone to think about peace with Christmas approaching. "With Christmas coming, we should all pray for the return of peace in our state," he told the displaced families.

3.25 lakh families receive PMAY-G sanction letters from the Assam Chief Minister

Guwahati, Dec 09: A significant advancement in the state's rural housing objective was made when Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma gave home ownership permission letters to recipients of the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana Gramin (PMAY-G). The event took place at Boko. Attendees included Palashbari MLA Hemanga Thakuria, Boko MLA Nandita Das, Assam Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Ranjeet Kumar Dass, and a number of dignitaries. PMAY-G residences have now been approved for over 3.25 lakh families with the backing of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A substantial investment of Rs. 4,228 crore would be made



to provide rural households with secure and respectable dwellings, with each family receiving approximately ₹1.3 lakh. Every sanctioned dwelling will also be supplied with toilet building help, so insuring holistic development. The CM

stated that all initial applicants under PMAY-G are included in the aforementioned allocation. He also reaffirmed their commitment to inclusive housing by stating that the subsequent geotagging process will identify an additional 30 lakh families who

are eligible for help. Assam's progress toward equity, dignity, and sustainable development is exemplified by the PMAY-G sanction distribution at Boko, which has brought 3,25,234 families closer to buying a secure home.

Assam Govt Inducts 672 new recruits

Guwahati, Dec 09: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma distributed appointment letters to 672 newly recruited personnel in the Housing & Urban Affairs Department to enhance employment and urban governance. The recruits will support various urban bodies, increasing efficiency in administrative operations, urban planning, and public service delivery. This initiative aims to expedite key urban infrastructure projects and improve waste management across the state. The total number of state government jobs now stands at 141,866, reflecting a commitment to transparent recruitment. Officials believe this hiring will strengthen urban institutions and facilitate developmental programmes, with the Chief Minister encouraging recruits to maintain integrity while working towards modern urban centres in Assam.



NATIONAL

Soon, Jharkhand will have its first vulture breeding and conservation facility

Ranchi, Dec 09: In a significant step towards preserving India's declining vulture population, Jharkhand is set to establish its first Vulture Conservation and Breeding Centre in Ranchi, which aims to provide a crucial lifeline for this critically endangered species. The state government has approved a proposal from the forest department to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) to secure technical support for operating the centre. The state cabinet's approval on Monday represents a vital move in making the centre operational by next year.

Originally sanctioned by the Centre in 2009 to combat the dwindling vulture population, the centre is located approximately 36 km from Ranchi at Muta. Although infrastructure development was completed in 2013 at a cost of ₹41 lakh, the centre



faced delays in opening due to bureaucratic challenges and regulatory hurdles, including the denial of permission from the Union ministry of forests and environment to house vultures, as explained by a retired forest official.

The BNHS will be instrumental in providing technical assistance and overseeing the operations of the centre. Plans are underway to liaise with other vulture conservation facilities across the country to facilitate the transfer of vultures for breeding purposes in Jharkhand. In 2015, train-

ing for handling vultures in captivity was undertaken by sending four casual workers to the Pinjore vulture breeding centre in Haryana.

Current efforts to prepare the centre for operation include necessary repairs, for which additional government funding will be requested. Additionally, a comprehensive census of vultures in Jharkhand is set to commence on December 15, coinciding with tiger estimation. Vultures are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act's Schedule, with nine species found in India, six of which have

been sighted in Jharkhand, namely the white-backed vulture, long-billed vulture, Himalayan vulture, Egyptian vulture, red-headed vulture, and Cinereous vulture. Once thriving across India, the vulture population has dramatically decreased, primarily attributable to poisoning from the veterinary drug diclofenac as they feed on contaminated cattle carcasses, which leads to acute kidney failure or reproductive failure. Nationally, the vulture population is estimated to be around 10,000, with Jharkhand showing a slight increase in recent years, now estimated between 400 and 450 vultures, predominantly found in Hazaribag and Koderma districts but also in other parts of the state. To enhance conservation efforts, a 'vulture restaurant' has been established in Koderma, specifically designed to provide diclofenac-free animal carcasses to ensure the survival of these birds.

Telangana aims to develop temple tourism through four major circuits

Hyderabad, Dec 09: Telangana's government is pursuing the development of temple tourism by establishing four major circuits that connect key temples, as announced by Minister Konda Surekha at the Telangana Rising Global Summit.

This initiative is part of a broader strategy under Vision 2047 aimed at enhancing facilities, promoting tourism, and preserving spiritual heritage. The circuits will link significant temples such as Jogulamba, Manyamkonda, Vikarabad Ananthagiri, Yadagirigutta, Ramappa, Bhadrachalam, Vemulawada, Medaram, and Kaleshwaram.

In addition, an eco-tourism framework aligned with the Tourism Policy 2025-30 has been introduced, emphasizing minimal structures and enriched experiences, with oversight from the Telangana Forest Development Corporation. Currently, Telangana features 13 eco-tourism circuits, and a new initiative titled "Deccan Woods and Trails" aims to enhance nature-based tourism.

The Amrabad Tiger Reserve has experienced a population increase, now housing 36 tigers. New destinations such as Nandipet, Tadwai, and Pakhal are being developed to facilitate trekking and other visitor experiences.

An online booking system is in the works to improve the overall tourist experience while supporting the state's commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2047. Telangana boasts a forest area of 19 percent, contributing to a total green cover of 22 percent when including tree cover outside forests.

The government is dedicated to forest conservation, increasing green cover, and tackling climate challenges. Regarding temple management, the Endowments department oversees over 12,000 temples, with 695 generating income. The government also provides support to over 6,400 temples to ensure basic ritual operations, underscoring the investments in culture, people, and sustainable growth.

Karnataka HC new menstrual leave policy for women employees



Bengaluru, Dec 09: The Karnataka High Court granted an interim stay on the Karnataka government's new menstrual leave policy for women employees, issued on November 20. This policy required all industrial establishments registered under various labor laws to provide one paid menstrual leave monthly to female workers, without the need for a medical certificate.

The Bangalore Hotels Association and Avirata AFL Connectivity Systems filed separate petitions against the policy, arguing that it lacked statutory backing and that existing labor laws did not recognize menstrual leave as a valid category. They contended that employers should independently determine their HR policies without state mandates that impose financial and administrative burdens. During the court proceedings, Justice Jyoti M questioned the state's consultation process with the industry prior to implementing the notification, to which the state acknowledged it had not consulted employers. Following these discussions, the court issued a stay on the policy, allowing the government to respond with objections, and scheduled a further hearing for January. The petitioners argued that the notification was unconstitutional and violated Article 14 of the Indian Constitution, which ensures equality before the law.

A Bengaluru man died in a fire at a nightclub in Goa

Bengaluru, Dec 09: A 25-year-old resident of Bengaluru, Ishaq, tragically lost his life in a fire at a Goa nightclub, which killed 25 people early Sunday morning. Ishaq, a data analyst, had talked to his father shortly before the incident, sharing details about his bachelor-party trip with friends. Although he and his friends initially escaped, he went back inside to retrieve his mobile phone and succumbed during a stampede or potentially from cardiac arrest, showing only minor burns on his body.

Among the victims was Bhavna Joshi, the sole survivor of her family, who returned to Delhi with the bodies of her three sisters and husband for final rites. Bhavna described their trip as the first time they traveled together, recounting that they noticed sparks leading to the blaze but dismissed it as an electrical issue. As the fire escalated rapidly, she was able to escape, but her husband re-entered to save her sisters and did not return. Bhavna lamented the loss of her family, stating, "I have lost everything," capturing the profound sorrow and chaos of that tragic night.

Rules designed to make residents' lives easier

At the NDA conference, PM Modi

New Delhi, Dec 09: Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) lawmakers during the first parliamentary party meeting of the winter session, urging them to ensure comprehensive reforms across all sectors. He emphasized that the existing rules and regulations aim to enhance the ease of living for citizens and should not act as impediments or sources of harassment. The Prime Minister highlighted the importance of implementing laws and policies effectively in the lawmakers' respective constituencies.

In reference to the Jan Vishwas Bill, currently under parliamentary committee review, he indicated that the government was poised to advance the Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0, which aims to simplify the business environment by decriminaliz-



ing minor offenses and substituting prison sentences with warnings and fines. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju reinforced the Prime Minister's message, clarifying that reforms encompass

more than just economic or financial changes; they should improve the quality of everyday life for ordinary citizens.

Rijiju noted that the ongoing reform agenda seeks to alleviate bur-

dens on the public and insists that any new laws must not complicate citizen's lives.

He echoed the PM's directive, committing to advance reforms that genuinely enhance the lives of people. Additionally, the Prime Minister criticized the Opposition for allegedly politicizing discussions around the Vande Mataram, which commenced in the Lok Sabha, suggesting their motives were tied to upcoming elections in Bengal.

Furthermore, he encouraged lawmakers to promote sports and other constructive activities within their constituencies. The reception he received from the MPs was enthusiastic, with congratulations extended for the NDA's recent electoral success in Bihar, underscoring the support for his leadership and reformative initiatives.

On 8th pay panel, govt shares key details in Parliament



New Delhi, Dec 09: The Eighth Central Pay Commission (8th CPC) has been formally established, with its Terms of Reference notified on November 3, 2025.

It will encompass over 50.14 lakh central government employees and approximately 69 lakh pensioners. The commission is expected to submit recommendations within 18 months, aiming for implementation starting January 1, 2026, although the final date will be determined

by the government. Historical context indicates a potential delay between the due date and rollout, as seen with previous commissions.

The 8th CPC may significantly alter pay structures, proposing a rise in basic pay to ₹34,500-₹41,000 per month, though there are no plans to merge the existing Dearness Allowance with basic pay permanently. Changes could lead to a 20-25% increase in overall emoluments.

Vijay's first public protest in Puducherry since the Karur stampede disaster draws a sizable turnout

Chennai, Dec 09: A large crowd gathered at Uppalam Expo Ground, Puducherry, for TVK Chief Actor Vijay's political rally, his first public meeting since the 2023 Karur rally tragedy.

Attendance was capped at 5,000, with strict safety measures enforced, including entry via QR code pass-



es. Police were deployed for order, particularly at the Mullodai border to

check attendees from Tamil Nadu. A police advisory restricted entry to those with

passes, banning children, seniors, pregnant women, and individuals with health issues.

TVK established guidelines emphasizing cooperation and discipline, prohibiting unauthorized banners and celebratory activities. 50 CCTV cameras were installed to monitor the rally effectively.

Political parties are required by ECI to submit revised copies of their constitutions

New Delhi, Dec 09: The Election Commission of India (ECI) has mandated national and state-recognized political parties to submit updated versions of their constitutions, including all amendments, within 30 days.

This directive arises amid a Supreme Court review of a petition advocating for statutory regulations governing political party registration and operations. The ECI emphasized the importance of the party constitution as a critical document that details

the party's objectives and operational procedures, necessitating compliance and public knowledge.

Parties are required to provide copies of all amendments made since their last submission to ensure adherence to statutory requirements and public access to operational rules. This directive is linked to the Supreme Court case Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay vs Union of India & Others, where the petitioner seeks a comprehensive regulatory framework for political



parties, including internal election norms, office-bearer selection criteria, funding procedures, and transparency

in financial reporting.

In response to the petition, the court has invited the ECI and the Union government

• The ECI directive was issued in light of the Supreme Court's examination of a plea that seeks statutory regulation concerning the registration and operation of political parties.

to provide detailed replies to the issues raised. The ECI has clarified that its authority under Section 29A is limited to registration and does not extend to overseeing everyday operations, while it periodically updates guidelines for compliance and recognition.

A House education group suggests changes to certification and testing

New Delhi, Dec 09: The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports tabled its 371st report recommending extensive reforms in the Department of Higher Education's autonomous bodies. Chaired by MP Digvijaya Singh, the Committee urged immediate measures to strengthen institutional capacity, enhance transparency, and implement the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in universities and colleges. It expressed concern about the National Testing Agency (NTA), citing recent examination irregularities and recommending improved in-house capacity along with a focus on pen-and-paper testing to mitigate risks associated with digital exams. The report highlighted frequent delays and errors in major exams such as NEET-UG, UGC-NET, CUET, and JEE (Main), advocating for a blacklisted firms list to prevent lapses and suggested that NTA's surplus funds should bolster internal operations.

On accreditation, the Com-

The House panel raised concerns about the National Testing Agency's performance, citing recent examination irregularities that have diminished confidence.

mittee criticized the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and recommended a white paper on irregularities and corrective actions, along with the implementation of the Basic Accreditation Framework (BAF) and Maturity Based Graded Levels (MBGL) to ensure objectivity in the processes. The Committee also advised referring the draft UGC regulations of January 2025 to the Central Advisory Board of Education for broader consultation to promote multidisciplinary teaching and the inclusion of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS).

A significant recommendation recognized the Himalayan Institute of Alternatives Ladakh (HIAL) and called for UGC recognition due to its community impact and educational model, despite ongoing legal disputes involving

its founder Sonam Wangchuk, who was detained following protests in Ladakh. Furthermore, the report highlighted the need to extend the Unified Pension Scheme to faculty and non-teaching staff in centrally funded institutions, enhance Junior Research Fellowship amounts, and implement the 7th Pay Commission in ICSSR research institutes. It also urged filling leadership vacancies and promoting participatory governance in bodies like the Auroville Foundation.

The Committee stressed the challenges of implementing NEP 2020, recommending more efficient accreditation processes to avoid delays in academic activities and admissions. It called for regulation of the proliferation of private coaching centers and alignment of examination papers with school curricula. Ongoing gaps in faculty recruitment, infrastructure, and delays in online education approvals for lower-accredited institutions were flagged, with suggestions for the UGC to revise its restrictions.

The opposition's use of SIR as an electoral issue is appreciated by the Bihar BJP MP, who says it "helps us actually"

Patna, Dec 09: Bihar BJP MP Sanjay Jaiswal publicly thanked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for raising concerns about alleged "vote chori" in the Bihar elections and encouraged him to continue this line of questioning in the upcoming West Bengal elections.

Jaiswal argued that this issue benefits the ruling BJP-led NDA, emphasizing their intent to highlight the removal of illegal voters from the electoral roll, including Bangladeshis and Rohingyas, while also criticizing the Trinamool Congress government under Mamata Banerjee. He expressed dissatisfaction with Gandhi's focus solely on vote theft, sug-



gesting he overlooked other issues concerning the 20 years of NDA governance. Jaiswal reiterated BJP's commitment to Bengal, referencing slogans from their electoral campaign and recalling former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee's optimistic vision for the state.

He critiqued opposition leaders for their engagement strategies and emphasized

the BJP's strong grassroots organization compared to that of the Congress and other parties. Jaiswal also revisited historical moments of perceived electoral misconduct by the Congress, including the choice of Jawaharlal Nehru as India's first PM and the Emergency of 1975-77.

In relation to election integrity, he highlighted past claims of "booth capturing" and responded to calls for a return to paper ballots due to alleged tampering concerns. Additionally, Congress's Priyanka Gandhi Vadra accused the BJP of politicizing the national song "Vande Mataram" in relation to the election, despite its Bengali heritage.

PM Modi, a Congress politician, and others wish Sonia Gandhi a happy 79th birthday

New Delhi, Dec 09: Birthday wishes overflowed for Sonia Gandhi as she celebrated her 79th birthday on Tuesday. The Congress party highlighted her transformative leadership, crediting her for pivotal rights-based legislation such as MGNREGA and the National Food Security Act.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also extended his

wishes for her health and longevity. The Congress shared a quote from Gandhi emphasizing collective strength and praised her integrity, compassion, and courage.

They acknowledged her lifelong dedication to women's empowerment, social justice, and inclusive growth, which continues to benefit millions. Various Congress leaders, in-

cluding Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin, congratulated her on her principled leadership and commitment to secularism and constitutional values.

Although Sonia Gandhi has stepped back from active politics in recent years for health reasons, her influence remains significant through her children, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who are



now prominent in the party. She serves as the Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson and is a member of the Rajya Sabha.

Wild Animal attacks in Boko

Boko, Dec 09: A farmer was killed by a wild elephant attack in Mouchoa village under Hahim, Boko, late on Sunday night.

The victim, 65-year-old Ranjit Rabha of Mouchoa village, was protecting his paddy field at midnight when a wild elephant unexpectedly charged at him, according to local sources. He instantly passed away there. Police officers from Hahim and forest officials from the Bondapara Range Office raced to the scene after the event to retrieve the body. In another startling occurrence, a rabid fox attacked many youngsters in Ghoramara, under the Chamaria Constituency, on Monday morning, sending locals into a state of terror. Six children were seriously injured in the incident, according to reports. Among them are Amirul Ali (6 years old), son of Abul Kalam Azad of Manjuribil, and Hafiza Khatun (3 years old), daughter of Hakim Ali of Ghoramara. Although Hafiza Khatun needed to be referred to Guwahati Medical College Hospital for more advanced care, the injured children were admitted to the Goraimari Community Health Center right away.

The entire area is in a state of terror due to the unexpected fox threat, with locals voicing serious concerns about children's safety and calling for immediate government action.

12-hour shutdown was held across the Itanagar Capital Itanagar bandh goes ahead even after administration terms it illegal

Itanagar, Dec 09: A 12-hour shutdown was held across the Itanagar Capital Region on Tuesday lthough the district administration had already passed an order calling the bandh unlawful. Many shops and transport services in parts of Itanagar and Naharlagun remained shut in the morning, while police were seen asking shopkeepers and public transport operators to continue normal activities. The bandh was announced by three youth organisations – the Indigenous Youth Force of Arunachal, the Arunachal Pradesh Indigenous Youth Organisation, and the All Naharlagun Youth Organisation. The groups have been holding protests over what they describe as illegal entry of outsiders into the capital region and the rise of makeshift prayer structures. They earlier submitted a list of demands to the state government and later said that the response was disappointing. The District Magistrate, Toko Babu, issued the order on Sunday evening, stating that bandhs cause hardship for the general public, especially daily wage earners and patients. The administration also pointed out that elections to local bodies are underway and the Model Code of Conduct is active. According to the



order, any disruption could affect election-related work, and therefore the bandh cannot be allowed. However, the three organisations went ahead with the shutdown and called upon residents to support it. They have demanded removal of what they call unauthorised religious structures and action against people they claim to be illegal migrants. Police patrolled different parts of the capital region on Monday morning. Some markets, particularly in Naharlagun, were shut when the bandh began at 5 am, but several shops reopened later in the day. Movement of vehicles was limited in the morning, but traffic gradually picked up after noon. Although the administration warned of strict legal action, no major incident had been reported by afternoon. Schools and government offices remained open, but attendance was thin in many places.

In a first, CZA permits transfer of 35 captive vultures to Kaziranga National Park

Guwahati, Dec 09: In a first – the Central Zoo Authority (CZA), a statutory body of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), has approved the transfer of 35 captive reared critically-endangered vultures from the vulture conservation and breeding centre at Rani in Guwahati to the Kaziranga National Park under Bishwanath Wildlife Division.

Among the species to be transferred to the Sixth addition of Kaziranga National Park are 30 White-rumped Vultures (Gyps bengalensis) and five Slender-billed Vultures (Gyps tenuirostris).

Both the slender-billed vultures and white-rumped vultures are classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List. They are also protected under Schedule I of India's Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, offering the highest level of legal safeguards.

Assam serves as the primary stronghold for slender-billed vultures in India, hosting breeding populations, particularly near Kaziranga National Park, though their numbers may be on a decline due to threats like poisoning from pesticide-laced cattle carcasses.

White-rumped vultures are present across the state but face similar population crashes, prompting active conservation at sites like the Vulture Conserva-



tion Breeding Centre in Rani, Kamrup, which holds a sizable number of captive individuals.

“The Sixth addition to Kaziranga National Park as administered by Bishwanath Wildlife Division was selected as the release site owing to its expansive forested landscapes, abundant carrion resources from large herbivores within Kaziranga's extended buffer. Ongoing anti-poaching measures and vulture-friendly veterinary practices further enhance its suitability for soft releases, promoting natural foraging and nesting behaviour,” an official statement issued on Wednesday, said.

A release aviary has been constructed by the Kaziranga Park Authority with technical supervision of Bombay Natural History Society near the Tewaripal forest camp from which the vultures

would be released to the wild in the coming months in accordance with the scientific soft release protocol.

Taking to social media, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma posted, “Happy to inform you that 30 white rumped vultures and 5 slender-billed will be released from Rani's Vultures Conservation Breeding Centre at the Sixth addition of Kaziranga National Park as a unique step towards conservation of our nature and living things.”

The Chief Minister emphasised the significant role of the bird in conserving the environmental balance. “This initiative will once again prove our role in wildlife conservation. Hearty appreciation to each and every person behind this great work,” Sarma stated.

Vulture population in India, including species like white-rumped, slender-billed, and Indian vultures, has declined considerably over the years.

Official said that by the year 2007, the population of white-rumped vultures dropped to around 11,000 and slender-billed at about 1,000, marking the fastest decline ever recorded for any bird species. Recent estimates from 2023–2025 indicate lingering low numbers, such as 750–1,000 slender-billed vultures, with declines slowing but no significant recovery.

ABSU conducts discussion on ST Status Demand

Kokrajhar, Dec 09: In order to examine the recent developments regarding the granting of Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to six communities in Assam, the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) hosted an intellectual gathering at Bodoland University on Sunday that included twenty-five Bodo organizations. Following the adoption of the ST Bill by the Assam Legislative Assembly, which has since been sent to the Central Government for additional discussion in Parliament, the conference was called. The leaders of 25 Bodo groups were asked for their opinions on ST status for six populous communities. They strongly opposed the State Government's decision to give ST status to more communities and vowed to unite against what they perceived to be an anti-tribal agenda. The Government of Assam's recommendation, which was based on GoM reports, was also rejected by the conference. ABSU President Dipen Boro told reporters that the meeting's main topic was the potential effects on Assam's current tribal communities of giving the six communities ST status. He claimed that the current indigenous tribal people would lose their rightful rights and facilities, including land, employment, education, political rights, and socioeconomic advancement, if the six populated communities were added to the ST list. Boro voiced his displeasure with BTC chairman Hagrama Mohilary's accusation that ABSU was responsible for the November 29 vandalism at the BTC-



LA. He restated that ABSU has previously denied any connection to the event. He claimed that after realizing the significant impact on the current tribal population, students from a number of institutions and colleges joined the effort opposing ST classification to six advanced and diverse towns. He added that he respected Mohilary as the Chief of the BTC and his senior movement leader and that there was no personal conflict between them. He advised Mohilary to refrain from harboring personal animosity toward him, claiming that the college students took part in the action voluntarily and that the ABSU did not instigate it. Additionally, he urged Mohilary and his colleagues to question their kids if they agree with the six-community ST classification. He claimed that since the political parties were attempting to gain political advantages, they should cease disparaging ABSU over the students' movement and let them make their own decisions because they would have to deal with the repercussions of ST status in six populated communities.

NEHU hosts first ever national-level software hackathon

Shillong, Dec 09: The spirit of innovation and technological problem-solving came alive as the Smart India Hackathon (SIH) 2025 - Software Edition Grand Finale was formally inaugurated today at the Multi-Convention Hall, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong. The prestigious national event-an initiative of the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell (MIC) and AICTE -brought together some of India's brightest young innovators for an intensive 36-hour coding marathon, aimed at building practical solutions for real-world challenges posed by various ministries, industries, and government agencies. The inaugural ceremony commenced with the traditional Lighting of the Lamp, followed by Saraswati Vandana, invoking an auspicious beginning to the nationwide programme. Prof. Dinesh Bhatia, Coordinator and Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for SIH 2025 at NEHU, delivered the Introductory Address, extending a warm welcome to all participants and delegates. He highlighted NEHU's pride in hosting the Grand Finale as a Nodal Centre and emphasized that SIH continues to be a defining platform where young innovators transcend theoretical learning to develop deployable solutions for pressing national challenges. This was followed by the Welcome Address by Prof. S. K. Dixit, Reg-



istrar, NEHU, who reaffirmed the University's commitment to nurturing a culture of innovation and technical excellence in the region. He encouraged participants to view the hackathon not merely as a competition but as an invaluable opportunity for collaboration, peer learning, and national contribution. Addressing the audience, Shri Yogesh Brahmankar, Director (Innovation), Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell, spoke about the national vision of SIH as a large-scale movement to crowdsource ideas for governance and societal betterment. He highlighted the significance of the 2025

edition and urged the participants to build ethical, scalable, and socially impactful technological solutions. Adding to the spirit of encouragement, Prof. B. Mishra, Pro-Vice Chancellor, NEHU, shared his remarks, applauding the enthusiasm of the young participants.

He underscored the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in building effective solutions and motivated the teams to innovate fearlessly throughout the 36-hour challenge. The event's keynote address was delivered by the Chief Guest, Shri Santosh V. T., Scientist F & State Information Officer, National Informatics

Centre (NIC), MeitY, Government of India.

In his inspirational speech, he emphasized the transformative role of technology in digital governance and public service delivery. He encouraged the young innovators to design solutions that strengthen the Digital India mission and bridge critical gaps between citizens and governance through secure and efficient digital platforms.

The ceremony concluded with the Felicitation of Dignitaries, followed by a heartfelt Vote of Thanks by Dr. S. Majaw, Co-Coordinator, SIH 2025, NEHU.

APTDCL Unveils New Website, Monitoring System

Guwahati, Dec 09: The Assam Plains Tribes Development Corporation Limited (APTDCL) introduced the Integrated Project Monitoring System (IPMS) at Janata Bhawan and its new official website, aptdcl.in, in a major effort to improve digital governance and transparency in tribal welfare programs. Smt. L. S. Changsan, Additional Chief Secretary, TA (P), Government of Assam, graced the launch ceremony.

The Directorate of Tribal Affairs (Plains) of APTDCL is responsible for the whole design and implementation of these newly created digital platforms. The effort seeks to improve accessibility, accountability, and efficiency in carrying out and overseeing development projects aimed at



indigenous people. According to the officials, the IPMS would make it easier to track projects, give

real-time data availability, and decrease execution delays by improving departmental cooperation. Simultaneously, the website provides citizens and stakeholders with quick access to the list of programs, project details, updates, and essential information related to tribal welfare.

Speaking at the event, authorities emphasized that this alignment precisely aligns with the vision of Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has continuously emphasized improving last-mile delivery of government initiatives and creating a society empowered by technology. The program is anticipated to establish a new standard for transparent, people-centered government by integrating technology into governance.

Gauhati HC Orders Fishing Ban Enforcement in Kaziranga

Guwahati, Dec 09: The Gauhati High Court has directed the Assam government to strictly enforce prohibitory orders to curb large-scale illegal fishing inside the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, particularly during the Magh Bihu festivities in January. The directive came on Monday while hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by environmental activist Rohit Choudhury of Bokakhat, who sought urgent judicial intervention to protect Kaziranga's fragile ecosystem from mass fishing activities carried out every year between A division bench comprising Chief Justice Ashutosh Kumar and Justice Arun Dev Choudhury heard the submissions of petitioner's counsel A. Phukan, who informed the court that thousands of people enter Kaziranga every year during Magh Bihu to engage in “traditional” fishing practisesence January 13 and 14. He argued that such large-scale activities violate wildlife protection laws and severely disturb the park's biodiversity. Phukan submitted that



fishing inside the UNESCO World Heritage Site threatens several species, including the endangered one-horned rhinoceros, migratory birds, and nearly 42 species of fish found in the park's water bodies.

He warned that continued violations could compromise Kaziranga's ecological integrity and its international conservation status. Appearing for the state, D. Gogoi, Standing Counsel for the Assam Forest Department, acknowledged the issue and said that the government has been issuing prohibitory orders every year. However, he admitted that enforcing the orders has been challenging due to the large congregations of people

entering the park with “religious fervour” during the festival. The court observed that failure to prevent such activities would not only violate the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, but also breach constitutional obligations, including Article 48A, which mandates the protection and improvement of the environment. “...the protection of such site is necessary or else there would be a violation of Wildlife protection Act, 1972; Forest Conservation Act, 1980; and breach of various constitutional obligations under Article 48A of the Constitution of India and of international obligations as well,” the order read.

Union Minister Shekhawat inaugurates first Mon edition of Hornbill Festival in Nagaland

Kohima, Dec 09: Union Minister of Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Monday formally inaugurated the first-ever three-day Mon edition of the International Hornbill Festival, marking a new chapter in Nagaland's annual cultural celebration. The special edition of the festival, hosted at the Konyak Heritage Complex in Mon town, has been organised for the first time alongside the main Hornbill events in Kisama near the state capital. Shekhawat attended the programme virtually as the guest of honour. In his address, the Union Minister said the Hornbill Festival has gradually turned into a well-known cultural event at both national and international

al levels, and added that the new Mon leg would help showcase the heritage of the Konyak community and other Naga tribes to a wider audience. Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio was present at the Mon programme as the chief host. Deputy Chief Minister Y Patton and other senior leaders and officials were also present at the venue. State authorities said that organising a separate event in Mon would give more space to local traditions and encourage more cultural activities in districts outside Kohima. Meanwhile, the eighth day of the 26th Edition of the Hornbill Festival also began with a programme called “Cultural Connect” at the Unity Plaza in the Naga Heritage Village at



Kisama. Cultural groups presented traditional dances, songs, and other performances. Visitors gathered at the venue to witness displays from several tribes of Nagaland. Officials said the aim this year is to highlight traditional crafts, food, and cultural practices through multiple events held across locations. The Mon edition will continue for

BUSINESS

Marico seeks mid-teens earnings growth and wants to treble revenue

Mumbai: With a target price of ₹850 and a valuation of 50x Sep-26E P/E, Emkay Global Financial has reaffirmed its “Buy” rating for Marico.

The brokerage stated that it continues to see Marico establishing new growth engines, increasing profitability, and enhancing its portfolio in accordance with changing consumer trends after meeting with the company’s management to evaluate its medium-term outlook and guidance.

The management is continuing to pursue its goals of doubling revenue over the next five years, becoming a worldwide recognized digital FMCG firm, and ranking second in India in the digital-first market after Honasa. Over the same time frame, the company also hopes to achieve a mid-teens earnings compound annual growth rate (CAGR).

The food business is expected to grow at a CAGR of over 20%, digital brands at a CAGR of 25%, and foreign business at a CAGR in the mid-teens.

Marico’s core business in India is expected to grow at a mid-to-high single-digit rate. Management warned that a wider downturn in global consumption would be the single significant danger to realizing this goal. However, demand recovery is anticipated to be supported by tailwinds relating to the goods and services tax (GST) from Q4FY26. According to the brokerage, Marico is still under pressure at the base of the urban consumer pyramid, where increasing income is more important than reducing expenses. Concurrently, Project Setu, its endeavor to bolster general trade, has been producing impressive outcomes by: With a strong focus on diversifying the sources of profitability, Marico is aiming for a mid-teens earnings CAGR over the next five years. Over the

Emkay Global Financial has reaffirmed a “Buy” rating for Marico with a target price of ₹850, backed by a valuation of 50x Sep-26E P/E.

next five years, management hopes to gradually rebalance profitability, which was historically significantly skewed towards the coconut oil portfolio.

There is now space to increase margins because copra prices have dropped by about 20% from their peak. With the next copra flush expected from March 2026, price stability is anticipated, which is favourable for Marico’s key categories.

The management anticipates higher margins in H2FY26 compared to H1FY26. In order to improve profitability in the foods portfolio, which is both a major future margin contributor and a robust growth engine (20%+ CAGR), the company is implementing corrective measures.

Sensex slides 1046 pts in 2 days, Nifty below 25,850; more downside ahead

New Delhi: Domestic equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty slipped for a second straight session on Tuesday as investors turned cautious ahead of the US Federal Reserve’s rate decision and uncertainty around a potential US trade deal. Sentiment weakened further after reports that President Donald Trump may consider new tariffs on Indian rice, adding to market jitters. At close, the Sensex closed 436.41 points, or 0.51%, lower to finish at 84,666.28, taking its two-day slide to 1046 points. The Nifty declined 120.90 points, or 0.47%, to settle at 25,839.65. Asian Paints topped Sensex laggards, falling 4.61% to Rs 2,790.90. Tech Mahindra followed with a 1.99% decline. Other major losers included HCL Technologies, Tata Steel, Maruti Suzuki and Sun Pharma, which fell 1.78%, 1.56%, 1.16% and 1.05%, respectively. Five stocks, namely, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, Asian Paints and Infosys, contributed heavily to the Sensex’s drop.

On the sectoral front, the BSE IT dropped 0.89% to settle at 36,843, spearheading the decline. The BSE Auto index also ended in the red, down 0.63% to close the session at 60,973.37. Across the broader market, the BSE 100 index declined 0.30%, while the BSE LargeCap index fell 0.25%. Overall, of the 4,331 actively traded BSE stocks, 2,616 closed higher, 1,550 declined, and 165 remained unchanged. During the session, 67 stocks touched their 52-week highs, while 512 fell to 52-week lows. Meanwhile, 169 scrips hit their upper circuits, and 162 were locked in low-



er circuits. Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments, said domestic equities opened on a soft note, extending the recent bout of profit booking as investors turned cautious ahead of tomorrow’s US Fed policy outcome. He added that weakness in the rupee, sustained FII outflows, and lingering uncertainty around the US–India trade deal further weighed on sentiment. Nair said “IT stocks led the decline, while PSU banks, realty, and consumer durables gained, with small caps outperforming other indices. Global senti-

ment was further pressured by surging Japanese bond yields and expectations of BoJ tightening in its upcoming December meeting.”

“While the markets largely anticipate a 25-bps rate cut by the Fed and a rate hike by the BoJ, forward guidance for 2026 will be critical. In the near term, central bank commentary, currency movement, and FII flows will steer sentiment, while domestic macro resilience is expected to provide a cushion against downside risks,” Nair added.

Global pilots’ body urges India to reverse relaxed rest rules, cites fatigue

IndiGo, controlling 65% of domestic aviatio

New Delhi: India’s decision to ease stricter rules on pilot rest following a wave of flight cancellations by the country’s largest carrier should be reversed due to the adverse effect of fatigue on safety, the head of global pilot union group IFALPA said. IndiGo, which controls about 65% of India’s domestic aviation market, has said it failed to plan adequately for a November 1 deadline to implement stricter rules on night flying and weekly rest for pilots. The poor planning resulted in at least 2,000 flight cancellations this month, leaving tens of thousands of passengers stranded, upending va-



cation plans and weddings, and sparking growing fury about lost luggage. India’s aviation regulator on Friday granted IndiGo a one-time exemption

from new pilot night-duty rules and withdrew a rule that stopped airlines from counting pilot leave as weekly rest. Captain Ron Hay, president of the Montreal-based International Federation of Air Line Pilots’ Associations (IFALPA), said India’s decision to grant the exemption to the rest rules was concerning because it was not based on scientific evidence. “This is troubling as fatigue clearly affects safety.” Hay warned the government’s decision could also exacerbate staffing issues given that working conditions account for one of the reasons pilots depart airlines based in the country. India’s civil aviation ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment outside regular business hours.

52-week lows were reached by ACC, MGL, Trent, REC, PFC, Bata, and 35 other BSE 500 companies

Mumbai: Amidst a severe sell-off in stocks, 40 stocks from the BSE 500 index, including ACC, Mahanagar Gas (MGL), REC, Power Finance Corporation (PFC), Page Industries, Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA), and United Breweries (UBL), hit a new 52-week low in Tuesday’s intraday trading.

Other noteworthy equities that were trading at their respective 52-week lows today included Tata Chemicals, Trent and Tejas Networks and Bata India, Balrampur Chini Mills, Whirlpool of India, Praj Industries, SJVN, Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals, and Finolex Cables. Meanwhile, Bajaj Housing Finance, Ola Electric Mobility, Vedant Fashions and Afcons Infrastructure from the BSE 500 index hit their respective all-time lows. The BSE 500 index has underperformed the market during the last month, declining by almost 1% while the BSE Sensex has increased

by 1.3%. On the other hand, the BSE Midcap and BSE Smallcap indices saw declines of 3% and 6%, respectively. In terms of individual stocks, Ola Electric, the top producer of electric vehicles (EVs) in India, fell 29% in the last month to a record low of ₹33.17. Ola Electric fell to fifth place in November as a result of a roughly 50% decline in sales. According to Vahan statistics, Ola Electric, which was formerly the market leader, saw registrations drop below the 10,000-per-month threshold to 8,254 units, about half of what it reported in October (16,013 units). Its market share thus fell below double digits to just 7.4%. In intraday trading, Balrampur Chini Mills’ share price fell 5% to ₹408.65 on the BSE. On February 17, 2025, the sugar company’s stock price dropped below its prior low of ₹419.75. It has plummeted 33% during the last six months.

The price of Trent shares fell

Ambit begins covering Tata Motors CV with a target upside of 19%

New Delhi: Tata Motors Commercial Vehicles (TMCV), the recently demerged commercial vehicle division of Tata Motors, has been covered by domestic brokerage Ambit Institutional Equities with a “Buy” recommendation, noting its market leadership, consistent margins, and worldwide expansion strategy. Analysts believe that TMCV has the potential to increase its margin due to its profitability, pricing discipline, higher tonnage mix, and cost initiatives. The company’s India CV revenue and Ebitda grew at 6 per cent and 7 per cent CAGR, respectively, during FY19–25, despite a 5 per cent decline in volumes and around a 10 per cent loss in market share. With the help of cost-competitive strength, technological maturity, and revenue, cost, and capital expendi-

ture synergies, the company is seeking worldwide expansion following the demerger. Due to weaker volume growth, a decline in LCV (light commercial vehicle) market share, and passenger vehicle (PV) drag, TMCV trades at a 6% discount to Ashok Leyland. The brokerage stated, “Domestic CV recovery, scale, global optionality, and profitability step-up offer re-rating potential, narrowing gaps with Ashok Leyland.” Ambit anticipates that TMCV’s revenue and Ebitda would increase at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6% and 7% over FY25–28, respectively, because to high-margin and non-core revenues that reduce cyclical risks. With a target price of ₹430 (24.5x FY27E P/E), analysts valued India TMCV and IVECO at 13.5x/2.5x 1-year fwd EV/Ebitda.

The target shows a 19% increase potential from the NSE closing price of ₹360.35 on December 8, 2025. In comparison to the NSE end of the previous session, the Tata Motors stock was trading nearly flat at ₹360.15 at 10:30 AM on Tuesday, December 9. At 25,840.6, the NSE Nifty50 was down 119.95 points, or 0.46 percent. The market capitalization of the company was ₹1.32 trillion. According to Ambit analysts, over 31-ton HGVs account for more than 60% of the CV retail market, with TMCV holding a 35% share. Higher tipper demand is advantageous because the MHCV segment, which accounts for 35% of volumes but contributes 68% of the income pool, is still quite important. TMCV is positioned for a gradual recovery thanks to product updates and



a stronger network, whereas LCV’s weakness hindered share. Despite a 5% drop in volumes, Tata’s CV overhaul has supported a 7% Ebitda CAGR between FY19 and FY25 with a 70 basis point margin gain. While margin-accretive non-core revenue streams aid in reducing cyclicality, a higher GVW mix should increase ASPs and profitability. It is anticipated that scale advantages, improved mix, and further cost-cutting measures will further boost profitability.

Google plans to launch two AI-powered glasses in 2026

New Delhi: Google hosted “The Android Show: XR Edition” on December 8, 2025, to announce its Android XR platform strategy and preview new products. During the online event, the tech giant previewed two AI-powered glass categories, which are planned to debut next year. One of them included wired XR glasses powered by Android XR and light-weight AI glasses, which are designed for all-day wearability and are pow-

ered by the Gemini assistant. Earlier this year, the company announced a partnership with Samsung, Gentle Monster, and Warby Parker to build audio-only AI glasses for daily wear, similar to the Meta RayBan glasses. Now, the AI glasses are confirmed to launch in 2026, with speakers, microphones, and cameras. Users will be able to interact with the smart glasses through the Gemini assistant for a hands-free experience. In addition, Google

also talked about the in-lens display AI glasses that will privately show content in the glasses. Hence, we can say that we may finally get a potential competitor for the Meta RayBan glasses, which has created all the hype for smart but are said to offer a similar experience to an Android XR headset due to the optical see-through technology. The AI glasses will be powered by a tethered puck that contains computing hardware and a battery.

Biocon to absorb biologics unit, eyes Rs 4,500 cr fund raise to buy Viatris’s

New Delhi: According to the company, the restructuring is expected to close by March 2026, will simplify the corporate structure and sharpen Biocon’s focus on diabetes, oncology and immunology — therapeutic areas that make up nearly 40 percent of global pharma revenues. The combined entity will offer a unique portfolio spanning biosimilars, insulins, GLP-1 peptides and complex generics, positioning Biocon among the few global players with scale in both generics and biologics. The deal values Biocon Biologics at about \$5.5 billion. Biocon will buy out minority investors including Serum Institute Life Sciences, Tata Capital Growth Fund II and Activ Pine LLP through a share swap of 70.28 Biocon shares for every 100 Biocon Biologics shares. It will also acquire Viatris Inc.’s residual stake for \$815 million, split between \$400 million in cash and \$415 million in stock. To fund the cash component, Biocon plans to raise up to Rs.4,500 crore (\$500 million) via a qualified institutional placement and take bridge loans. Swap ratios were vetted by EY, while Morgan Stanley advised on the transaction. Before the integration, Biocon promoters held about 54.45% in Biocon. After the transaction and the planned fundraise, their stake is expected to drop to around 44.4%, falling below the 50% threshold. This reduction reflects the share swap with Biocon



Biologics’ minority shareholders and the issuance of new equity for the QIP. “Bringing these two businesses together and having a combined balance sheet, combined financial metrics which are very strong... this is a very important decision,” Biocon Executive CBiologics as a separate entity, the objective was clearly to attract investments and build global scale in biosimilars. We did that successfully, even acquiring Viatris’ biosimilars business for

\$3 billion. But markets kept devaluing both Biocon and Biocon Biologics because of debt overhang and holding company discount. Folding Biologics back into Biocon unlocks true value and gives us a much stronger balance sheet,” Mazumdar-Shaw said. The debt-to-EBITDA ratio has already improved from 4.3x in 2020 to 2.5x today, and Mazumdar-Shaw expects further deleveraging, enabling free cash flow for aggressive product launches.

Hema Malini, Esha, and Ahana Deol to Lead Dharmendra's Prayer Meet in Delhi

New Delhi: As the Deol family continues to come to terms with the loss of Dharmendra, remembrance gatherings are being held to honour the legendary actor's life and legacy. Days after prayers were organised in Mumbai, Hema Malini is now set to host another prayer meet in New Delhi to pay tribute to her late husband.

Veteran actor Dharmendra passed away on November 24, 2025, at the age of 89, leaving the film industry and millions of admirers in mourning. Following his funeral, a prayer meet was held on November 27 at Mumbai's Taj Lands End, where several members of the film fraternity gathered to offer their respects. On the same day, Hema Malini also conducted a separate prayer ceremony at her Mumbai residence. According to a report by NDTV, Hema Malini will be hosting a prayer meet in New Delhi on Thursday, December 11, 2025. The event will take place from 4 pm to 6 pm at the Dr Ambedkar International Centre on Janpath. She will be joined by daughters Esha Deol



and Ahana Deol, along with Bharat Takhtani and Vaibhav Vohra. Several Delhi-based politicians are expected to attend the gathering. Ahead of the Delhi event, Hema Malini also conducted a Gita Paath at her home in memory of Dharmendra. The prayer meets coincide with an emotionally significant period for the family, as December 8, 2025 marked what would have been Dharmendra's 90th birthday. On the occasion, Hema Malini shared a deeply personal note on social media, reflecting on life after his passing. Posting two throwback photographs with Dharmendra on X (formerly Twitter), she wrote, "Dharam ji. Happy birthday my dear heart. More than two weeks have passed since you

left me heartbroken, slowly gathering up the pieces and trying to reconstruct my life, knowing that you will always be with me in spirit. The joyful memories of our life together can never be erased and just reliving those moments bring me great solace and happiness." She further added, "I thank God for our lovely years together, for our two beautiful girls who reaffirm our love for each other and for all the beautiful, happy memories that will remain with me in my heart. On your birthday, my prayers for God to grant you the wealth of peace and happiness that you richly deserve for your humility and goodness of heart and your love for humanity. Happy birthday dear love. Our happy 'together' moments."

Amitabh Charms Sheetal With KBC Flowers

Mumbai: The quiz reality show Kaun Banega Crorepati continues to charm audiences with Amitabh Bachchan's warmth, wit, and effortless ability to turn contestants into stars of their own stories.

The upcoming episode shall feature contestant Sheetal Snigdha Mohrana, a spirited plant pathology student from Cuttack, Odisha, whose interaction with Amitabh Bachchan, the host of the iconic show, quickly will become one of the episode's most talked-about moments. During a chat with Big B, Sheetal mentioned that no one had ever given her flowers. Listening to this, Big B immediately handed her the flowers and made her smile. After receiving the flowers from none other than Amitabh Bachchan, Sheetal said, "Ab mujhe phoolon mein nazar nahi jaa rahi hai... jisne diya hai, jo de raha hai, uspar nazar jaa rahi hai. (I can no longer focus on the flowers, the one who has given me these, my focus only lies on him right now)"

'Tere Ishk Mein' Box Office Dominance: Film Earns Over ₹100 Crore by Day 11

Mumbai: Dhanush and Kriti Sanon's romantic drama Tere Ishk Mein is currently in its second week of theatrical run and has achieved a major milestone at the box office. Released on November 28, the film has connected with audiences through its emotional storyline and powerful performances. Despite strong competition from Ranveer Singh's Dhurandhar since Friday, December 5, the film has successfully crossed the Rs 100 crore mark in India.

According to a Sacnilk report, the film collected Rs 2.50 crore on Day 11, taking its total Indian box office earnings to Rs 102.50 crore. This marked the film's lowest single-day collection so far. On the same day, the film recorded a decent audience turnout, with Hindi occupancy at 17.03% and Tamil occupancy at 10.86%. The film opened with Rs 16 crore on its first day and went on to earn a strong Rs 51.75 crore over its opening



weekend. Meanwhile, Arjun Rampal, Akshaye Khanna and Sara-starrer Dhurandhar has already earned Rs 99.50 crore in its opening weekend, emerging as strong competition for other theatrical releases. Aanand L. Rai's 2025 film has surpassed the lifetime earnings of his earlier hit, Raanjhanaa. The Dhanush and Sonam Kapoor Ahuja-starrer had collected Rs 60.22 crore during its the-

atrical run. Tere Ishq Mein broke this record within just five days of its release. The film also marks Dhanush's third Bollywood project, following Raanjhanaa (2013) and Shamitabh (2015). Tere Ishq Mein depicts the narrative of Shankar, a passionate and temperamental young man who falls deeply in love with Mukti. Their relationship deepens in college, but Mukti eventually decides to marry someone else. The

film delves into their passionate and unpredictable world, depicting a love story that defies logic, time, and fate. The film also marks Dhanush's highly anticipated return to Hindi cinema after a long absence. He made his Hindi debut in Raanjhanaa, directed by Aanand L. Rai, nearly ten years ago. His second collaboration with the filmmaker, Atrangi Re, was released on OTT in 2021.

The Best of Sunny Deol: Ranking His Most Memorable Performances, From Debut to 'Gadar 2'

Mumbai: Sunny Deol, one of Bollywood's most iconic action stars, has built a legacy defined by powerful performances, unforgettable dialogues and intense screen presence. Known for his righteous anger, patriotic roles and emotive depth, Sunny Deol has delivered several films that have become timeless classics for Indian cinema lovers.

Whether it's the thunderous roar of "Tarikh pe tarikh!", the raw intensity of Ghayal or the patriotic fervour of Border, his movies carry a unique blend of action, drama and heartfelt storytelling. Set during the chaos of the 1947 Partition, the film follows Tara Singh, a Sikh driver who falls deeply in love with Sakina, a Muslim girl. Their love



story faces emotional and political turmoil when she is taken back to Pakistan, forcing Tara to fight against all odds to reunite with her. Based on the Battle of Longewala, this war drama brings together an ensemble cast and highlights the courage, sacrifice and brotherhood of Indian soldiers defending their post during the 1971 conflict. A continuation of Tara Singh's

story, the sequel takes place during the 1971 war. Tara sets out on a dangerous mission across the border to rescue his son Jeete, who has been captured, reigniting themes of love, bravery and patriotism. A gripping psychological thriller where Sunny Deol plays Sunil, a navy officer whose fiancée becomes the obsession of a dangerous stalker – Shah Rukh Khan.

The film builds tension as Sunil battles to protect the woman he loves from an unhinged pursuer. A powerful courtroom drama centred on a woman fighting for justice after witnessing a brutal crime. Sunny Deol plays Govind, a fearless lawyer who helps her challenge corruption and stand up against a powerful family. The film is remembered for the powerful dialogues delivered by Deol, which include the 'Tarikh pe tarikh' and 'Yeh dhai kilo ka haath.' This intense action film follows Ajay Mehra, a young boxer whose world collapses when his brother disappears under mysterious circumstances. His quest for truth pushes him into a battle against powerful criminals.

Red Sea International Film Festival Dazzled by Kartik Aaryan's Undeniable Charm



Mumbai: Saudi Arabia lit up as Kartik Aaryan graced the fifth Red Sea International Film Festival 2025 in Jeddah for a special session. The Bollywood star continues to rise, joining the prestigious event as a special guest for an "In Conversation" session. He shared the stage with an illustrious lineup of renowned personalities, including Idris Elba, Anthony Hopkins, Nicholas Hoult, Riz Ahmed, Darren Aronofsky, and Edgar Ramirez.

The Red Sea International

Film Festival's session reportedly dove into Kartik's approach to acting, his experience working across varied genres, and his perspective on how Indian cinema is evolving as it engages with wider global audiences. For the big appearance, Kartik opted for a sleek beige blazer teamed with a crisp white shirt with blue stripes, blue pants and a printed maroon tie. Brown shoes and perfectly styled hair elevated his elegant formal look. He shared photos from the event on Instagram,

with the caption, "Fresh from the Getty Images Studio at the RED SEA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL."

The actor is awaiting the release of his upcoming romantic drama, Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri. Made under the direction of National Award winner Sameer Vidwans, the film promises a simple and heartfelt story set against a visually engaging backdrop. Also featuring Jackie Shroff and Neena Gupta, the romantic drama promises a heartwarming mix of romance, laughter and heartwarming moments. Mark your calendars! The film is set to release on Christmas Eve. Next, he is set to captivate audiences in the thriller film Naagzilla, which is gearing up for an August 2026 release. Kartik is also roped in for Anurag Basu's highly anticipated sequel, Aashiqui 3.

Actor Zeeshan Khan in Versova Crash



Mumbai: Television actor Zeeshan Khan, best known for his role in Kumkum Bhagya and his stint on Bigg Boss OTT, was involved in a road accident in Mumbai on December 8, 2025. Sources confirm that while the crash was serious, the actor is safe, though visibly shaken by the incident.

According to information accessed by Bollywood Bubble, the accident occurred around 8:30 pm in Mumbai's Versova area. Zeeshan's black car reportedly collided head-on with a grey vehicle. The impact was strong enough to deploy the airbags in his car. Following the incident, the actor went to a nearby police station to file an official report. Further details related to the accident are awaited. Zeeshan Khan rose to prominence with his portrayal of Aryan Khanna in Zee TV's Kumkum Bhagya, a role he played between 2019 and 2021 and which earned him widespread recognition. He later appeared in Naagin and gained further public attention as a contestant on the first season of Bigg Boss OTT. During his time on the reality show, he became known for maintaining a relatively calm and straightforward approach in a high-conflict environment.

Prior to Bigg Boss OTT, Zeeshan had already established himself on television with roles in daily soaps. His participation in the reality series allowed audiences to see a more personal side of him, particularly his emphasis on boundaries and emotional honesty. Although his journey on the show ended early following a rule violation involving physical contact during a task, the exposure significantly boosted his public profile. After his eviction, Zeeshan shared a note thanking his supporters, stating that despite the abrupt end to his journey, he felt like a "winner" because of the support he received. Beyond reality television, Zeeshan has often described himself as someone who enjoys breaking norms and trying unconventional ideas. He previously courted attention after a viral airport video, which he later explained was meant purely as a light-hearted expression of his entertainer persona.

RM's Emotional Confession: BTS Almost Disbanded During Dark Moments

Agency: BTS fans are eagerly waiting for the group's new release, scheduled for 2026. All seven members of the South Korean boy band, RM, Jin, Jimin, J-Hope, Jungkook, Taehyung and Suga have completed their mandatory military service this year and are now working on their new album and world tour. ARMYs have been waiting for years for this. Amid this, band's leader Kim Namjoon aka RM has made a shocking revelation.

The rapper recently interacted with the fans virtually through the fan community platform, Weverse. He said, "We've thought for tens of thousands of times whether it would be good for us to disband or to suspend activities. What has kept this team going is how much we love each other, and the love and respect we have for those watching this livestream." However, much to the relief of fans, RM confirmed that



their comeback plans are on track and all the band members are working towards that. Sharing an update, he continued, "Preparations for the album are almost being made. We practiced together yesterday. We are filming content and practicing every day. We will show you after we prepare well." BTS' last major album release was in 2022, followed by their Yet to Come concert.

During an earlier interaction with fans, RM shared

that BTS' 2026 album will have varied genres that they have not tried before as a group. Recently, a Bloomberg report stated that BTS is set to launch its biggest world tour to date with 65 shows. The report further stated that half of the shows from the 65 will be held in North America. However, their agency clarified the situation. They added that neither the number of shows nor the size of the tour has been finalised.

"I Needed More Silence": Vijay Varma on Difficulties of His Public Relationship

New Delhi: When Vijay Varma walked back onto screens with Gustaakh Ishq, fans were quick to notice the long quiet spell before its release. For an actor who once had a new project dropping every few months, the pause felt unusually long. But Vijay, in a chat with HT, said the gap wasn't about work drying up — it was the constant spotlight on his personal life that made him step away.

He admitted the attention around him had stopped being about his craft. Much like the recent conversations sparked by Jaya Bachchan on intrusive pap culture, Vijay said the noise around him became overwhelming. "The work wasn't coming out, so the conversation was about everything else," he said, referring to the period when his relationship with Tamannaah Bhatia dominated headlines. Vijay explained that he wanted stillness, but fame didn't allow any. "I would have liked complete silence but that's not possible," he said, adding that even though he avoided press interactions for more than a year, the spotlight never left him. "I have not spoken to the press since IC 814: The Kandahar Hijack, not given a single interview, yet the presence is all over and it's beyond my control. But



this is something that this generation is going to suffer from unless you live in a cave. Your decisions and your lives are being scrutinised every single day, so that's how it is. I did need a gap, I needed more silence. But that's something I didn't have any control over."

As he returned with Gustaakh Ishq, many began calling this his "lover boy" era. Vijay finds the label funny but said it may have grown out of how viewers perceived him during his much-talked-about relationship. "I feel it was a byproduct of being in the spotlight for

being in a public relationship. People saw me in a certain way," he says. Reports of Tamannaah Bhatia and Vijay Varma's breakup surfaced in March this year. They reportedly parted ways after dating for over two years. Back then, a source told Pinkvilla, "Tamannaah Bhatia and Vijay Varma parted ways weeks ago as a couple but they plan to remain good friends. Both have been working hard in their respective schedules." They starred together in Sujoy's Ghosh's segment in Netflix's 'Lust Stories 2', which premiered in June 2023.

Kartik Aaryan Reveals Why He Initially Rejected Box Office Hit 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2'

Mumbai: At the Red Sea International Film Festival in Saudi Arabia, Kartik Aaryan represented India on the global stage, interacting with audiences and industry figures from around the world. Recently, his picture with Hollywood star Johnny Depp went viral. Meanwhile, several videos from his conversation at the Red

Sea International Film Festival have surfaced on social media. In the Session, Kartik shared that he had initially turned down Bhool Bhulaiyaa franchise.

Kartik Aaryan revealed he first rejected Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2, as he wasn't keen on the project. Back then, it was just a sequel concept without a story. "When the film



first came to me, there was no story- just a sequel idea. I wasn't keen. But Bhushan (Kumar) sir convinced me,

we worked on it, and everything changed. Today, wherever I go, kids call me Rooh Baba. I'm glad I eventually did it," he said.

Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2, and its follow-up Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3, became career-defining milestones for Kartik, especially as BB2 emerged as one of Bollywood's biggest theatrical blockbusters post-

Covid. Kartik Aaryan plays a fraud psychic Rooh Baba in Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2, which also starred Kiara Advani and Tabu. The film, directed by Anees Bazmee, released in theatres in May 2022. After this, Kartik also starred in Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3, co-starring Vidya Balan, Madhuri Dixit and Triptii Dimri. It was released in 2024.

Meanwhile, last month, Anees Bazmee confirmed Bhool Bhulaiyaa 4 with Kartik Aaryan. In an interview with Bollywood Hungama, the director shared that Bhool Bhulaiyaa 4 is officially in development. "Most definitely. It is a work in progress. The love that the series has accrued over the years is unsurpassable. So

yeah, it is happening. The only factor that I can confirm is Kartik," Anees said. Meanwhile, Kartik Aaryan will next be seen in Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri, alongside Ananya Panday. Directed by Sameer Vidwans, the film promises a simple yet sincere love story set against a visually captivating backdrop.

HEALTH & TRAVEL

This Japanese city is for people seeking love

The romance of air travel still exists. At least that’s the impression when you land at Japan’s auspiciously named Izumo Enmusubi Airport. Translating roughly to “the tying (musubi) of bonds (en)”, or, more popularly, “matchmaking”, the word enmusubi encompasses many of the relationships that are part of life, such as those with family, friends and work, but most often references romantic entanglements. This connotation is in the air as you step off the plane and walk past a statue of a jovial god named Okuninushi, known as the “great matchmaking power”, and a rack of ema (wooden prayer plaques) inscribed with travellers’ romantic wishes. It may seem like travellers here have love on the mind, and that’s because if you pray for love in Izumo, there’s a good chance you’ll be heard. Lying along the Sea of Japan in Shimane, the second-least populated of Japan’s prefectures and, in 2023, the least-visited, Izumo is far off the Shinkansen bullet train track, making it one of the few cities in Japan that is easier to fly into. The city is home to Izumo Taisha, thought to be the country’s oldest shrine and dedicated to Okuninushi, who is worshipped as the creator of Japan and the god of enmusubi in Japan’s indigenous Shinto religion. “He is the god who governs things that cannot be seen by humans”, such as fate, explained local guide Minoru Maeda, “You could say he is the god of matchmaking. He brings people together; he has tremendous power.” That’s why Izumo Taisha has become popularly known as one of Japan’s “power spots”, a term that emerged in the 1990s to describe places, usually surrounded by nature, that are said to possess special powers to generate good luck, better health or, in this case, love. While the philosophy of power spots is a fuzzy grab bag of Shintoism, new age spirituality, feng shui and marketing, its popularity over the last few decades has increased tourism to places like Izumo. More than seven million people visited the shrine in 2023, according to Izumo City, including around 350 couples who got married there. Certainly not everyone who visits Izumo does so in pursuit of love, but the number of matchmaking-related activities here suggest a fair number do. With this in mind, tourism boards have compiled sightseeing itineraries focused on romantic spots in Izumo and the wider San’in region, from Yaegaki Shrine where a pond forecasts the outcome of relationships, to a pleasure boat whose bronze



“matchmaking bell” summons the gods and even a train station painted pink and adorned with hearts. Less widely promoted is Izumo’s Umi Shrine, which people visit to pray for en-riki, the severing of ties, the other side of the enmusubi coin. Set on an often tempestuous sea and a place of sunsets so stunning that they are certified by Japan Heritage as an important cultural property, Izumo is romantic by nature. But nowhere exerts such a mighty pull as Izumo Taisha. Singles visit to ask Okuninushi to find them a partner, while couples ask him to bless their relationship. Many write their wishes on an ema in the faith that they will reach Okuninushi directly. Some, perhaps seeking a larger audience, time their trip to the 10th month of Japan’s old lunar calendar (usually November), because that’s when Japan’s eight million kami (gods and spirits) travel from all around the country to gather in the city. Throughout Japan, this month is known as Kan-na-dzuki (the month without gods), but in Izumo it’s called Kami-ari-dzuki (the month with gods). The reason for this seaside gathering is that the gods have a job to do: they are there to decide the fate of humans’ relationships in the coming year. The seven-day gathering of the gods (11-17 November 2025) is a spectacle in its own right. It begins on the beach at Inasa-no-Hama with a ceremony welcoming the kami to Izumo. Just after sunset, bonfires are lit and shrine priests escort the kami to Izumo Taisha, shielding them from the gathered public’s view with white sheets. It’s not all work and no play, said Maeda. The kami also enjoy feasts and lots of sake offered up by local brewers. A handful of

those eight million kami enjoy the local sake a



little too enthusiastically and hang around well beyond their official departure date. “There’s a goddess who is known for her persuasiveness,” Maeda said. “She eventually has to perform a ceremony telling them that they have to go home.” I visited Izumo a few days after (most of) the kamis’ departure in late November last year. I hadn’t arrived looking for love, rather to sip sake in the place said to be its spiritual birthplace and explore the rugged coastline’s cliffs and caves. But, still, I felt compelled to visit Izumo Taisha. Approaching the altar under a huge shimenawa (rope), I dropped a five-yen coin into the offering box – five yen (“go-en”) is thought to be good luck because in Japanese, go en is a homophone with go-en, the respectful way to refer to “en” (bonds).

Then I clapped four times, twice for myself and twice for my partner, the custom distinct from other Shinto shrines where worshippers clap just twice. After silently making my own wish, I browsed the amulets on sale. Maeda said the red-and-white amulet is particularly well known, “for bringing people together in love”. Then I peeked at some of the handwritten wishes inscribed on the ema hanging along the shrine’s pathways. “It’s said that writing your wishes on an ema will ensure that [they] reach the gods directly,” said Maeda. Some of those written wishes asked to simply find love, others were more specific, requesting to “get married within three years”. The eagerness of visitors’ desire to get married felt like a counterpoint to Japan’s much-publicised plummeting marriage rates. In the same month that I visited Izumo, the Tokyo government, in an effort to nudge residents towards marriage and stem the city’s falling birthrate, launched a matchmaking app,

read of travel trends suggesting that people are tired of looking for love online. Could they ignore the apps and look to the heavens instead, I wondered, and, if so, is a degree of belief in higher powers required? “Whether they believe or not is beside the point,” said Tokyo-based author Hiroko Yoda, whose book about Japanese spirituality, Eight Million Ways to Happiness: Wisdom for Inspiration and Healing from the Heart of Japan, will be published in December 2025. “Unlike the West, ‘belief’ or ‘disbelief’ doesn’t really factor into Japanese spirituality,” she explained. “People go to Izumo Taisha because it is famous or because they feel a personal need, or simply because they want to check it out. There’s no recruiting or evangelising or claims of power.” As for choosing between praying for love and downloading a matchmaking app, you can do both, Yoda added: “Japanese spirituality embraces rather than rejects.” Yoda considers Izumo Taisha’s image as a sacred matchmaking spot to be largely the product of tourism marketing; when I hear the word ‘power spot’, I always roll my eyes,” she says. But she also believes that there’s a “spiritually playful aspect” to its promotion, which the flexibility and inclusivity of Japanese spirituality allows for. “In Japan, religions are not based in dogma. They co-exist with modern society,” she said. Go to Izumo to pray for a partner but do so with the awareness that “Izumo Taisha’s offering of connection goes far beyond that of finding your romantic match”, Yoda says, reinforcing the widely inclusive meaning of enmusubi. “It’s about the invisible web of metaphorical threads that bring us together for all sorts of things, in all spheres of life, in ways unpredictable and unexpected, wondrous and wonderful.”

aply named Tokyo Enmusubi. But I’d just



Can drinking ketones really improve heart health?

Type 2 diabetes, which is affecting increasing numbers of people worldwide, occurs when the body stops responding to insulin, the hormone that controls blood glucose. When the insulin does not work correctly, glucose remains in the blood instead of being taken into cells to be used as energy. If blood glucose is not controlled, this can lead to complications, which may include cardiovascular disease. Treatments for type 2 diabetes aim to reduce blood glucose levels. One type — sodium-glucose cotransporter-2 inhibitors (SGLT2i) — also appears to protect the heart, possibly by inducing ketosis, a state where the body uses fats instead of carbohydrates as an energy source. The liver converts fats into ketones, which cells metabolize to release energy. A previous study found that ketone supplements reduced postprandial blood glucose concentrations in people with type 2 diabetes and called for research into other possible benefits of the treatment. To test whether ketosis is responsible for the heart benefits of SGLT2is, a team from Portsmouth University in the United Kingdom gave ketone monoesters (exogenous ketones) to a group of people with type 2 diabetes and then measured their heart function. Cheng-Han Chen, MD, board certified interventional cardiologist and medical director of the Structural Heart Program at MemorialCare Saddleback Medical Center in Laguna Hills, CA, told Medical News Today that this study forms a basis for further research: “This was a very small study (with 13 patients) that reported significant differences in heart function and muscle oxygenation after a ketone monoester drink. [...] It should be noted that their test method for determining cardiac function is not commonly used



in the clinical setting for this purpose.” Researchers enrolled 13 people (six men and seven women) with a mean age of 66 years in the trial. The participants had a mean body mass index of 31.3, with only 4 having a BMI in the healthy range (less than 25). All had type 2 diabetes but no other significant health conditions related to it. All participants attended a screening session for blood tests, resting electrocardiogram Trusted Source and familiarisation with the study process. At each of two experimental visits, researchers gave them either a ketone monoester (0.3ml/kg), or an identical placebo drink. Each participant had the ketone drink once and placebo once, but neither the researchers nor the participants knew who received which drink at each visit. The participants then rested for 30 min-

utes before undertaking a step-incremental cycling test. The researchers measured heart function using thoracic impedance cardiography Trusted Source, a noninvasive method of assessing cardiac output and stroke volume. They also measured blood flow in the smaller vessels and muscle oxygenation. In all the participants, heart function was better after the ketone drink than after placebo, both when resting and when undertaking moderate exercise. The researchers found that following ketone treatment, not only did circulating β -hydroxybutyrate (which carries energy from the liver to cells) increase but there was also an increase in both cardiac output and stroke volume. Dr. Menka Gupta, Functional Medicine Doctor in Singapore, and founder of Nutranourish, explained why the treatment might have this effect, telling MNT: “Exogenous ketones offer a highly efficient fuel source for the heart. They produce more ATP per molecule of oxygen than glucose metabolism and may reduce the production of reactive oxygen species, thereby lowering oxidative stress and inflammation. By reducing oxidative stress and inflammation, they could help protect cardiac tissue, which is particularly important for individuals with metabolic challenges.” The effects were seen even with the low dose of ketones given to the participants. Perissiou explained why they used this low dose: “While generally considered safe when taken in appropriate doses, ketone monoesters can pose risks including potential stomach upset, electrolyte imbalances, particularly for people with kidney issues, and may cause negative effects (like ketonaemia) in people with type 2 diabetes mellitus if consumed in large quantities due to their ability to significantly raise blood ketone levels.”

Can too much ‘good’ cholesterol increase glaucoma risk?

Researchers estimate that about 80 million people globally live with glaucoma — an eye condition affecting the optic nerve Trusted Source, resulting in vision loss and possibly blindness, for which there is currently no cure. Glaucoma is known as “the silent thief of sight” because many times there are no symptoms in the earliest stage of the disease, making it hard to detect. There are a number of risk factors for glaucoma, including genetics Trusted Source, age Trusted Source, and ethnicity, as well as health conditions such as diabetes, migraine Trusted Source, sleep apnea, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease Trusted Source. Now, a new study published in the British Journal of Ophthalmology says older adults with too much “good” HDL cholesterol may be at a higher risk of developing glaucoma. Conversely, researchers found that people with higher levels of “bad” LDL cholesterol tended to have a lower risk of developing the eye condition. For this study,

researchers analyzed medical data from more than 400,000 participants between the ages of 40 to 69 in the U.K. Biobank Study. Participants had the amount of fats in their blood measured, and their health was tracked for an average of 14 years. Upon analysis, researchers found that study participants with higher amounts of HDL cholesterol in their blood had an increased risk of developing glaucoma. Scientists reported that participants with the highest levels of HDL cholesterol were 10% more likely to develop glaucoma than those at the lowest levels. On the other side, researchers discovered study participants with increased amounts of LDL cholesterol, total cholesterol, and triglycerides — a type of fat in the blood — were at a reduced risk for glaucoma. Scientists found that participants with the highest levels of LDL cholesterol were 8% less likely to develop glaucoma than those with lower levels. That percentage rose to 14% less likely for those with the leading amounts of triglycerides. The researchers did state that these ob-

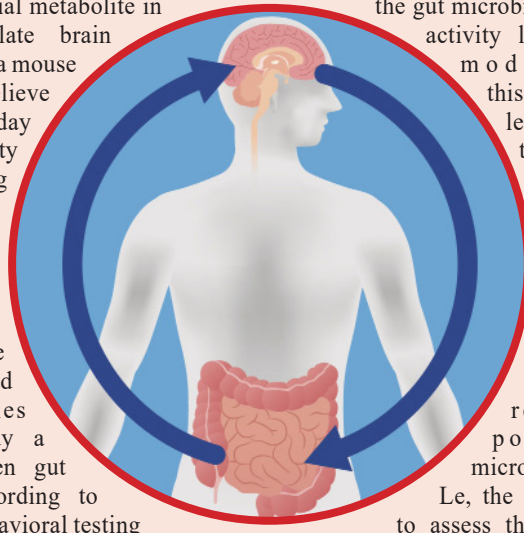


servations continued among participants older than 55, and no significant association was noticed in those aged 40 to 55. Medical News Today had the chance to speak with Alexander Solomon, MD, a neuro-ophthalmologist and strabismus surgeon of Pacific Neuroscience Institute at Providence Saint John’s Health Center in Santa Monica, CA, about this study and the importance of finding health concerns that may increase a person’s glaucoma risk. “Glaucoma is the second most

common cause of blindness, and unlike cataracts, which are the most common, it is irreversible,” Solomon explained. “Because all forms of glaucoma typically impact a patient’s peripheral vision first, a patient may have glaucoma for years before they are symptomatic.” “Treatments for glaucoma are directed at slowing disease progression, so catching it and stopping it in its early stages before it becomes symptomatic is key,” Solomon continued.

Could probiotics help reduce anxiety?

Researchers estimate that about 4% of people Trusted Source around the globe live with an anxiety disorder. This type of mental health condition is typically treated with a combination of talking therapy, lifestyle changes, and medications. However, not all people with anxiety respond well to the treatments currently available. Past studies have shown that only 60% to 85% of people treated for anxiety will respond to current treatments. “It’s important that researchers continue to find new ways to treat anxiety because current treatments, such as benzodiazepines and SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors), often come with significant challenges,” H. Shawn Le, PhD, associate professor in the Signature Research Programme in Neuroscience and Behavioural Disorders at Duke-NUS Medical School in Singapore told Medical News Today. “These drugs can take a long time to show results, and their long-term use is associated with various side effects,” he explained. Le is the co-lead author of a new study recently published in the journal EMBO Molecular Medicine that has identified a specific microbial metabolite in the gut microbiome that helps regulate brain activity linked to anxiety, via a mouse model. Researchers believe this finding may one day lead to new anxiety therapies targeting the gut-brain axis. For this study, Le and his team used a model of germ-free mice that have had their gut microbiomes removed — to study a link between gut microbes and anxiety. According to Le, the mice underwent behavioral testing to assess their emotional responses, such as anxiety. He said they were surprised to find the germ-free mice exhibited increased anxiety. Through the study, the scientists found the extra anxiety was linked to more activity in a specific area of the brain called the basolateral amygdala. “The basolateral amygdala is a part of the brain that helps control how we feel emotions, especially fear and anxiety,” Le explained. “It is a subregion in the amygdala Trusted Source that acts like the brain’s alarm system.” Later in the study, Le and his team tried treating the germ-free mouse model with microbial metabolites called indoles Trusted Source. “Indoles are natural compounds found in plants, animals, and the human body, often derived from the amino acid tryptophan,” Le detailed. “They are also produced by tryptophan-metabolizing bacteria in the gut.” “In our study, dietary indole supplementation was shown to reduce anxiety-related behavior in a mouse model lacking gut microbiota,” he continued. “This finding is significant because it suggests that indoles may help calm the brain’s anxiety response, offering a potential new treatment for anxiety.” “If these findings can be replicated in other animals, companion animals, and eventually in human clinical trials with anxiety disorders, they could pave the way for novel therapies targeting the gut-brain axis,” Le added. MNT spoke to Gary Small, MD, chair of psychiatry at Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey, about this study, in which he was not involved. “In light of recent research confirming the gut-brain connection, these findings are not surprising but also quite exciting,” Small commented. “The results provide a potential mechanism for the link between gut microbes and anxiety symptoms.” “Moreover, the amygdala is a well-documented brain region that controls anxious feelings, which makes the gut-brain pathway consistent with previous brain research in humans,” he explained. “Understanding this mechanism offers opportunities for developing novel, safe, and effective treatments for anxiety.”



Shehnaaz Gill Sparkles In Statement Gold Sequins For A Glam Fashion Moment

Draped in unapologetic glam and oozing confidence, Shehnaaz Gill just served a look that’s not just fashion, it’s a whole moment. Channeling the energy of a modern-day disco queen, Shehnaaz took to Instagram with a series of smouldering shots captioned, “Not just a look... it’s a whole mome” and we couldn’t agree more. The actor wore a dazzling gold mini dress drenched in oversized sequins that caught the light from every angle, creating a mirror-ball effect that screamed main-character energy. The sculpted silhouette hugged her curves just right, with the sleeveless cut and square neckline adding a touch of clean minimalism to an otherwise maximalist moment. The key to pulling off a sequin dress is confidence and Shehnaaz wears it like second skin. Her choice of gold, a universally flattering metallic, adds drama without overwhelming her natural glow. With such a statement piece, Shehnaaz kept her accessories pared back and polished.



Sparkling drop earrings and silver strappy heels brought just the right touch of bling, harmonizing with the dress without stealing the spotlight. Her luscious waves, full of volume and movement, added an element of carefree glamour. Whether she was in motion or holding a power pose, her hair flowed like a mood, untamed, confident, and feminine. With her signature glowing skin, bold brows, and a soft smokey eye, Shehnaaz struck a balance between sultry and sophisticated. The subtle nude lip ensured the focus stayed on her outfit and eyes. Set against a hot pink backdrop, the contrast only amplified her golden goddess aura. Every frame from this shoot feels like a freeze-frame from a pop anthem, electric, fierce, and fabulous. Shehnaaz Gill isn’t just stepping into fashion territory; she’s owning the damn runway with her vibe. So next time you’re dressing for a moment, take a cue from her: be bold, be bright, and never dim your shine.

Urban Sanctuaries: How Organic Cafes Are Redefining Conscious Dining in Mumbai

In a city that never stops, where the rhythm is fast and the noise constant, two thoughtful spaces have emerged to offer Mumbai a breath of calm, one nourishing meal at a time. Café Saar and Paashh are not just cafés—they are sanctuaries that nurture the soul, celebrate sustainability, and honour slow living in the most conscious ways. Tucked amidst the green heart of Bandra, Café Saar feels like an oasis of peace. A place where lush foliage wraps around you and every corner whispers serenity, it redefines vegetarian dining through its focus on nutritious, calming meals served in harmony with nature. Designed to dissolve the boundary between indoors and out, Café Saar invites patrons into open seating under trees, with sunlight filtering through leaves and tables surrounded by flourishing plants. From its coffee menu to its soul-nourishing food, everything at Café Saar is curated with intention. Think: velvety cinnamon-vanilla lattes with oat or almond milk, raw mango rasam soup that tingles your senses, and Truffle Khichdi that comforts like a hug. Every bite and sip is a celebration of balance, health, and joy. Signature offerings like the Overnight Oat Bowl, All About Nuts

Panjiri, and vegan-friendly small plates showcase a dedication to fresh, plant-based ingredients. “At Café Saar, we strive to create soul food that nourishes both the heart and the body,” says Chef Vinit. “Our dishes are crafted with love and care, using the freshest ingredients to provide a wholesome and fulfilling dining experience.” Meanwhile, Paashh, already a beloved name in Pune for its slow living philosophy has opened its tranquil doors

a café; it’s a pause. It’s the long exhale in a world that breathes too fast. At its core lies the vision of founder Vaishali Karad, a wellness-focused marathoner who believes true luxury is living intentionally. “Paashh was born from a personal journey,” shares Vaishali. “I wanted to create a space where slow, conscious living isn’t a luxury; it’s a way of life.” From handcrafted brassware to seasonal, local produce, every element of Paashh is rooted in care.



in Mumbai. This isn’t just Their vegetarian menu is not only organic and predominantly vegan but also

driven by the principles of traditional Indian food wisdom. Dishes like the Terrain salad, Soil to Soul raw mango curry with ragi bhakri, and Kothimbir Wadi with shakarkandi labneh echo regional flavours with contemporary consciousness. Chef Vinod Warade, who leads the kitchen, treats food as ritual. Minimal sugar, zero artificial additives, and slow cooking methods preserve the life force of ingredients. Every dish is deeply nourishing, in taste and intention. Paashh also houses an in-house fashion label working with handloom artisans and natural textiles, and its curated pantry offers ethically sourced lifestyle products, from A2

ghee to saffron honey. All of this is set against an aesthetic backdrop of earthy tones, botanical textiles, and sunlight-washed interiors that invite quiet reflection. What Café Saar and Paashh represent is a shift in how urban India consumes. No longer are cafes just places to eat. They are becoming ecosystems of intention—where wellness, sustainability, aesthetics, and community meet. Whether you’re sipping an Orange Zest Mocha in the greenery of Bandra or indulging in a mindful meal at Paashh’s serene retreat, these spaces are not just feeding the body. They’re nurturing a lifestyle, gently asking us to pause, breathe, and return to ourselves.

Why Millennials And Gen Z Prefer Cafés Over Traditional Restaurants

The café culture in India is brewing hotter than ever, and it’s not just about coffee anymore. For Millennials and Gen Z, cafés have become the new cultural hubs, spaces where lifestyle, work, creativity, and connection seamlessly blend. From aesthetically pleasing interiors to flexible workspaces and innovative menus, cafés are replacing the formality of traditional restaurants with an experience-first approach that resonates deeply with today’s youth. “Millennials and Gen Z have redefined dining culture, increasingly favoring cafés over traditional restaurants,” says Rajat Jaiswal, Pilot and Co-founder, WAB Cafe and Keydroid. “This shift is driven by lifestyle choices, social habits, and evolving work patterns that align more with the casual and versatile nature of cafés.” He highlights that the informal, flexible vibe of cafés makes them ideal for everything from solo productivity to social catch-ups. With simpler, more affordable menus and photogenic spaces that suit their social media habits, cafés are exactly what younger consumers are looking for. “It’s more than just food, it’s an experience,” he adds. Rajan Sethi, Managing Director, Bright Hospitality Pvt. Ltd., echoes this sentiment, having witnessed the evolution firsthand. “Over the past decade, we have seen a clear shift in how Millennials and Gen Z approach dining, and cafés have naturally become the spaces they gravitate toward,” he says. Sethi’s brands, like Espressos Anyday and OMO – Soul Food Community, are built around this café-first mindset. “With Espressos Anyday, we’ve created an everyday café that feels like your own corner in the city,” he explains. “Whether you’re working solo or brainstorming with friends, the vibe is intentionally casual yet inspiring.” Meanwhile, OMO takes it a step further by merging food and philosophy. “OMO is for people who want their dining spaces to align with their values—offering grounding meals, seasonal ingredients, and a calm, conscious atmosphere,” Sethi says. The rise of the “laptop and latte” work culture, particularly in metros like Delhi and Gurgaon, has made cafés a modern-day second home and office. What’s also redefining this space is the experiential element. According to Rajat Agarwal, CEO of Barista Coffee, “At Barista, coffee is more than just a beverage, it’s a lifestyle and cultural experience, especially for Millennials and Gen Z.” He points out that these generations crave connection, ambiance, and self-expression. Barista caters to this demand with curated offerings like Coffee Bubble Tea, Iced Tiramisu Latte, and live brewing sessions, trendy, flavorful, and highly Instagrammable. “Through experiential marketing, playful menus, and community-driven spaces, we’ve made Barista a go-to destination where coffee culture meets contemporary lifestyle,” Agarwal says. It’s not about fancy dining, but about engaging environments that balance affordability with innovation. Shreya Ghai, owner, Bean & Coffee Kitchen, beautifully sums up the emotional value cafés offer: “For Millennials and Gen Z, a café isn’t just a place to eat or drink, it’s an extension of their lifestyle. It’s where work happens, friendships grow, passions are explored, and everyday moments become memorable.” She emphasizes that what people seek today is comfort without formality, creativity without judgment, and connection without pressure. “It’s about being surrounded by warm lights, familiar faces, and the quiet hum of inspiration,” Ghai shares. “At Bean & Coffee Kitchen, the stories shared at every table are as important as the food on it.” What we’re witnessing is not just a shift in dining preferences but a broader cultural evolution. Cafés have emerged as the modern-day living rooms, creative studios, and informal workspaces for younger generations. They combine aesthetics, affordability, flexibility, and community, qualities that traditional restaurants often lack. In short, Millennials and Gen Z don’t just want to eat out, they want to belong somewhere. And cafés, with their warm lights, good brews, and open vibes, offer just that.



Where Movement Meets Mindfulness

For Shakti Mohan, movement has always been a form of expression, but her recent journey to Queensland, Australia, revealed a new rhythm entirely. Away from the spotlight and studio mirrors, the celebrated dancer and choreographer found herself immersed in something far more elemental: the quiet pulse of the rainforest, the salty breeze of untouched beaches, and the golden hush of a Queensland sunset. “Queensland, Australia offers such a compelling mix, from peaceful coastal retreats and ancient rainforests to vibrant urban energy. This trip allowed me to reconnect with nature and experience Australia in a truly fresh and soulful way,” Shakti shared, reflecting on a journey that blurred the lines between luxury, nature, and inner stillness. Her travels spanned the urban vitality of Brisbane, the golden expanse of the Gold Coast, the laid-back charm of the Sunshine Coast, the marine wonder of the Great Barrier Reef, and the grounding calm of ancient rainforests. But it wasn’t



just the geography that made an impact; it was the emotional texture of each place. With every barefoot walk, silent gaze, and cultural encounter, Shakti’s posts unfolded not as a travel diary but as a personal unravelling. In images and video captured mid-journey, she’s seen with wind-tousled hair by the sea, still beneath the rainforest canopy, or laughing quietly with locals. It’s a softer, more intimate portrait of the artist, one that reveals a side rarely seen on screen. What began as a collaboration with travel company JourneyLabel and Tourism

and Events Queensland soon evolved into something more personal: a chance to pause, breathe, and move at nature’s pace. “At JourneyLabel, we are drawn to destinations that leave a lasting impression. Queensland, Australia’s stunning beauty, diversity, and warm spirit align perfectly with what today’s Indian traveller seeks,” said Sufail Husain, Co-Founder, JourneyLabel. “It’s a privilege to partner with TEQ and collaborate with Shakti Mohan, who brings such grace and sincerity to the storytelling. We believe this journey will inspire others to travel deeper and dream bigger.” As Shakti continues to share her journey on social media, her audience is tuning in not just for the scenic beauty, but for the feeling of presence, of peace, of purposeful travel. Through Shakti’s eyes, Queensland becomes more than a destination. It becomes a mirror, a muse, and a moment of renewal.

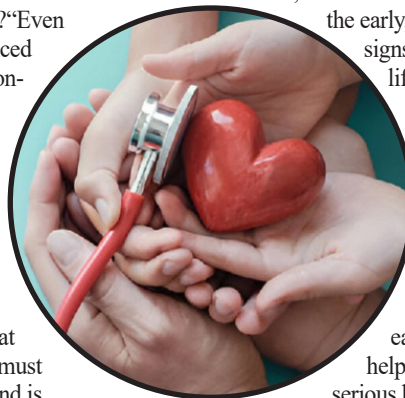
Cardiologists Explain The Hidden Cardiac Risk

Heartburn, nausea, or breathlessness is usually associated with an unsettled stomach or a stressful day. Maybe it’s the late-night meal, a skipped breakfast, or just a little anxiety. But cardiologists are sounding a quiet, critical alarm: these symptoms might be telling a different story, one about your heart. “When symptoms like a hinner feeling in the mind, nausea, or breathlessness appear, they should never be brushed off,” says Dr. Sunil Dwivedi, Consultant, Cardiology at Manipal Hospital, Millers Road, Bengaluru. “No matter which part of the body they seem to arise from, they often signal something significant. These symptoms are commonly linked to the digestive system, and sometimes to the heart.” That’s what makes these symptoms particularly tricky. According to experts, cardiac and gastrointestinal symptoms can mimic each other so closely, they’re often mistaken for one another, especially when the signs

are subtle. It’s a common misconception that heart problems always announce themselves with crushing chest pain or dramatic collapses. In reality, the signs can be whisper-soft and dangerously easy to miss. “Light heartburn, nausea, and shortness of breath may be easily overlooked as either a mild digestive issue or stress reaction,” explains Dr. Jajati Keshari Padhi, Senior Consultant Interventional Cardiologist at Manipal Hospital, Bhubaneswar. “Especially when these feelings of discomfort occur soon after eating or during exercise.” But for certain individuals, especially older adults, diabetics, and people with multiple health conditions, heart trouble may not present with textbook symptoms at all. “Heart attacks in these groups often begin with something as subtle as mild heartburn, or sometimes just vomiting. In many elderly or immunocompromised patients, vomiting can be the only symptom,” adds Dr. Dwivedi. One particularly deceptive

symptom? Breathlessness. It’s easy to chalk it up to poor fitness, anxiety, or even the weather, but in the context of heart disease, it can be a serious sign. “Shortness of breath, often attributed to anxiety, can actually indicate congestive heart failure or coronary artery disease,” warns Dr. Padhi. “It may reflect the heart’s reduced ability to pump blood, leading to fluid backup in the lungs.” So, how does one tell the difference between a harmless bout of acidity and a potential cardiac warning? “Even experienced professionals can struggle with that,” Dr. Dwivedi admits. “But what patients must understand is that these are not usual symptoms. If the discomfort feels different, if your regular

acidity meds don’t work, or the nausea seems unusual, don’t wait. Seek help immediately.” As Dr. Padhi puts it, “Being famous and fabulous won’t provide answers. Many cardiac patients don’t show any signs until the condition becomes critical. By then, time becomes the enemy.” Early detection is key. Appropriate tests and evaluations can dramatically alter the course of treatment and recovery. While it’s true that not every case of heartburn or nausea is heart-related, the risk of ignoring the early, quieter signs can be life-threatening. “It’s always better to be careful. Getting checked early can help prevent serious heart problems,” Dr. Padhi stresses. The advice is consistent: listen to your body.



SPORTS

AIFF Super Cup Final: FC Goa defeats East Bengal penalties to defend title

Seal FC Goa’s win

New Delhi: In a tense finish, FC Goa prevailed 6-5 in a penalty shootout over East Bengal to retain the AIFF Super Cup and punch its ticket to next season’s AFC Champions League 2 once again. Both teams couldn’t be separated in what was a cagey final here at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Sunday, with the last two champions of the competition trading blows for 120 minutes only to remain goalless. The home supporters were subdued for the majority of the game, but the decibel levels were cranked up in the shootout when FC Goa substitute Sahil Tavora slotted his penalty in the sudden death after East Bengal’s PV Vishnu had blazed his penalty over the bar. Midfield lynchpin Borja Herrera was brilliantly marked out of the game by Mohammad Rashid and the back four. Everywhere he went, he was double-teamed and outmuscled off the ball. His frustration only compounded when he missed his penalty in the shoot-out. East Bengal centre-back Anwar Ali had a solid opening 45 minutes. He was literally ev-

Substitute Sahil Tavora converted his sudden-death penalty after East Bengal’s Mohammad Rashid and P.V. Vishnu blazed their spot-kicks over the bar to seal FC Goa’s win in front of jubilant home fans.

erywhere and crucially where his team needed him the most – clearing out the danger in his own box with his athleticism and his brilliant reading of the game. His timing was impeccable, too, with his crucial interception to cut out a dangerous cross from Akash Sangwan standing out. East Bengal repeatedly targeted FC Goa’s right side with its diagonal switches and long balls to use the pace of Bipin Singh against the fullback Boris. In their first coming together of the match in the sixth minute, Boris got into the referee’s book for pulling the winger down. After being on the wrong side of Bipin for the opening 25 minutes, Boris was removed from the firing line by Manolo Marquez. But East Bengal was wasteful with its finishing. Hiroshi



Ibusuki beat the offside trap and ran through on goal, but couldn’t bend the ball to find the bottom corner from a narrow angle. Bipin found Naorem Mahesh at the far post with a looping cross, but his finish lacked power, allowing Hrithik Tiwari to get down in time to push it out. But for East Bengal, this was a lost opportunity to upset the odds against the heavily-favoured home side. Even though head coach Oscar Bruzon was not on the touchline, he had tactically got it spot on in the training ground on how to stop FC Goa from playing its game. It executed the plan perfectly for the first 75 minutes of the game. It was cagey, at times

scrappy, with very few chances for either side. FC Goa was not helped when it had to make a double substitution to its back four, with both the right side defenders, Ronney Willson and Boris Singh, who was on a booking, had to go off. In the second half, Ibusuki was once again guilty of not opening the scoring when he headed the ball straight at Tiwari from close range after being served on a platter by Bipin’s cross from the right. FC Goa had to endure more nervy moments when Tiwari flapped at substitute PN Vishnu’s effort and spilt the ball over his head, but saved himself from any embarrassment by clawing the ball away on the goalline.

European S/C Championships, Day 5 Prelims

Sara Curtis Tops Prelims In 50 Free & Back

New Delhi: European S/C Championships, Day 5 Prelims: Sara Curtis Tops Prelims In 50 Free & Back Sara Curtis led the way in the 50 free and 50 back in the penultimate prelims session at the European Short Course Championships in Lublin, Poland. Sara Curtis continued her morning with another prelims topper as she stopped the clock in 23.45secs. Kasia Wasick of Poland was catching with every stroke down the second 25 which she covered in 11.99 as she posted 23.47. Silvia di Pietro – who set an Italian mark of 23.39 leading off the women’s 4x50 free relay quartet that won silver on the opening night – joins teammate Curtis in the semis after posting 23.70 with 2023 silver medallist Beryl Gastaldello also through (23.80). Okaro safely progressed in 23.96. Marrit Steenbergen and Roos Vanotterdijk were absent, the former already having a busy evening ahead. The 19-year-old set an Italian record of 25.97 in the 50 back before returning about an hour later to post the top time in the 50 free. It set up a busy evening for Curtis who goes into the 100 free final tonight in lane four alongside Great Britain’s Eva Okaro as well as tackling two semifinals. The session ended with Matt Richards winning a swimoff with Nandor Nemeth for the last spot in the 100 free final with the Briton clocking 46.16 to 46.30. On another note, Yohann Ndoye Brouard’s competition is over with the Frenchman falling sick with Caspar Corbeau also withdrawing with illness. Sara Curtis made her first journey inside 26secs to top prelims in 25.97, 0.06 swifter than



her previous best of 26.03 – a WJR – from the short-course worlds in Budapest. Lauren Cox, winner of the 100m backstroke, was second through in 26.15, 0.02 outside the British record of 26.13 that has stood to Georgia Davies since 2018. Analia Pigree (26.39) and Louise Hansson (26.51) were next through. Ralf Tribuntsov led the way in 22.86 as he lowered his own Estonian record from the Carmel stop of the World Cup by 0.05. Miroslav Knedla of Czechia was the other man inside 23 on 22.94 followed by Robert Pedersen (23.18) and Ollie Morgan, who went within 0.10 of Chris Walker-Hebborn’s British record in 23.19. Walker-Hebborn, an Olympic and world medley relay medallist, posted 23.09 en-route to silver at the 2015 edition in Netanya, Israel. Tribuntsov’s Estonia teammate Eneli Jefimova already has one title under her belt when she sped to the 100 crown in a championship record of 1:02.82. She topped the two-length

prelims in 29.48, heading 10 women on 29secs separated by 0.50. Anastasia Gorbenko (29.64) and Ruta Meilutyte, the world record holder, (29.69) were the next through. Reigning champion Benedetta Pilato isn’t in Lublin as she serves a suspension imposed after she and Italian teammate Chiara Tarantino were caught shoplifting after the Singapore worlds. The two-per-nation rule really came into play here where three Italians filled the top four slots. Simone Cerasuolo set the pace in the fifth of seven heats in 25.52 which meant a nervous wait. Teammate Nicolo Martinenghi went 25.84 in the final prelim ahead of Ludovico Viberti whose time of 25.89 was fourth fastest but he misses out as only two swimmers from a single nation can progress from the prelims. World record-holder Emre Sakci posted the same time as Martinenghi for joint second qualifier with Melvin Imoudou of Germany next through in 26.06.

IND vs SA: Suryakumar Yadav keeps mum on Rinku Singh’s

New Delhi: India T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav remained tight-lipped on Rinku Singh’s omission ahead of the five-match series against South Africa. Once a regular in the Indian T20I side, Rinku Singh has not had consistent appearances in the team over the past year and has been dropped for the upcoming series. The 28-year-old featured in just one fixture across the last two series, as the team management has preferred all-rounders over him. Recently, Suryakumar Yadav was asked about the lack of appearances for Rinku in the T20I side but the India skipper chose not to reveal much regarding their team-combination plans. He even gave a cheeky reply to the media personnel, saying that they would be well aware of the team combinations as well, as they tend to know everything beforehand. “He is an all-rounder, so he and Hardik are the all-rounders. is a finisher. Who? Dube is another one. And the thing is, all the batters from three to seven are capable of batting at any position.

Neymar to undergo knee surgery after playing



New Delhi: The 33-year-old returned to his childhood club Santos in January after a stint in Saudi Arabia and had a crucial impact in his team’s survival in the Brazilian top flight, scoring five goals in the last four matches. The 33-year-old returned to his childhood club Santos in January after a stint in Saudi Arabia and had a crucial impact in his team’s survival in the Brazilian top flight, scoring five goals in the last four matches. “I came for this, to try to help the best way I can. These have been tough weeks for me,” Neymar, who played in only 20 of their 38 league games, told reporters. In October, national team head coach Carlo Ancelotti said the forward must regain full fitness if he is to earn a recall to the squad for the June 11 to July 19 World Cup in Canada, Mexico and the United States. “I thank those who were with me to lift me up. If it weren’t for them, I wouldn’t have played these matches because of these injuries, this knee problem. I need to rest and then we will have this knee surgery. In October, national team head coach Carlo Ancelotti said the forward must regain full fitness if he is to earn a recall to the squad for the June 11 to July 19 World Cup in Canada, Mexico and the United States. He did not provide details on the surgery or a timeline on his expected recovery.

ILT20 Cricket League will begin play on December 2

New Delhi: Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited has announced it will broadcast the fourth season of the DP World International League T20 starting December 2, 2025, with the final scheduled for January 4, 2026. The announcement was made on November 10, 2025. The 34-match tournament will be available on Zee’s television channels including &Pictures SD, Zee Cinema HD, Zee Action, Zee Thirai, and Zee Cinemalu, as well as streaming free-to-view on the Zee5 Hindi platform. The league has been moved from its traditional January-February window due to the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup scheduled for February-March 2026. Matches will be played across three UAE venues: Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah. The league features six franchise teams: MI Emirates, Abu Dhabi Knight Riders, Dubai Capitals, Gulf Giants, Desert Vipers, and Sharjah Warriors. This season marks increased Indian participation, with players including Dinesh Karthik, Piyush Chawla, and Unmukt Chand joining the roster. International stars such as Andre Russell, Kieron Pollard, and Sunil Narine



will also compete. The league has positioned itself as the second most-watched T20 cricket league globally after three seasons. Zee will broadcast matches in Hindi and English to reach audiences across urban and regional markets in India and internationally, with distribution across over 190 countries through its network and syndicate partners.

MS Dhoni is very unique, we should be proud

New Delhi: One of cricket’s most successful captains, Dhoni has been retained by the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) for the IPL 2026 season. His accomplishments continue to stand out, from the 2007 T20 World Cup and the 2011 ODI World Cup to the 2013 Champions Trophy. In 2009, his leadership also propelled India to the top of the Test rankings for the first time. Former India opener Murali Vijay has heaped rich praise on MS Dhoni, describing him as a natural and “very unique” leader whose instinctive decisions and calm authority have shaped some of Indian cricket’s most defining moments. Vijay said Indians should feel “proud” that a player of Dhoni’s character and talent was born in this country.

Prince Deep Singh steps into Sreejesh’s legacy with breakout performance

Junior Hockey World Cup 2025:

New Delhi: For years, the revered No. 16 jersey has been synonymous with the guardian of India’s hockey dreams. At the FIH Men’s Hockey Junior World Cup 2025, young custodian Prince Deep Singh stepped boldly into that powerful legacy, delivering a phenomenal breakout performance in the iconic jersey once worn by PR Sreejesh. His heroics during the pressure-cooker shootout against Belgium—featuring clutch saves against Nicolas Bogaeys and Nathan Rogge—were instrumental in sealing India’s place in the semifinal. The Pathankot native possesses a towering presence in front of the goal. Yet, it’s not just his shootout mastery that distinguishes him; his constant and commanding communication with the defensive unit has equally impressed observers. Recounting the dramatic quarterfinal, Prince Deep “It was a tough match for us, as Belgium is a very good team. We started slowly but managed to fight our way back into the game. Conceding the goal just before full-time was difficult, but in the shootout, seeing our players score gave me the confidence to deliver my best.” It goes without saying that Prince Deep

picked up the No. 16 jersey due to the influence of double Olympic medallist Sreejesh, currently the Blue Colts head coach. “I started as a goalkeeper in 2016. At that time, I saw Sreejesh sir at the Rio Olympics, and since then I’m wearing No. 16,” the 21-year-old explained. Prince Deep highlighted the significant advantage of learning directly from such an illustrious figure. “He shares everything with us—when the pressure will be on and how to handle it. In the pool matches, we didn’t have to do a lot, but he constantly reminded us to communicate with the defenders and organise the defence.” Interestingly, his hockey journey began in 2015, not as a custodian, but as a right full-back at the Cheema Hockey Academy in Batala. Weekend football matches prompted his eventual switch to goalkeeping. “During the weekends, we used to play football at the academy, and I played as a goalkeeper. to enjoy it,” he recalled. His pursuit of excellence soon took him from Ludhiana’s Malwa Hockey Academy to the Roundglass Punjab Hockey Club Academy in Mohali to polish his skills. His early career saw him represent the Roundglass



Academy in the 2nd Hockey India Junior Men Academy National Championship 2022, and later play for Punjab, winning a bronze at the 5th Khelo India Youth Games 2022. He also featured for Hockey Punjab in the 13th Hockey India Junior Men National Championship in 2023. His ascent continued in 2024 with his selection among the 40-member probables for the Junior Men’s National coaching camp. He was also a gold medallist with the Indian team

at the FIH Junior Asia Cup 2024 and a silver medallist at the recently concluded Sultan of Johor Cup 2025. As part of the leadership group, Prince Deep cherishes the responsibilities that come with India’s quest to win the Junior World Cup title on home soil after a nine-year gap. “As players, we have to perform under pressure and take responsibilities. There will always be pressure when you represent the country, but then it is a privilege,” he affirmed.

USL begins strategic review of RCB business, it ‘non-core’ operations

New Delhi: United Spirits Limited (USL) has announced that it is considering a strategic review of its investment in Royal Challengers Sports Private Limited (RCSPL), according to a regulatory filing by the company. USL announced that the process is expected to conclude by March 31, 2026. According to media reports, Serum Institute of India CEO Adar Poonawalla has been in talks with Diageo Plc regarding a potential acquisition of RCB Praveen Someshwar, Managing Director & CEO, United Spirits Ltd, said in a statement, “RCSPL has been a valuable and strategic asset for USL; however, it’s non-core to our alcoholic beverage business. This step reinforces USL’s & Diageo’s commitment to continue reviewing its India enterprise portfolio to enable sustained delivery of long-term value to all its stakeholders, while keeping RCSPL’s best interest in mind.” RCSPL is a wholly-owned subsidiary of USL. RCSPL’s business comprises ownership of the “Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB)” franchise teams that participate in the men’s Indian



Premier League (IPL) and Women’s Premier League (WPL) cricket tournaments hosted by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) annually. According to the company’s annual report, in FY25, RCSPL reported a revenue from operations of ₹504 crore, which declined by 21 per cent, primarily on account of a lower number of men’s IPL matches played by

RCB. During the financial year, RCSPL reported a profit of ₹140 crore against ₹222 crore in the previous financial year, primarily on account of a lower number of men’s IPL matches. However, following RCB’s win in June 2025, RCB surpassed Chennai Super Kings to emerge as the most valued IPL franchise at \$269 million (up from \$227 million).