

Himanta Biswa Sarma dismisses Congress claim of ‘vote chori’, calls allegation baseless

● *Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma dismissed Congress’s “vote chori” allegations against the BJP, stating that claims of voter list manipulation are unfounded since the electoral rolls have not yet been published.*

Guwahati, Jan 09: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma today rejected the Congress party’s allegation of “vote chori” against the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), stating that such a charge has no basis as the voter list has not yet been published. Reacting to the claims made by the Assam Congress, the Chief Minister said there is no question of voter list manipulation at this stage of the electoral process. He pointed out that without the publication of the electoral rolls, allegations of tampering or theft of votes are premature and misleading. “When no list has been published so far, then how can there be ‘vote chori’?” Sarma said while responding to the opposition’s remarks. Clarifying the issue, Sarma explained that the BJP’s state president had only asked booth-level agents (BLAs) to

carry out their routine responsibilities.

According to him, these responsibilities include checking voter lists at the local level, ensuring that names of ineligible voters are removed, and that eligible voters are properly included. He stressed that this exercise is part of the regular and lawful process followed before elections. The Chief Minister said that such activities are neither new nor illegal and are carried out by all political parties. He said maintaining an accurate voter list is a basic requirement for conducting free and fair elections and should not be turned into a political controversy. Sarma also highlighted the role of the Election Commission of India, stating that the constitutional body follows a clear, transparent, and well-established procedure while revising electoral rolls.

He added that political parties do not control the process but only assist by pointing out possible errors through their booth-level workers. According to the Chief Minister, the opposition’s allegation was aimed at creating confusion among voters and raising unnecessary doubts about the



election system.

He described the charge as misleading and said it could weaken public trust if such claims are made without facts. Earlier, the Assam Congress had ac-

cused the BJP of attempting to influence voter lists ahead of the elections. The party claimed that instructions given to BJP workers were part of a plan to manipulate the electoral pro-

cess. However, Sarma rejected these claims outright, saying that routine electoral work should not be misrepresented for political gain.

Over 22,000 Inner Line Permits issued at Sairang since rail link opened

Aizawl, Jan 09: More than 22,000 Inner Line Permits (ILPs) have been issued to visitors arriving at Sairang railway station in Mizoram since the start of train services on the new rail line, officials said. The ILP system has been in steady use ever since the Bairabi-Sairang railway line was inaugurated in September last year, opening direct rail access to the state capital area for the first time. According to police officials stationed at the ILP counter, the permits are being issued daily to tourists, traders and migrant workers entering the state by train. An officer posted at the station said that between September 13 and December 31, 2025, a total of 20,914 permits

were issued. From January 1 to January 8 this year, another 1,517 ILPs were granted, taking the total number to 22,431. “Each time a train arrives, around 100 to 200 people apply for ILPs. Usually, two trains reach the station every day,” the officer said. He added that tourists made up a large number of visitors during October and November, while December saw more arrivals of migrant workers and traders. The ILP is a mandatory travel document required for Indian citizens to enter protected areas like Mizoram under the provisions of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation. The rule is meant to regulate entry and protect the social and cultural identity of indigenous communities.



Officials said there have been occasional cases of people trying to enter without permits. Some beggars were also found travelling without valid documents and were sent back to their native places. Visitors have been arriving from different parts of the country, including Delhi, West Bengal, several southern states and neighbouring Assam, which accounts for the highest number of arrivals. Police personnel at the station admitted that manpower remains a major concern. Only 20

officers are currently posted at Sairang, handling ILP checks, general law and order, and railway-related duties. The Government Railway Police unit has not yet been formally notified, adding to their workload. “Sometimes trains get delayed and we work till 2 am. We have to report back by 7 am the next day,” an officer said, adding that no extra allowance is provided for railway policing duties. The 51.38-kilometre rail line was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 13, 2025. The project also marked the launch of Mizoram’s first Rajdhani Express connecting Aizawl with Delhi, along with two other trains linking the state capital to Kolkata and Guwahati.

Post-operative check-ups for cataract patients held in Manipur’s Kakching

Imphal, Jan 09: Under the Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY) scheme, post-operative check-ups for five cataract patients from Sugnu were conducted yesterday, organised by the District Social Welfare Office (DSWO) under the overall supervision of the District Administration Kakching. These five patients were identified during the cataract detection and surgery camp held on December 24, 2025 as part of the Good Governance Week. The cataract surgeries for the patients were carried out yesterday at the Kakching Eye Hospital. Also, pre-operative medical examinations were conducted today for another five patients identified during the cataract detection and surgery camp held on December 22, 2025 at the Deputy Commissioner’s Office Complex,



Kakching. The cataract surgeries for the patients have been scheduled for tomorrow. It may be mentioned that special drives for cataract detection and surgery for senior citizens under the AVYAY scheme were organised earlier by the District Social Welfare Office, Kakching in collaboration with the Medilane Foundation, Imphal Eye Clinic and Kakching Eye Hospital. The camps were held at the Deputy Commissioner’s Office Complex, Kakching on December 22, 2025; at KBM Kakching Khunou and Sugnu Municipality Office, Sugnu Bazar on December 24, 2025.

Poppy plantation destroyed, drug smugglers nabbed



Imphal, Jan 09: Security forces along with the Forest Department destroyed 20 acres of poppy cultivation yesterday at Thinghangiang Hill under Churachandpur-PS, Churachandpur district in Manipur. Two huts found at the plantation site were also set ablaze. On the other hand, during an operation in the area between Maukot Village and Singnat of Churachandpur District, a combined team of security forces and Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials arrested, two drug smugglers namely Hangkhankap and Khupjamlal. From their possession, 4.3 kgs of heroin powder contained in 320 soap cases, one four-wheeler Bolero bearing registration no. MN01S-1618, and one two-wheeler Bajaj Avenger bearing registration no. DL10-SH-3331 were recovered. Further, a case has been taken up by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence for further investigation. Security forces also apprehended one Krishna Mohon Namasudra (55) of Latingkhal Part-II, Jiribam district from his residence along with local DIC liquor and IMFL. From his possession, 20 litres of DIC liquor and 44 bottles, 180 ml each of different brands of IMFL were found.

Rail Connectivity Boosts Visitor Flow as 22,000 ILPs Issued at Mizoram’s Sairang Station

Aizawl, Jan 09: More than 22,000 Inner Line Permits (ILPs) have been issued to visitors at Mizoram’s Sairang railway station since the inauguration of the Bairabi-Sairang railway line in September last year, officials said. The Inner Line Permit is a mandatory document for Indian citizens seeking entry into protected areas such as Mizoram. The system operates under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR), 1873, which was notified during British rule in 1875. According to an official stationed at the ILP counter at Sairang railway station, a total of 20,914 permits were issued between September 13, 2025, and December 31, 2025, following the

launch of rail services. Between January 1 and January 8 this year, another 1,517 ILPs were issued, taking the total count to 22,431. “On an average, around 100 to 200 ILPs are issued with each train arrival. Generally, two trains reach the station every day,” the official said. Police officials noted that tourists formed the bulk of visitors during October and November, while migrant workers and traders accounted for most arrivals in December. Visitors have travelled to Mizoram from various parts of the country, including Delhi, West Bengal and several southern states, with the highest number coming from neighbouring Assam.

Authorities said several violations have been detected, including attempts to bypass ILP checks. Beggars found entering the state without valid permits were immediately sent back to their places of origin, officials added. Meanwhile, police personnel at Sairang station acknowledged facing a severe manpower shortage. In the absence of a formally notified Government Railway Police (GRP) unit, local police are currently managing GRP-related duties along with maintaining law and order and conducting ILP verification. “Although the GRP has not yet been officially notified, we are handling all related responsibilities, including traf-

fic and parking management. The situation becomes particularly challenging when 1,500 to 2,000 passengers arrive simultaneously,” said an officer, requesting anonymity. Currently, only 20 police personnel are posted at the station. They often work late into the night due to train delays and resume duty early in the morning. The officer added that no additional allowance is provided for performing GRP-related duties.

Rs 26,069 crore Kamala Hydropower Project gets green signal in Arunachal Pradesh

Itanagar, Jan 09: The Public Investment Board (PIB) has approved an expenditure of Rs 26,069.50 crore for the proposed 1,720 MW Kamala hydroelectric project in Arunachal Pradesh. Official sources said the approval was given on January 8, clearing a major hurdle for one of the largest hydropower projects planned in the state. Once completed, the project is expected to generate about 6,869.92 million units of electricity every year. Officials said the power generated will be clean and renewable, and will support India’s long-term goal of reducing carbon emissions and achieving Net Zero by 2070. The Kamala project is a storage-based hydropower scheme with a built-in flood moderation component. It will come up on the Kamala River, which is a major tributary of the Subansiri River. The project area will span across parts of Arunachal Pradesh, covering Kam-

le, Kra Daadi and Kurung Kumey districts. As part of the project, a 216-metre-high concrete gravity dam will be constructed, along with an underground powerhouse. The construction period has been fixed at eight years. Apart from electricity generation, the project is expected to help reduce flood impact in the Brahmaputra Valley. During heavy monsoon rainfall, the storage capacity of the dam is expected to provide downstream flood relief. The project will be implemented under the Build-Own-Operate-Transfer model through a joint venture. NHPC will hold a 74 per cent stake, while the Government of Arunachal Pradesh will own the remaining 26 per cent. The total project cost includes interest during construction and financing charges amounting to Rs 4,815.64 crore. Funding has been structured with a debt-equity ratio



of 70:30. The project will also receive central government support, including Rs 1,340 crore for enabling infrastructure and Rs 4,743.98 crore specifically for the flood moderation component. The state government has agreed to reimburse 100 per cent of the state GST. Based on these factors, the levelised tariff has been estimated at Rs 5.97 per unit.

In Brief

Kamala Hydropower Project

Itanagar: The Public Investment Board (PIB) has approved Rs 26,069.50 crore for the 1,720 MW Kamala hydroelectric project in Arunachal Pradesh, a significant step for this large-scale power initiative. Set to generate approximately 6,869.92 million units annually, the project aims to contribute to India’s carbon emissions reduction and Net Zero goal by 2070. It features a storage-based scheme with flood moderation on the Kamala River, including a 216-metre-high dam and underground powerhouse, with an eight-year construction timeline. The project will alleviate flood impacts in the Brahmaputra Valley and will be developed through a joint venture, primarily financed through a 70:30 debt-equity structure and supported by central government funding. The expected levelised tariff is Rs 5.97 per unit.

Poppy plantation destroyed

Imphal: Security forces in Manipur destroyed 20 acres of poppy cultivation at Thinghangiang Hill and set fire to two huts at the site. In a separate operation between Maukot Village and Singnat, they, along with Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials, arrested two drug smugglers and seized 4.3 kg of heroin in 320 soap cases, along with two vehicles. Additionally, a man named Krishna Mohon Namasudra was apprehended with local liquor and IMFL, totaling 20 litres of DIC liquor and 44 bottles of IMFL.

76 New Meghalaya Sub-Inspectors Appointed

Shillong, Jan 09: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Friday attended the distribution of appointment letters programme for newly recruited police personnel at the 2nd Meghalaya Police Battalion in Goeragre. The Chief Minister was accorded a guard of honour on arrival, followed by a felicitation ceremony. Addressing the gathering, Sangma congratulated the 76 newly appointed Sub-Inspectors, describing the occasion as a significant milestone in their personal and professional lives. He noted that more than 21,000 candidates had applied for the posts, underlining the competitive nature of the recruitment process. Emphasising public trust in the police, the Chief Minister urged the recruits to live up to the expectations of the government, their families and the people of Meghalaya. He described Sub-Inspectors as the “eyes and ears” of the police and the government, playing a key role as a link between citizens and decision-makers. He also stressed the importance of humane and people-centric policing and cautioned against misuse of authority.

Sangma advised the recruits to take their forthcoming training seriously, calling it the foundation of their policing careers. He also commended the Director General of Police and the Recruitment Board for conducting the recruitment process in a fair and transparent manner despite challenges. Earlier, Director General of Police Idashisha Nongrang said the recruitment process began with the issuance of the advertisement in March 2024 and thanked the Chief Minister and other senior officials for their support. She said the induction of 76 Sub-Inspectors strengthened the Meghalaya Police force, which currently has over 17,000 personnel. She informed that the recruits would soon report to the North Eastern Police Academy, with basic training scheduled to begin on January 30. The batch includes 49 male and 27 female officers, with women accounting for over 35 per cent of the intake.

Assam LoP requests that CEC address anomalies

Guwahati, Jan 09: Assam's Leader of Opposition Debabrata Saikia wrote to Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, alleging "serious irregularities" in the draft electoral rolls of the state, published after a Special Revision (SR). The senior Congress leader demanded the halt of the finalisation of the electoral rolls until "all irregularities are thoroughly verified and resolved" to ensure the removal of any unauthorised or "unknown" voter entries. Assam has registered a 1.35 per cent increase in the number of voters as per the integrated draft electoral roll for the state, published on December 30 after the SR was conducted, with months left for the assembly elections. "I am writing to express my deep concern regarding serious irregularities observed during the ongoing SR of electoral rolls in Assam. Media reports and ground-level feedback indicate unauthorised inclusion of non-Assamese speaking voters and other procedural lapses that threaten the integrity of the electoral process," Saikia said in his letter to Kumar on Monday.

He alleged that specific instances have come to light where "unknown" persons have been added as voters in households without the knowledge of residents. Saikia cited examples of four non-Assamese individuals enrolled at House No 44 and 15 on Tayabulla Road in Guwahati unbeknownst to the family, while voter entries have been seen against non-existent Household No 00 in the Nazira constituency. "Such malpractice often goes unnoticed, potentially leading to these 'unknown' voters casting their ballots...The inclusion of entries under such fabricated designations not only breaches procedural norms but also severely compromises the verifiability and integrity of the electoral roll, casting serious doubt on the authenticity of the entire revision process,"

the Congress legislator claimed.Sounding caution, Saikia said such samples of "violations" pose a "grave threat" to the democratic values and the security of the people of Assam, including the constitutional rights and socio-cultural heritage."Additionally, this incident reinforces Rahul Gandhi's allegation to the ECI regarding vote manipulation in the electorate's consciousness and exposes an extensive systemic problem," he added.Reacting to the opposition's allegations on draft roll, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that anyone who has any objections can "fill Form No 6, 7 and 8 to effect changes in the final electoral roll" as per the established norm."Instead of crying foul in the media, the opposition should follow set procedures if they have any genuine concerns," he added.Saikia also pointed out that the electoral draft has seen the "removal of more than 10 lakh individuals for various reasons", but the emergence of discrepancies suggests that the credibility of the electoral roll has been "compromised"."Therefore, data verification is of the utmost importance before finalisation of the electoral roll...These malpractices do not merely violate procedural norms; they represent a breach of the fundamental protections enshrined in Clause 6 of the Assam Accord and disregard the Hon'ble Supreme Court's directive to uphold this constitutional safeguard," he said.In this context, such irregularities can be construed as an alleged attempt to "manipulate" the upcoming electoral process, thereby "undermining" the decisive voice of the legitimate electorate of Assam, the Congress leader said with apprehension."These discrepancies not only violate electoral guidelines but also undermine public trust in the democratic process. Considering these issues, I urge the Election Commission of India to take immediate steps to safeguard the credibility of the electoral roll and ensure a free and fair electoral process," he added.Saikia demanded that the CEC conduct a swift and transparent investigation into all reported discrepancies and make the findings public."Halt the finalisation of electoral rolls until all irregularities are thoroughly verified and resolved, ensuring the removal of any unauthorised or 'unknown' voter entries," he said.Saikia also asked the poll panel to implement a uniform addressing system and strengthen verification protocols to prevent such issues. "Elections are the cornerstone of our democracy, and any compromise in the accuracy of electoral rolls erodes public confidence and democratic values. I trust the ECI will take decisive action to uphold the sanctity of the electoral process in Assam," he added.The draft roll reflected a total of 2,52,01,624 electors, representing a 1.35 per cent increase from the previous final roll published in January 2025.A total of 7,86,841 additions and 4,47,196 deletions have taken place from January 6 to December 27 last year. During the SR process, 4,78,992 deceased electors and 5,23,680 shifted voters were identified. Another 53,619 multiple entries were detected.The Election Commission, however, said that these names have not yet been deleted. These will only be processed for removal or shifting after formal applications are received during the current claims and objections period.Claims and objections can be filed from December 27 to January 22, with special campaign dates fixed for January 3-4 and January 10-11.The final electoral roll will be published on February 10.

Manipur MP fumes as security forces prevent him from visiting blast site

Imphal, Jan 09: Manipur Congress MP Dr Angomba Bimol Akoijam was on Tuesday denied access to the village at Bishnupur-Churachandpur inter-district border where multiple blasts were set off on Monday morning.Furious over denial of entry by the security forces, the MP remarked "This is where the border of India begins, India with Kuki... I cannot go to this side because this is the India-Kuki border."The Lok Sabha from Manipur on Tuesday visited Nganukhong, the village struck by IED blasts on early Monday that injured two innocent civilians near an abandoned Meitei home along the inter-district border.He was, however, stopped by the Central security forces from accessing the village which lies at the sensitive zone of the ongoing Meitei-Kuki conflict."At the illegal buffer zone in this village, the MP was stopped by Central forces from proceeding further," the office of the MP said in a release."This is where the border of India begins, India with Kuki... I cannot go to this side because this is India-Kuki border," the release quoted the MP's remark on location.It underscored the unconstitutional division turning Manipur into a fortified divide, the release alleged.The MP alleged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah were directly accountable. "Mr. Amit Shah, you must understand this...



Modi ji should also understand... You're dividing my own home state by putting up this illegal buffer zone," the MP asserted, adding that with forces under President's Rule blocking even Parliament members, a travesty absent in other Indian riot zones.Notably, this is not the first time the MP was prevented from visiting the fringe and vulnerable areas of the ongoing more than two and a half year old violent crisis.There were earlier instances of the MP confronting the Central security forces from not allowing him entry into violent-affected Meitei villages too.

Pema Khandu reviews plan to develop Chakzam Bridge as heritage tourism hub

Itanagar, Jan 09: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Wednesday reviewed the master plan for development of a proposed tourist and heritage centre around the historic Chakzam Bridge in Tawang district, stressing a community-first approach to preserve the region's rich indigenous engineering legacy. Highlighting the civilisational depth of the Himalayas, Khandu said that the region had a long history of innovative engineering.The Himalayas have a long history of innovative engineering, with iron-chain suspension bridges existing here centuries before such methods appeared elsewhere," Khandu said in a post on X, after the meeting held at his office here.Refering to the Chakzam Bridge, Khandu said the 15th-century structure stands as a powerful example of indigenous engineering and community-oriented infrastructure.The historic Chakzam Bridge at Mogto, traditionally attributed to a Buddhist Monk Thang-tong Gyalpo and constructed in the 15th century, stands as an important example of indigenous engineering and community-oriented infrastruc-



ture," the chief minister said.Khandu said the proposed heritage and tourism centre at Mogto in Tawang district has been envisioned as a model that places local communities at the centre of conservation and development. "This heritage must be protected, celebrated and shared in a way that benefits the people living around it," he said. The Chakzam Bridge, located near Mukto village,

spans the Tawang Chu River and lies about 20-25 km from Tawang town in the westernmost part of Arunachal Pradesh.One of the oldest surviving iron-chain suspension bridges in the region, it connects settlements on both sides of the river and remains a key cultural landmark in the high Himalayan terrain. The chief minister added that the bridge is already a point of interest for visitors travelling

from Tawang towards Dirang and Bomdila, and said planned development would strengthen heritage tourism while safeguarding its historical and cultural significance. He underlined that the project should balance conservation, community participation and sustainable tourism, ensuring that the legacy of the Chakzam Bridge continues to inspire future generations.

Gold biscuits and cash worth Rs 21.87 crore seized

Agartala, Jan 09: In a major crackdown on smuggling of gold and financial crimes, the Assam Rifles, in a joint operation with the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), seized gold biscuits and unaccounted Indian currency worth Rs 21.87 crore in Tripura, officials said on Wednesday. A defence spokesman said that acting on secret inputs, the joint operation was conducted at Shantipara in the heart of the capital city and in Dhaleswar on the outskirts of the city and arrested three persons, identified as Kunal Jaiswal, Ajay Naha and Rakesh Das.He said that during the operation, gold biscuits weighing approximately 14 kg, valued at around Rs 19 crore, along with Indian currencies amounting to Rs 2.87 crore, were recovered."The successful seizure was carried out by Assam Rifles and DRI based on specific intelligence inputs," the spokesman said.The seized gold and currency were subsequently handed over to the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) for further investigation and legal proceed-

ings.An Assam Rifles statement said that the operation highlights the continued vigilance and coordinated efforts of Assam Rifles in collaboration with sister agencies to curb illegal activities and maintain security in the region.Based on intelligence input, in another operation of trafficking of counterfeit goods, Assam Rifles, in a joint operation with the Customs Department, Silchar (Assam), recovered counterfeit cigarettes from a godown worth Rs 34 lakhs.The consignment was being transported via Silchar for further supply to other states in India, the defence spokesman stated. An official statement said that the Assam Rifles and Customs Department in Silchar have been at the forefront of operations against counterfeit goods in the region, conducting regular operations to disrupt and dismantle the counterfeit networks.This seizure is a significant milestone in the effort to combat counterfeit goods trafficking, the spokesman said.

Himanta meets Shah to talk about NDA seat sharing and the Assam elections

Imphal, Jan 09: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said he met Union Home Minister Amit Shah to discuss the seat-sharing agreement with NDA partners for the upcoming assembly elections in the state. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an official function, Sarma said the BJP is likely to formalise its seat-sharing arrangement with the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and other smaller NDA allies by February 15.Last month, Sarma had said the finalisation of the alliance with existing NDA partners was expected to be over by January 15."Our seat sharing and other details related to the alliance will be finalised by February 15. Last night, I went to meet the Union home minister and discussed it. Hagrama Mohilary (BPF chief) was also with me during the meeting," the CM said.Prior to this meeting, UPPL president Pramod Boro had also met Shah, he added.The CM went to Delhi on Tuesday in a special flight and returned on Wednesday morning."Yesterday, I had a long discussion with AGP president Atul Bora. Our discussions are going on. We will amicably decide on a seat-sharing agreement and there will be no issue at all," Sarma said.He, however, did not share any reason for the delay of a month in finalising the seat-sharing agreement and other details for the elections.Sarma also said new faces always get an advantage in every election and this time will not be different.The BJP currently has an alliance with AGP, United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) and Bodoland People's Front (BPF).Besides, Rabha Hasong Joutha Sangram Samiti (RHJSS) and Janashakti Party (JP) are also NDA constituents in Assam.On December 5, Sarma said, "I feel we will complete our discussion with AGP regarding poll alliance and seat-sharing before Magh Bihu."

In the same manner, BJP's talks with the RHJSS and JP would also be over by Magh Bihu, which is celebrated usually on January 13-15, he had said."My target is that all understandings with our allies should be formalised



by January 15," the CM had said.Assembly elections are likely to take place during March-April.The BJP presently has 64 seats in the 126-member House, while its allies AGP have nine, UPPL seven, and BPF three MLAs.In the opposition, Congress has 26 seats, AIUDF 15, CPI(M) one, and one Independent legislator.In August, several NDA leaders including Sarma, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, and AGP chief Atul Bora had set a target of winning 100 seats, with Sarma later claiming the ruling alliance had high chances in 103 constituencies.

Sikkim govt signs MoU with IIFT to boost marketing of local products

Sikkim, Jan 09: The Commerce and Industries department of Sikkim on Wednesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) Kolkata, to boost marketing of local products. An Export Facilitation Cell was also inaugurated on the occasion for marketing of goods from Sikkim. In her address after signing the MoU, the Commerce and Industries department secretary, Karma D Youtso, said that the MoU aims to guide local entrepreneurs in facilitating trade in both local and international markets. "The entrepreneurs would be guided on policy decisions and on utilisation of the export facilitation cell for marketing of goods produced in Sikkim in both markets within the country and abroad," she said. Youtso said that the entrepreneurs have been provided with a conducive environment under the leadership of Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang. She said that due to the 'One Family-One Entrepreneur' scheme, entrepreneurship in the state has grown significantly from around 1,000 MSME entrepreneurs in 2020 to nearly 30,000 at present. The Commerce & Industries secretary said that IIFT Kolkata would assist the department in im-



portant areas such as policy framework, capacity building programmes for local entrepreneurs, and skill development of departmental manpower. An export coordinator has been assigned to facilitate the functioning of the export facilitation cell. The initial agreement with IIFT has been signed for a period of three years and will be reviewed annually. Youtso said that the export facilitation cell and all export-related activities are initiatives under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) scheme of the Union MSME Ministry. She also said that export-

ers can avail a 50 per cent transport subsidy by submitting relevant bills. She said that a 50 per cent subsidy would also be provided to entrepreneurs who have used cold storage facilities for export purposes. IIFT Kolkata Professor Dr K Rangarajan appreciated the proactive steps taken by the Commerce & Industries department to strengthen the export ecosystem in Sikkim. He said that IIFT Kolkata would work closely with the department to build export readiness among local entrepreneurs through training programmes, market guidance, policy support, and handholding initiatives.

Interim committee formed in Delhi to seek justice for Anjel Chakma, raise safety concerns of northeast students

Kohima, Jan 09: An interim committee has been formed in New Delhi to pursue justice in the death of Anjel Chakma and to raise wider concerns about the safety and rights of students from the Northeast living in different parts of the country. The decision was taken at a meeting of several Northeast student organisations held on January 8 at the Nagaland State Guest House in R.K. Puram, Delhi. The meeting brought together representatives of 17 student bodies from across the Northeastern states. The meeting was chaired by Naga Students’ Union Delhi president D Sozio Mao, who led the discussions on the need for a united platform to address

safety, justice and discrimination issues faced by students from the region. A general briefing on the formation and objectives of the interim committee was presented by Northeast Students’ Society, Delhi University general secretary Abhilasha Saikia. She said the committee would act as a common forum to coordinate efforts and engage with authorities on urgent concerns. Updates on the recent hearing by the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes were shared by Delhi Chakma Students’ Union president Bipul Chakma, who raised serious concerns over alleged lapses by the Uttarakhand Police in handling the case related to Anjel Chakma’s death.

During the discussion, participants agreed on several key demands. These include a CBI inquiry into the formation and objectives of laws against racial discrimination, strengthening special police units for the protection of people from the Northeast such as SPUNER in different states, and inclusion of Northeast history in NCERT textbooks. The need to improve the functioning of SPUNER in Delhi was also discussed, with members pointing to staff shortages and limited outreach. Suggestions included better coordination with student groups from other regions, awareness campaigns, use of social media, and the development of complaint-based mobile applications.



After detailed deliberations, the interim committee was formally constituted. D Sozio Mao was named convener. Sikkim Students Association Delhi president Bindash Chettri and Bipul Chakma were appointed

co-convenors. Abhilasha Saikia and All Bodo Students’ Union Delhi president Hadungra Narzary were named secretaries. Each participating organisation will also nominate one member to the committee.

Northeast to Get First Highway-Based Emergency Landing Strip in Dibrugarh–Moran

Guwahati, Jan 09: Assam is set to get its first highway-based emergency landing strip, with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announcing on Thursday that the facility along the Dibrugarh–Moran stretch of the National Highway will be inaugurated in February.

Speaking to the press during a welfare scheme seed-capital distribution program at Khowang, Dibrugarh, Sarma said the Centre may give the project a high-profile launch. “There is a possibility that the Prime Minister may inaugurate this advanced landing facility in his aircraft. If not, we will try to involve the Defence Minister,” he added.

The 4.2-km highway strip in Moran is designed to accommodate both civil-

ian aircraft and Indian Air Force fighter jets, including Sukhoi and Rafale platforms. Sarma had earlier noted, “If an aircraft cannot land at Dibrugarh airport for any reason, this highway strip will act as an alternative.”

The project is being implemented by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL) and will be the first of its kind in the Northeast. The Centre has also approved two more highway-based emergency landing strips in Assam — one along the Boroma–Tihu stretch in Lower Assam and another between Nagaon and Lumding at Sankardevnagar. Once operational, the landing strip is expected to enhance strategic flexibility for the Armed Forces

■ Assam will soon have its first highway-based emergency landing strip, announced by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, with an inauguration planned for February along the Dibrugarh–Moran stretch of National Highway.

along the sensitive Northeast frontier and strengthen civil aviation preparedness during emergencies. The Chief Minister further revealed plans to set up helipads at regular intervals along major highways, particularly in highland areas prone to flooding. His aim is to create helipads every 50–100 km and transform the Numaligarh–Dibrugarh–Tinsukia corridor into a modern, resilient transport and emergency-response corridor.

Mizoram Governor felicitates Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar awardee Esther Hnamte

Aizawl, Jan 09: Esther Lalduhawmi Hnamte, recipient of India’s highest civilian honour for children -- the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2025 -- was felicitated by Mizoram Governor, General (Dr) Vijay Kumar Singh (Retd) at Lok Bhavan, Aizawl on Thursday.

Congratulating Esther Hnamte on her remarkable achievement, General (Dr) Vijay Kumar Singh said that her success is a matter of immense pride not only for Mizoram but for the entire nation. He encouraged her to continue disci-



plined training and strive for greater excellence in the future, noting that she stands as an inspiration and a symbol of potential for

young talents across the country. The Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar, instituted by the Minis-

try of Women and Child Development, recognises exceptional achievements of children aged 5 to 18 years in seven categories -- Bravery, Art & Culture, Environment, Innovation, Social Service, Science & Technology, and Sports. This year, 20 outstanding children from 18 States and Union Territories were selected for the prestigious award. Esther Hnamte was honoured in the Art & Culture category by President of India, Droupadi Murmu, at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on December 26, 2025.

Hojai District Reels Under Human–Elephant Conflict, Three Dead in Four Days

Hojai, Jan 09: Hojai district is facing a severe crisis due to the rising human–elephant conflict. In the early days of the New Year, a third fatality has occurred, spreading fear, anger, and deep concern across forest-fringe communities. In just four days, three people have lost their lives in separate incidents involving wild elephants.

The latest incident took place on the night of January 4 in the Radhanagar area of Hojai, where a middle-aged man, identified as Prakash Biswas, was trampled to death after a herd of wild elephants strayed into the locality in search of food.

Local sources reported that the elephants broke into Biswas’s house, completely destroying the structure and attacking those inside. Amid the chaos,

Prakash Biswas was crushed to death on the spot.

Frequent incursions of wild elephants into human settlements have left residents living in constant fear and sleepless nights. Locals allege that the Forest Department has failed to take effective preventive measures to control the regular movement of elephants from forest areas into villages, resulting in growing panic after sunset.

Forest officials and Hojai police reached the spot following the incident and initiated necessary formalities. However, the tragedy has once again raised serious questions about preparedness, early-warning mechanisms, and long-term mitigation strategies to address the escalating conflict.

The death of Prakash Biswas marks

the third fatal elephant attack in the district since the start of the New Year. On January 1, 55-year-old Basudev Chouhan, a resident of the Milik Basti area, was killed when a wild elephant attacked him while he was grazing his cow near the forest.

A day later, on January 2, another tragic incident occurred near the Theplaguri forest area adjacent to Komorakata. A group of eight people returning from a picnic after sunset was suddenly surrounded by a herd of wild elephants. In the attack, Anil Kumar Singh, a resident of the Moina Pur area of Hojai, was trampled to death on the spot.

The multiple fatalities have intensified demands for rapid and effective measures to control the human–elephant conflict in the district.

AR organises specialist medical camp in Manipur’s Tengenoupal

Imphal, Jan 09: Assam Rifles organised a mega specialist medical camp at Tengenoupal High School to provide accessible healthcare to remote and underserved areas of Tengenoupal District. Conducted under the Operation Sadbhavna initiative, the camp featured a team of specialised doctors from the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), who offered comprehensive consultations in Ophthalmology, General Medicine, Paediatrics, Gynaecology, Dentistry and Orthopaedics. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from approximately 2000 local civilians who received examinations, preventive healthcare counselling and free medicines. The participation of specialists from the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) facilitated high-level inter-

vention across several key medical disciplines. A significant number of women and children received specialised consultations in Gynaecology and Paediatrics, which ensured that these vulnerable groups were provided with vital supplements and diagnostic advice. In the fields of Ophthalmology and Orthopaedics, the team treated numerous elderly residents for age-related vision impairment and musculoskeletal issues often exacerbated by the rugged terrain. Furthermore, the Dentistry section provided essential procedures while counselling patients on preventive oral care, offering a service that is rarely accessible in these underserved areas. A large contingent of 65 officials and troops ensured the smooth execution of the camp through efficient coordination and logistical support.

Mizoram Lokayukta registers 20 corruption complaints in 2024- 25

Aizawl, Jan 09: Mizoram Lokayukta has registered 20 corruption-related complaint during 2024-2025.

The Sixth Annual Report mentioned that of these complaints, six were referred for preliminary inquiry. Since its establishment in March 2019, the Mizoram Lokayukta has registered 91 cases as of January 8, 2026. Of these, 58 have been disposed of, with 33 remaining under preliminary inquiry and investigation.

Over the period, eight preliminary inquiry reports were received, five cases were disposed of, and two persons were convicted in one case. In compliance with Section 47 of the Mizoram Lokayukta Act, 2014, Lalmalsawma, Chairperson of the Mizoram Lokayukta, on Thursday presented the Sixth Annual Report for the period 2024-2025 to General (Dr) Vijay Kumar Singh (Retd), Governor of Mizoram. Covering



April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025, the report is scheduled to be tabled in the Mizoram Legislative Assembly. During the meeting, Chairperson Lalmalsawma, accompanied

by Members Lalsanglura and Joel Joseph Denga (Judicial Member), briefed the Governor on the Lokayukta’s overall status, key activities, future plans, case handling,

disciplinary actions, current progress, and expected outcomes. The Governor commended their efforts and urged them to intensify their work going forward.

Four Rohingyas arrested in Assam’s Cachar district for illegal entry

Silchar, Jan 09: At least four Rohingya nationals, including two women, were arrested by security forces in Assam’s Cachar district on Friday for allegedly entering India illegally, police said.

According to officials, the four were apprehended in the Katigora area of Cachar district after it was established that they had crossed the international border and entered Indian territory through illegal means. During the operation, police recovered forged documents from their possession, including fake refugee cards.

All four have been taken into police custody for further interrogation and legal proceedings, officials added.

The arrests come amid an intensified crackdown on illegal infiltration in the state. Recently, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the government would

step up action against undocumented foreign nationals, asserting that Assam would not be allowed to become a refuge for illegal immigrants.

The Chief Minister said the state had carried out a large-scale “push-back” operation in 2025 to deport illegal Bangladeshi nationals and that the drive would be pursued with greater intensity in the coming year. “In 2026, we will be ruthless in this effort and push back even more. Assam is not your breeding ground,” he said.

CM Sarma has repeatedly maintained that illegal infiltration poses a serious threat to Assam’s demographic balance, social harmony and internal security. He said the government remains committed to safeguarding the rights of indigenous communities and enforcing the law without compromise.

The Chief Minister has also stated that infiltration has long been a major challenge for Assam, particularly in border districts, and alleged that previous governments failed to address the issue decisively. He credited recent administrative measures, enhanced border surveillance and improved coordination between state police and central security forces for improved enforcement on the ground.

Reiterating his government’s commitment to the full implementation of the Assam Accord, CM Sarma said provisions related to the detection, deletion and deportation of illegal foreigners would be strictly enforced. He stressed that protecting Assam’s cultural identity, land rights and demographic integrity remains a top priority of his administration.

Silchar prepares for record-breaking music concert, over one lakh visitors expected in February

Silchar, Jan 09: Silchar is set to witness a major moment in the history of live music in Northeast India as preparations begin for what is being described as the biggest concert ever held in the region. Organisers have said that more than one lakh people are expected to attend the two-day music event, scheduled to take place on February 7 and 8, 2026. The concert will be held during the month of Makar and is expected to bring together music lovers from across Assam and neighbouring states. According to the organisers, the event

Silchar will host a landmark concert, expected to be the largest in Northeast India, on February 7 and 8, 2026, with over one lakh attendees anticipated.

will feature well-known Bollywood performers and is planned on a scale that has not been attempted before in the Northeast. If attendance estimates are met, it will set a new record for concert footfall in the region. The festival is being organised and produced by Aeroeast, which has been working to bring large live entertainment

events to Northeast India.

The Silchar concert has also been announced as an opening event ahead of a larger Kite Festival planned to be held in Sonai, near Silchar, in December 2026. The event is powered by Aeroeast Production Studio, which was recently associated with the production of an international concert by American rapper Post Malone for BookMyShow Live. Organisers said their aim is to build a strong concert culture in the Northeast and create opportunities for artists, audiences and local businesses.

BTR Accord Signatories Demand Action on Clauses

Kokrajhar, Jan 09: A tripartite review meeting chaired by Neeraj Kumar Bansod addressed the implementation of the BTR accord, involving the Government of India, Assam, BTC authority, ABSU, UBPO, and Ex-NDFB Welfare Association via video conference. Key issues raised by ABSU President Dipen Boro included urgent implementation timelines, the amendment of the Sixth

Schedule for BTC autonomy, inclusion of more villages, establishment of BKWAC, ST Hill status for Boro Kacharis, educational infrastructure funding, and military recruitment. Boro emphasized the need for swift action, warning of a potential mass movement if delays continue. Attendees included various officials from the Government of Assam and signatory organizations, highlighting

a collective push for timely action on the agreement’s clauses.



Nirmala Sitharaman Endorsing Govt Scheme With Rs 25.5 Lakh

New Delhi: A social media post is going viral that shows Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman endorsing a government scheme. In the video FM Sitharaman is heard saying that people can get Rs 25.5 lakh on the very first month of the scheme. Fact-checking agency PIB has refuted the social media claim. PIB has stated that the claim being made in this post is misleading. Sponsored advertisements circulating on Facebook are using AI-generated and digitally manipulated videos of Union Finance Minister @nsitharaman to falsely promote an investment scheme,” PIB FactCheck has tweeted.

It added that this claim is completely fake. Neither the Finance Minister nor the Government of India has endorsed or promoted any such investment scheme. PIB has also cautioned the people and urged them to follow these preventive steps- Always verify financial claims through official government portals or regulatory bodies like RBI and SEBI. AI-Generated Scam: The video uses advanced technology to manipulate the Finance Minister’s voice and facial features to make it appear she is promoting a “get-rich-quick” scheme.The Deception: The fraudulent ads often claim that an initial investment of around ₹21,000–₹25,000 can generate high monthly returns (such as ₹20 lakh to ₹25.5 lakh).Phishing Alert: The links



associated with these videos are likely phishing attempts aimed at stealing personal and banking information. A video featuring Indian Finance Minister The video purportedly shows them urging Indian citizens to invest Rs 21,000 in the project, promising returns of Rs 15 lakh in a month. Let’s verify the authenticity of this video. Claim: Nirmala Sitharaman and Shaktikanta Das are promoting a government income-generating project, urging people to invest Rs 21,000 to receive returns of Rs 15 lakh within

a month.Fact: This video was manipulated using AI-driven facial feature alterations and voice cloning. Neither Nirmala Sitharaman nor Shaktikanta Das promoted such projects. the key-frames from the viral video and found that the clip of Nirmala Sitharaman was taken from her News18 interview on 16 September 2024, where she discussed the Indian economy, GST, and Modi 3.0 etc. She did not mention any government income-generating project offering Rs 15 lakh returns for a Rs 21,000 investment.

HUL slapped with Rs 1,560 crore income tax demand for FY22

New Delhi: Hindustan Unilever (HUL) has received an income tax assessment order along with a demand notice of Rs 1,559.69 crore for the financial year 2021–22, the company disclosed in a regulatory filing on January 8. As per the company’s filing with the exchanges, the order was issued by the Assistant Commissioner of Income Tax, Central Circle 5(2), Mumbai. It also added that this notice comes under Section 143(3) read with Section 144C(13) of the Income Tax Act, 1961.The demand notice has been raised under Section 156 of the Act and pertains to the assessment year 2022–23. HUL said it received the communication on 7 January 2026 According to the company, the tax authorities have made transfer pricing adjustments relating to payments made to related parties, including a challenge to the valuation of such payments.

In addition, corporate tax adjustments have been proposed, largely linked to disallowances in the nature of depreciation claimed by the company.HUL noted that the nature of these adjustments is similar to those made for the previous financial year, indicating continuity in the tax department’s approach rather than a new area of contention. by the authority. HUL said it will file the necessary appeal before the appropriate appellate authority within the permissible time-



line prescribed under law. Despite the size of the demand, the company said the assessment order is not expected to have any material impact on its financial position, operations, or other activities

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Trump tariff: US Supreme Court verdict today; can stock market recover

New Delhi: Stock investors in India were nervous on Friday, ahead of the US Supreme Court verdict on the legality of Trump tariffs. The US apex court may rule today on the US President Donald Trump’s use of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to impose sweeping global tariffs, including 10 per cent baseline rates and higher reciprocal duties on key trading partners. The ruling may centre on two key questions: first, whether the White House can legally invoke emergency powers to impose tariffs; and second, if the tariffs are struck down, whether the US government would be required to issue refunds. On Friday, the BSE Sensex settle at 83,576.24, down 604.72 points



or 0.72 per cent. Nifty shed 193.55 points, or 0.75 per cent, to close at 25,683.30, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit In-

vestments, said that after the sharp correction in the previous session, triggered by the possibility of a nearly 500 per cent tariff on India

under the provisions of the Russia Sanctioning Act approved by President Donald Trump, markets were focused on the verdict now There is a high probability of the verdict going against Trump. But the details are significant: that is, whether it would be a partial striking down of the tariffs Nomura in its global macro outlook 2026 note last month said if Trump’s tariffs through his emergency powers are ruled as illegal, this would cut the US effective tariff rate by nearly half (currently around 11-12 per cent). Without immediate usage of other trade acts from Trump to reimpose tariffs, markets would likely initially view the outcome as additional support for the Fed to cut, it noted.

JSW Steel’s Q3 FY26 production Output falls 5% as Vijaynagar plant shutdown hits

New Delhi: JSW Steel reported a 5% QoQ steel output decline in the third quarter of FY26. The company’s consolidated steel production in Q3 FY26 came down to 7.48 million tonnes, compared to 7.90 million tonnes in the previous quarter. The steelmaker said that the shutdown of a blast furnace at the Vijaynagar facility is the primary reason for the production decline in the quarter. The company elaborated that the blast furnace 3 at the

Vijaynagar plant has been under shutdown since September for a capacity upgrade and is likely to resume operations by the end of this fiscal year. “The capacity utilisation for Indian operations for the quarter excluding BF3 capacity was at 93% and including BF3 capacity was at 85%” JSW Steel said in an exchange filing. JSW Steel’s production in India was at 7.28 million tonnes in Q3 FY26. The company’s India production was down 5 per cent QoQ (7.66 MT in Q2 FY26), but a 7 per cent higher on YoY (6.8 MT in Q3 FY25). JSW Steel’s production from the Ohio plant was at 0.28 million tonnes in Q3 FY26, compared to 0.24 million tonnes in Q2 FY26. In the last 9 months, i.e the three quarter of

FY26, JSW Steel’s consolidated steel output stood at 22.65 million tonnes, 12 per cent higher than the same period in the last



fiscal year. JSW Steel Q3 result date JSW Steel has informed the stock exchanges that its quarterly financial statements for Q3 FY26 will be released on January 23, 2026. In the last one month, the company’s share price has gained upward momentum, rising 4.7 per cent. As the company prepares for the release of its Q3 results, another important development for the company is the Competition Commission of India’s probe, which found the company in breach of antitrust law for colluding on steel selling prices JSW Steel’s Q3 FY26 production dropped 5% QoQ due to a Vijaynagar blast furnace shutdown, even as year-on-year output stayed higher. Company’s US output also suffered in the quarter.

Due to multiple lender control, the RBI objects to Bain Capital’s Manappuram Finance deal

New Delhi: India’s central bank has raised objections to Bain Capital’s plan to acquire a controlling stake in Manappuram Finance as the U.S. firm has a controlling interest in another Indian lender, three people with direct knowledge of the matter said.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) frowns on investors having control of multiple lenders – whether they be banks or non-banks. Private equity firms that have held 20% or more in non-bank lenders have previously had to divest holdings in the face of RBI opposition. Bain, which announced its planned investment in the gold loan firm last March, is exploring a phased divestment in Tyger Capital, a smaller firm, to ad-

dress the RBI’s concerns, one of the people said.The sources were not authorised to speak to media and declined to be identified.Bain declined to comment. It received approval for the Manappuram deal, which was announced last March, from India’s market regulator and the competition commission but the RBI is the final authority for the clearance of any large stake purchases in banks and non-bank lenders.

The proposed deal calls for Bain to acquire 18% of Manappuram for around 44 billion rupees (\$488 million) after which it would launch an open offer for an additional 26%. That would make Bain one of two controlling shareholders with the right to influence management decisions.

Classifying air purifiers as medical devices cannot determine rate of GST, may affect market supply

New Delhi:The Union government has told the Delhi High Court that the push to make air purifiers cheaper by first classifying them as “medical devices” could hurt availability by triggering extra compliance and limiting market entry. In its counter affidavit, the Centre has argued that such a move may “affect supply in a market already facing constraints,” as quoted by The Indian Express. The air purifiers are classified under HSN 8421 and attract 18% GST, whereas many medical devices under HSN 9018-9022 hold 5% GST after the Council’s rationalisation exercise. The Centre has restated that the GST Council, which was set under Article 279A, is the only constitutional body empowered to recommend GST rates, classifications, and exemptions. The court-led directions would violate the separation of powers and upset cooperative federalism. The government cautioned that “if courts were to issue directions on GST rates or compel specific recommendations, the GST Council would be reduced to a mere rubber stamp,” as quoted by The Indian Express. As per a report by ANI, the Centre pointed to the institutional process for GST changes, including scrutiny by the Fitment Committee. It has also been suggested to consider the PIL as a representation to the GST Council Secretariat. The petitioner did not accept this option. The affidavit also claimed that the PIL is “colourable and motivated,” arguing the real aim is regulatory reclassification that could benefit a limited set of players. The High Court has listed the matter for further hearing on January 9, 2026.

The affidavit filed through the Ministry of Finance on



January 4 opposes a PIL by practising advocate Kapil Madan. It seeks to cut Goods and Services Tax (GST) on air purifiers from 19% to 5% by bringing them under the medical device category The petitioner has cited a 2020 Ministry of Health and Family Welfare notification issued under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act (DCA) to argue that

air purifiers can be notified as medical devices. The Centre rejected this reference, stating that notifying a product as a medical device “has no nexus with, and cannot determine, the rate of GST applicable,” because GST rates fall under the GST regime and the GST Council’s recommendations, as reported by The Indian Express.

Trump tariff: US Supreme Court verdict can stock market recover

New Delhi: Stock investors in India were nervous on Friday, ahead of the US Supreme Court verdict on the legality of Trump tariffs. The US apex court may rule today on the US President Donald Trump’s use of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to impose sweeping global tariffs, including 10 per cent baseline rates and higher reciprocal duties on key trading partners. The ruling may centre on two key questions: first, whether the White House can legally invoke emergency powers to impose tariffs; and second, if the tariffs are struck down, whether the US government would be required to issue refunds.On Friday, the BSE Sensex settle at 83,576.24, down 604.72 points or 0.72 per cent. Nifty shed 193.55 points, or 0.75 per cent, to close at 25,683.30, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments, said that after the sharp correction in the previous session, triggered by the possibility of a nearly 500 per cent tariff on India under the provisions of the Russia Sanctioning Act approved by President Donald Trump, markets were focused on the verdict now There is a high probability of the verdict going against Trump. But the details are significant: that is, whether it would be a partial striking down of the tariffs The Supreme Court heard oral arguments Wednesday on the legality of President Donald Trump’s sweeping “Liberation Day” tariffs, with justices expressing some skepticism of Trump’s ability to impose the hefty fees—potentially paving the way for a landmark decision that could upend the Trump administration’s signature economic policy and carry millions of dollars in ramifications for businesses and foreign countries.

INTERNATIONAL

Vance criticises Denmark and Europe’s handling of ‘critical’ Greenland

Washington: US Vice-President JD Vance says Greenland is “critical” for the defence of the US and the world against possible Russian or Chinese missile attacks - and that Europe and Denmark have “not done a good job” in securing the area. Vance told Fox News that they had not only under-invested in Greenland’s defences, but also failed to engage with President Donald Trump’s argument over the issue. US officials are “actively” discussing a potential offer to buy Greenland - a semi-autonomous Danish territory - the White House said on Wednesday, a day after suggesting military action to annex it to the US was also an option Reuters A soldier in camouflage holds a rifle as he walks on ice-covered ground with three other people seen at a large distance behind, as well as a sliver of blue skyReuters European allies have rallied to Denmark’s support US Vice-President JD Vance says Greenland is “critical” for the defence of the US and the world against possible Russian or Chinese missile attacks - and that Europe and Denmark have “not done a good job” in securing the area.



Vance told Fox News that they had not only under-invested in Greenland’s defences, but also failed to engage with President Donald Trump’s argument over the issue. US officials are “actively” discussing a potential offer to buy Greenland - a semi-autonomous Danish territory - the White House said on Wednesday, a day after suggesting military action to annex it to the US was also an option. Denmark, a fellow Nato member, has warned this would spell the end of

the alliance. Both Greenland and Denmark have repeatedly stressed the island is not for sale. Despite being the most sparsely populated territory, Greenland’s location between North America and the Arctic makes it well placed for early warning systems in the event of missile attacks, and for monitoring vessels in the region. The US already has more than 100 military personnel permanently stationed at its Pituffik base in Greenland’s north-western tip - a facility that

has been operated by the US since World War Two Under existing agreements with Denmark, the US has the power to bring as many troops as it wants to Greenland.In recent years, there has also been increased interest in Greenland’s natural resources - including rare earth minerals, uranium and iron - which are becoming easier to access as its ice melts due to climate change. Scientists think it could also have significant oil and gas reserves. “People do not realise that the entire missile defence infrastructure is partially dependent on Greenland,” Vance said in his interview on Wednesday. “If God forbid the Russians and the Chinese - not saying they’re going to - but if, God forbid, somebody launched a nuclear missile into our continent, they launched a nuclear missile at Europe, Greenland is a critical part of that missile defence. “So you ask yourself, ‘have the Europeans, have the Danes done a proper job of securing Greenland and of making sure it can continue to serve as an anchor for world security and missile defence?’ And the answer is obviously they haven’t,” he said.

US Willing To Sell Venezuelan Oil India White House Official Said

Washington: The Donald Trump administration in the United States is reportedly willing to sell Venezuelan oil to India under a new US-controlled framework, amid Washington’s sustained pressure on New Delhi to cut its reliance on Russian crude, a sticking point since the Ukraine war. The move came after Caracas and Washington reached a deal this week to export up to \$2 billion worth of Venezuelan crude, some 30-50 million barrels, to the United States after US forces captured President Nicolas Maduro on January 3.Talking to the news agency IANS, a senior Trump administration official confirmed that the United States was ready and willing to allow India to purchase Venezuelan oil, as Washington moves to market the country’s crude globally.Before American sanctions curtailed trade, India was one of the largest buyers of Venezuelan crude. When asked about conditions on Venezuelan oil trade with India, the official pointed to recent comments by US Energy Secretary Christopher Wright, who said Washington was open to selling Venezuelan oil to “almost all countries”.Wright, in an interview with Fox Business, said Venezuelan crude would be allowed to flow again, but only through a structure designed and overseen by the US government. “So that oil, we’re allowing it to flow. Again, it’s marketed by the United States government. The money’s going to flow into accounts,” he said, adding that funds would then be directed back to Venezuela in a way that “benefits the Venezuelan people, not corruption, not

the regime.”Wright said there was strong interest in Venezuelan crude not only from US refiners but also from buyers “in Europe and Asia and all around the world,” underscoring the administration’s position that sales would not be limited to a narrow set of countries.He noted that many US refineries were historically designed to process Venezuelan crude and said demand remained high. The Energy Secretary framed the policy as part of a broader effort by President Trump to enforce sanctions while reshaping Venezuela’s oil sector. “You can sell oil together with the United States, or you can not sell oil,” Wright said, describing US control over oil flows and revenues as leverage to end what he called criminal activity and destabilising behaviour linked to Venezuela’s previous leadership. He also emphasised that enforcement was central to the approach. Referring to recent seizures of sanctioned oil tankers, Wright said US actions demonstrated that sanctions and policies would be enforced, not merely announced. “Only legitimate and lawful energy commerce, as determined by the US, will be permitted,” he said in response to a question about US military actions against vessels carrying Venezuelan oil outside the new framework. In separate remarks delivered at an energy conference in New York, Wright outlined how the United States plans to market between 30 million and 50 million barrels of Venezuelan oil currently held in storage, followed by ongoing sales of future production.

Why S Jaishankar Had To Travel 670 Km By Road US

Washington: US security officials drove External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar 416 miles during a September government shutdown after commercial flights were grounded, according to a State Department report released this week.The journey allowed Jaishankar to reach New York for a scheduled meeting with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.The account was written by the US Diplomatic Security Service on December 30 and made public on January 8.The shutdown halted air travel across the country. With flights unavailable, security officials chose a road option. Agents received the minister at the Lewiston–Queenston Bridge on the US-Canada border and began a seven-hour drive to Manhattan.A total of 27 agents took part. They came from the Diplomatic Security Service’s Dignitary Protection Division and its New York and Buffalo field offices. Some agents drove separately to reinforce local teams. The security detail worked with officials from India’s UN mission, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and US border authorities to complete the handover at the crossing, the report said. Jaishankar’s motorcade route



ran through long stretches of upstate New York. Agents planned for winter weather and long driving hours, it said, adding that drivers were rotated during the trip. The service said the motorcade continued despite freezing temperatures and limited visibility.According to the State Department, at one point, a sheriff’s office explosive detection dogalerted to the minister’s armored vehicle during a team handoff. Agents secured the area and called in local technicians. After an inspection, the vehicle was cleared and the trip resumed, it said. After arriving in New York City, a security agent encountered a woman badly injured in a hit-and-run accident. The agent provided assistance while others worked with city police and fire officials to control traffic and clear the way for emergency responders. The woman received medical care. The incident did not disrupt protection for the visiting minister, the service said.US officials said the operation ensured the minister’s UN meeting went ahead as planned, despite the shutdown. The Diplomatic Security Service is part of the US State Department. It is responsible for protecting American diplomats and visiting foreign officials.

Nationwide internet shutdown amid fresh escalation in Tehran

Washington: Iran’s army chief Amir Hatami (C) posing for a photograph with military officials and military academy students in Tehran. Iran’s military chief warned on January 7, 2026, that Iran will not stand by and allow itself to be threatened by outside powers, after the U.S. and Israel backed anti-government protests A ‘nationwide internet blackout’ was reported in Iran on Thursday night (January 8, 2026) amid a fresh wave of escalation in Tehran following a call for mass demonstration by the country’s exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi. This comes after twelve days of protests in the country over its ailing economy. Rights groups accused Iranian security forces of shooting at protesters as the death toll mounted from a crackdown by authorities. So far, at least 45 people have been killed, while more than 2,260 others have been detained, as per human rights agencies. At a crossroads: On Iran’s U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday (January 8) threatened to take severe action if Iranian authorities “start killing people” who are protesting, warning that Washington would “hit them very hard”. The country under Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is battling an economic crisis after years of sanctions and recovering from the June war against Israel.U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance on Thursday (January 8, 2026) reiterated support for the Iranian people, saying that the United States stands by anybody who is engaged in peaceful protests and trying to exert their rights for free association. While addressing presspersons at the White House, V-P Vance said that the United States would stand by the citizens of Iran. When asked if the U.S. would take part if Israel decides to strike the nuclear sites in Iran, the U.S. Vice-President said that the United States would stand by anybody who is engaged in peaceful protests and that the “smartest thing” for Iran to have negotiations with the United States on its nuclear programme.



“We certainly stand by anybody who’s engaged in peaceful protests, anybody who’s trying to exert their rights for free association and to have their voices heard. Obviously, the Iranian regime has a lot of problems, and as the President of the United States has said, the smartest thing for them to have done, it was true two months ago, it’s true today is for them to actually have a real negotiation with the United States about what we need to see when it comes to their nuclear program. I’ll let the President speak to what we’re going to do in the future, but we certainly stand with anybody across the world, including the Iranian people, who are advocating for their rights,” Mr. Vance said.The protests in Iran first began on December 28, 2025, in the bazaar of Tehran over the plunging value of the currency and soaring inflation, the biggest wave of dissent in three years. Over 12 days, the protests spread nationwide amid deepening distress over rocketing inflation driven by mismanagement and Western sanctions, and curbs on po-

litical and social freedoms. Iranian authorities have acknowledged the economic hardships facing Iranians, but accused networks linked to foreign powers of stoking the protests Iran’s top judge warned protesters on Wednesday there would be “no leniency for those who help the enemy against the Islamic Republic.”Iran’s economy is facing high inflation and other challenges, partly due to U.S. sanctions, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Thursday (January 8, 2026), underscoring Washington’s concerns about Tehran cracking down violently on anti-regime protests. “The Iranian economy is on the ropes,” Mr. Bessent told the Economic Club of Minnesota, underscoring President Donald Trump’s warning to Tehran to avoid harming protesters. “It’s a very precarious moment. He does not want them to harm more of the protesters. This is a tense moment,” the U.S. Treasury secretary said, referring to Mr. Trump’s threat to hit Tehran if it began killing protesters..

Russia’s Overnight Strikes In Ukraine Leave 1 Million Without Water, Heat



Ukraine: Russian strikes on Ukraine overnight left more than one million people in the Dnipropetrovsk region without water supplies or heating, a Ukrainian minister said Thursday, as temperatures dipped below freezing. As in previous winters, Russia has intensified its

strikes on Ukraine’s energy sites, leading to heating and water outages in what Kyiv and its allies call a deliberate strategy to wear down the civilian population.The large-scale Russian drone attack also knocked out power in theZaporizhzhia region, leaving thousands without electricity or heating, the state

grid operator Ukrenergo said late Wednesday.“Repair work continues in Dnipropetrovsk region to restore heat and water supply for over a million subscribers,” Restoration Minister Oleksiy Kuleba wrote on social media. The Ukrainian air force said Russia attacked with 97 drones, with 70 downed by air defence system but 27 striking various locations, without elaborating. Dnipropetrovsk’s critical energy infrastructure was damaged in the attack, according to its military head Vladyslav Gaivanenko.The situation is difficult. However, as soon as the security situation allows, energy workers will begin restoration work,” he posted on Telegram.In Zaporizhzhia, the electricity supply was restored to “key facilities” but most consumers were still without power, according to its governor, Ivan Fedorov.Kyiv has responded to the long-running targeting of its energy grid with strikes on Russian oil depots and refineries, seeking to cut off Moscow’s vital energy exports and trigger fuel shortages. Russian strikes on Ukraine overnight left more than one million people in the Dnipropetrovsk region without water supplies or heating, a Ukrainian Minister said on Thursday (January 8, 2026), as temperatures dipped below freezing. As in previous winters, Russia has intensified its strikes on Ukraine’s energy sites, leading to heating and water outages in what Kyiv and its allies call a deliberate strategy to wear down the civilian population

Trump Rules Out Pardon For Sean “Diddy” Combs

Ukraine: Sean “Diddy” Combs, who is serving a four-year prison sentence for prostitution-related crimes, has asked Donald Trump for a pardon, but the US president said he does not plan to grant clemency to the hip-hop star.Trump, in an interview with The New York Times published Thursday, also said he does not plan to issue pardons to several other high-profile individuals, including deposed Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro.The 56-year-old Combs was convicted last July of two counts of transporting people across state lines for prostitution. A jury acquitted the music mogul of the most serious charges – sex trafficking and racketeering.Trump told the Times during Wednesday’s interview that Combs had sent him a letter asking for a pardon but he was not inclined to grant it.Asked about pardoning Maduro, who was seized by US forces over the weekend and is facing drug trafficking charges, Trump said: “No, I don’t see that.” In November, Trump pardoned Honduran ex-president Juan Orlando Hernandez, who was serving a 45-year sentence after being convicted of drug trafficking.Trump also said he did not plan to issue pardons to disgraced crypto tycoon Sam Bankman-Fried, who is serving a 25-year prison sentence, and former Democratic senator Robert Menendez, who is serving an 11-year sentence for accepting bribes.The Times said the Republican president was also asked whether he would consider pardoning Derek Chauvin, the white Minneapolis police officer convicted of the 2020 murder of George Floyd, whose death sparked nationwide racial justice protests.“I haven’t been asked about it,” Trump said.On the day of his inauguration Trump pardoned more than 1,500 people who had been convicted or were facing charges for involvement in the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol by his supporters. The 56-year-old Combs was convicted last July of two counts of transporting people across state lines for prostitution. Sean “Diddy” Combs has reportedly asked President Donald Trump to pardon his prison sentence, though it doesn’t look like that will be happening any time soon. In an exclusive report by the New York Times published Thursday, Jan. 8, the outlet said the president, 79, stated that he has no intention of helping the disgraced music mogul, 56. Trump told reporters for the Times that Combs “asked me for a pardon,” adding that the request from the Bad Boy founder came “through a letter When asked more details about the request, Trump said, “Oh, would you like to see that letter?”The Times noted that the president did not produce the letter. PEOPLE reached out to the White House for comment, with a spokesperson confirming Trump’s comments to the publication.

Ananya Panday’s Rs 1.47 Lakh Purple Kaftan Look Is A Masterclass In Modern Luxury

In a fashion landscape often dominated by maximalism and statement dressing, Ananya Panday continues to carve out a style identity rooted in restraint. Her sartorial choices increasingly reflect a confident understanding of balance between trend and timelessness, glamour and ease. Whether she’s stepping out for film promotions or attending industry events, there’s a quiet polish to her looks that feels deliberate rather than overworked.

Most recently, Ananya Panday turned heads at an event by Tanishq with an outfit that leaned into fluid tailoring and modern elegance. She chose a striking violet ensemble from luxury label Taller Marmo, reaffirming her preference for silhouettes that feel fashion-forward yet unfussy. Ananya wore the La Luna crystal kaftan in a rich purple hue, opting for the shorter version of the design. Known for its dramatic drapes and architectural simplicity, the kaftan silhouette offered a sense of movement and softness. What elevated the look was the crystal-embellished buckle at the waist, which subtly defined her frame without disrupting the relaxed flow of the garment.

The jewel detailing added just



enough sparkle, creating visual interest while maintaining the kaftan’s understated appeal. The design also tapped into a growing global trend – the integration of scarf-like drapes into garments, lending the outfit a contemporary edge without feeling

gimmicky. According to the brand, the La Luna crystal kaftan is priced at €1,400, approximately Rs 1.47 lakh. True to form, Ananya resisted the temptation to over-style. She paired the look with a diamond necklace and matching earrings from Tan-

ishq, choosing classic jewellery that complemented rather than competed with the bold colour of the dress. The restraint allowed the kaftan’s silhouette and craftsmanship to take centre stage. On the footwear front, she opted for Alaïa fishnet sandals, a sharp



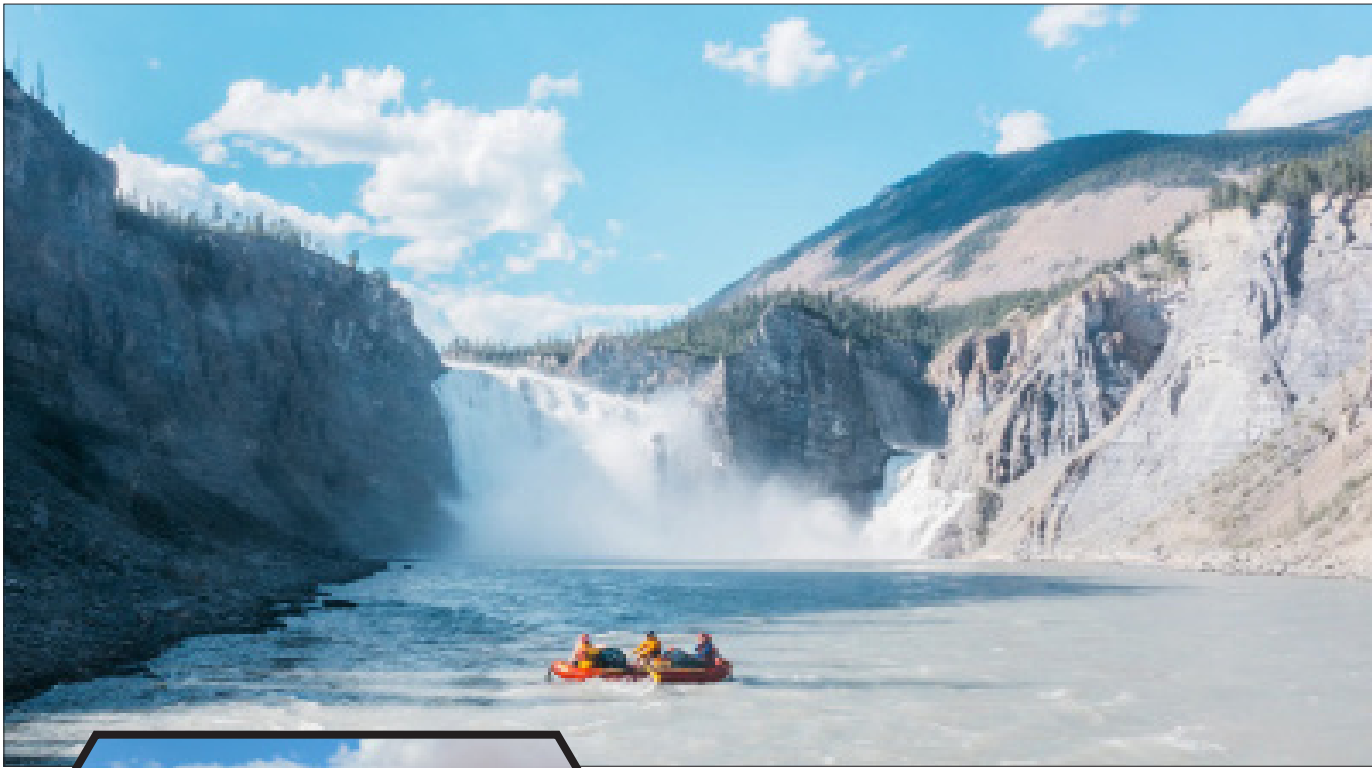
styling move that added texture and a subtle fashion-forward twist. Her hair, pulled back into a sleek half ponytail, and her minimal makeup reinforced the clean, modern mood of the ensemble.

What stands out about this look isn’t

just the label or the price point. It’s how naturally it aligns with Ananya Panday’s evolving fashion language. There’s a growing consistency in her choices: sculptural silhouettes, confident colours, and styling that feels intentional yet approachable.

Paddling the dramatic ‘Grand Canyon of Canada’

“Pop these earmuffs on – you’ll need them,” says the co-pilot of our vintage 1967 Twin Otter floatplane, his voice barely cutting through the roar of the engines. Soaring above endless boreal forest, dramatic canyons and the mist-shrouded cascades of the thundering Virginia Falls, the plane delivers us into the wild heart of the Nahanni National Park Reserve in Canada’s Northwest Territories, setting the stage for an unforgettable journey downstream. My partner and I are here to embark on a bucket list adventure down the iconic Nahanni River. Our 11-day, 217km guided journey begins at the iconic Virginia Falls and concludes just outside the park at Nahanni Butte. This isn’t a high-adrenaline whitewater journey, but rather a leisurely float down the river’s winding length – an immersive experience that lets you soak in the pristine beauty of the Northwest Territories at a gentle pace. By venturing deep into the park’s five lower canyons and listening as our guides share the area’s Indigenous and Gold Rush-era history, each stop becomes an invitation to connect more deeply with the Nahanni’s winding path and its storied past. Ever since RM Patterson’s seminal 1954 book *The Dangerous River*, chronicling the year the writer and explorer spent canoeing these waters, the Nahanni River has held near-mythical status among Canadian paddlers. Towering cliffs, carved over millennia, rise on either side of the water, forming canyons so breathtaking they’re frequently dubbed “the Grand Canyon of Canada”. For many, journeying down the Nahanni is a kind of national pilgrimage, offering a glimpse into a remote and untouched side of the country that few travellers ever experience. It’s not just the dramatic canyons and thundering waterfalls, but the sense of profound wilderness and solitude. As such, getting here is no simple feat. While a handful of visitors might fly in for a day hike or a scenic flight, the heart of the Nahanni reveals itself only to those who travel by water. The trip can be self-guided or guided, and most outfitters offer multi-day rafting or canoe expeditions, ranging from a week to nearly two weeks. For us, the lengthy travel time and cost make the 11-day itinerary more



worth-while than the shorter seven-day trip that travels the same stretch of river. This gives us more time to relax at campsites, hike scenic trails and enjoy the river’s tranquility. For seasoned paddlers, there are even more ambitious routes: experienced canoeists can begin their journey with whitewater paddling and hiking at the world-renowned Cirque of the Unclimbables, combining hikes among towering granite spires and camping on the shores of Rabbitkettle Lake. The upper reaches of the Nahanni before Virginia Falls are accessible only by canoe, and contain stretches of flat, calm water and require a vessel that glides swiftly – unlike the bulky

further downstream. The South Nahanni is more famous for its dramatic canyons, but no matter the section, travelling the river is a journey through some of the most remote parts of Canada, where solitude isn’t just a possibility but a defining feature. Fewer than 900 overnight visitors explore the park each year, and the chances of encountering anyone outside your own group are slim. Upon landing, we’re greeted by our three guides from Nahanni River Adventures who are in the midst of portaging all of the gear, including deflated rafts, down to the base of the falls. We soon meet Parks Canada Interpretation Officer Jaclyn Paddison, who leads us on an

rafts we

use for our float trip

interpretive journey along a boardwalk above Virginia Falls. The elevated wooden path winds through stunted boreal forest to a lookout, where two Parks Canada Red Chairs offer the perfect spot to relax and take in the awe-inspiring view. Across from us, Mason’s Rock – a towering spire – stands defiantly as Virginia Falls thunders around it in a spectacular whitewater display. Paddison explains that, in 1970, then-prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau paddled the Nahanni River. At the time, a hydroelectric dam was being proposed for the area, but Trudeau’s transformational journey through the foaming river as it zig-zags through the towering Mackenzie Mountains inspired him to champion its protection. By 1972, the Nahanni was designated as a national park reserve, becoming the first of its kind in Canada. “This park holds a lot of firsts,” Paddison tells us. “It was the first National Park Reserve in Canada, meaning it was established in collaboration with the Dehcho [First Nations], allowing the Dene Peoples to continue foraging and hunting on their traditional lands. It also became Canada’s first Unesco World Heritage Site (in 1978), and in 2009, it was expanded to include the entire South Nahanni River watershed, making it one of the largest protected areas in the country.” Perched safely above the dramatic torrent of the falls, Paddison hands each of us a small bundle of tobacco and invites us to cast it into the wind

– an offering to the Indigenous ancestors who have travelled and protected this river for thousands of years. “[The Dene Peoples] would build canoes from moose hide and travel the river in search of food – caribou, deer, moose and other staples. The river was, and still is, a lifeline [for them].” After some bannock (Indigenous fry bread) around the fire made by the Parks staff, we spend night one at Virginia Falls Camp-ground before setting off down the river. With Virginia Falls fading behind us, the Nahanni carries us in its current and I quickly realise I’m able to sit back, relax with camera in hand and let the Nahanni River – and the rhythm of our guides’ oars – draw us deeper into its untamed embrace. Slicing through the rugged Selwyn and Mackenzie Mountains before emptying into the Liard River, these sheer rock walls rise more than 1,200m in places, creating the five canyons we will traverse during our expedition. Unlike Patterson’s

swashbuckling journey, our serene paddling expedition requires no prior rafting or river experience, making it accessible to almost anyone. Fuelled by gourmet meals ranging from cinnamon buns to lamb, carrot cake cooked to perfection, steak and more – all masterfully prepared over an open fire and in a Dutch oven by our guides – it is a journey of indulgence. A portable toilet system, affectionately dubbed the “loo with a view”, ensures sustainable pack-it-in, pack-it-out practices, while we set up and take down our own camping gear. As the river carves its way through five canyons, the landscape becomes increasingly dramatic – the canyons deepening and towering higher with each passing day. One of the most striking campsites is “The Gate”, a spectacular entrance to Third Canyon, where sheer cliffs rise above the water. This 32km-long canyon has formed as the river sliced through layers of shale, sandstone and limestone over the past 100 million years. “The Nahanni River is more than just a place; it’s a journey through time and connection. Every bend feels like stepping into a new world, and as you paddle, the land

Adventures to serve as a training programme to empower the next generation of Indigenous leaders. Through a partnership with Nahanni River Adventures owner Joel Hibbard, Rose Koe provides First Nations guides with opportunities to work on rivers like the Nahanni. This collaboration not only increases Indigenous representation in the industry, but also creates a platform for guides to share their culture, language and stories with guests. “Now, I’m training youth to not only guide, but also bring their own culture, language and stories to the river.” For Rose Koe, this work is about more than just representation; it’s about creating meaningful change. “People talk a lot about reconciliation, but what Joel and I have is more than that. It’s about learning together and shifting how things are done – not just in our company, but across the [Northwest Territories and Yukon].” While the Dene Peoples maintain their original place-names for the canyons they still travel, they were also named by number in reverse order by early settlers, reflecting the order they travelled upstream through. After passing through Third Canyon, our days in Second and First



Canyon are filled with even more dramatic cliffs rising higher on either side of the river. A rare sighting of a lynx and later, swimming bison, combined with more hiking and swimming through a frigid

comes alive with stories.” Indigenous river guide Bobbi Rose Koe later tells me. Dedicated to transforming the landscape of river guiding in Canada’s Northwest Territories and the Yukon, including on the Nahanni, Rose Koe founded Dinjii Zhuh Adventures. When she began her guiding career in 2019, Rose Koe was struck by the lack of First Nations river guides. Determined to change that, she set up Dinjii Zhuh

the appropriately named Chasm of Chills, adds to the sense of wildness. When a fisher in the group successfully catches an Arctic Grayling, our guides fry it up for the group to enjoy. With each bend of the river revealing ever more awe-inspiring cliffs, untamed wildlife and a profound sense of solitude, it becomes unmistakably clear why the Nahanni has earned its place among the world’s great wilderness rivers.

Presenter Priyanka Chopra joins Julia Roberts and Miley Cyrus



Mumbai:Priyanka Chopra Jonas will be one of the presenters at the forthcoming Golden Globe Awards 2026. The organizers have announced a star-studded roster.Prior to this weekend’s ceremony, the presenter lists were posted on the official Golden Globes X account. Major Hollywood figures like Julia Roberts, George Clooney, Miley Cyrus, Orlando Bloom, Pamela Anderson, Macaulay Culkin, Melissa McCarthy, Snoop Dogg, Queen Latifah, and others are among the presenters, along with Priyanka Chopra Jonas. A variety of worldwide celebrities,

industry veterans, and fan favorites were anticipated to take the stage, according to the release. Amanda Seyfried, Ana de Armas, Ayo Edebiri, Chris Pine, Colman Domingo, Dakota Fanning, Dave Franco, Diane Lane, Hailee Steinfeld, Jason Bateman, Jennifer Garner, Joe Keery, Judd Apatow, Justin Hartley, Kathryn Hahn, Keegan-Michael Key, Kevin Bacon, Kevin Hart, Kyra Sedgwick, Lalisa Manobal, Luke Grimes, Macaulay Culkin, Marlon Wayans, Regina Hall, Wanda Sykes, Will Arnett, and Zoe Kravitz are also on the list.The ceremony this year will air live

on CBS and be available to stream on Paramount+ from 8 to 11 p.m. ET. The Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles will host the event on Sunday, January 11. Sentimental Value had eight Golden Globe nominations, while One Battle After Another has nine. Sinners has gotten seven nominations, while Hamnet has six. Both Wicked: For Good and Frankenstein have five nominations. With six nominations, The White Lotus is the front-runner in the television category. Severance and Only Murders in the Building each have four, followed by Adolescence with five.Speaking of Priyanka Chopra, she will co-star with Mahesh Babu and Prithviraj Sukumaran in SS Rajamouli’s Varanasi. Priyanka will play Mandakini, Mahesh will play Rudhra, while Prithviraj will play Kumbha in the Sankranti 2027 film. Additionally, Priyanka recently released the first trailer for her other movie, The Bluff. In February, it will be available on Prime Video.

How Farah Khan Overcame Childhood Adversity to Become Bollywood Icon

Mumbai: Farah Khan was born into a film-related family; her mother, Menaka Irani, had ties to the industry, and her father, Kamran Khan, was a filmmaker. Nevertheless, her early years were characterized by emotional difficulties and unstable finances. The family was forced to live hand to mouth due to her father’s struggle with alcoholism and their deteriorating financial situation. In order to make ends meet, the family had to rent out their living room to gamblers, according to Farah herself. In an open discussion, she said, “We’d buy bhaji, milk, and dad’s half bottle with Rs 35.” To make ends meet, the family even had to sell apartments. Despite her subsequent success, these experiences left her with a lifetime of financial uncertainty. Because to her upbringing, Farah developed resilience at a young age. She was an avid dancer who taught herself by watching movies and practiced nonstop. Her career took off once her perseverance allowed her to choreograph her first significant Bollywood project.In the 1990s, Farah Khan made her debut by choreographing well-known songs that characterized a time period. Her status as one of Bollywood’s most inventive choreographers was solidified by her work with Shah Rukh Khan in movies like Dil Se and Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge.Later, she made the switch to filmmaking, and her first movie, Main Hoon Na (2004), was a big hit. Om Shanti Om (2007), which debuted Deepika Padukone and became a global phenomenon, came next. Farah was one of the few female directors in Bollywood to consistently attain financial success because of her ability to combine grandeur with poignant storytelling.Farah Khan has demonstrated incredible versatility



even after decades in the film industry. She has embraced digital channels in recent years, especially YouTube, where she collaborates with friends in the industry and provides genuine chats and lifestyle content. Her appearances on Sania Mirza’s YouTube channel demonstrated her wit and relatability in addition to her challenges. Because she speaks honestly about her family life, vulnerabilities, and the lessons she learnt from adversity, Farah’s YouTube presence strikes a chord with viewers. She has been able to connect with a younger audience through her reinvention, demonstrating that her popularity goes well beyond dancing and filmmaking.Today is Farah Khan’s 61st birthday, and she represents resiliency and self-reinvention. Her journey demonstrates flexibility and bravery, from a childhood marred by financial hardships to becoming one of Bollywood’s most successful choreographers and directors and now a digital celebrity. Farah Khan’s capacity to reinvent herself—first as a choreographer, then as a filmmaker, and now as a YouTuber—ensures that she will always be popular and current.

Days After the AP Dhillon Concert Drama, Tara Sutaria and Veer Pahariya “Quietly” break Up



Mumbai: Tara Sutaria and Veer Pahariya, B-Town’s new pair who rose to fame in 2025, are said to have split up. Fans of Veer-Tara were shocked by the news because only a few months prior, the couple had made their romance public through sentimental posts. The pair has reportedly made the decision to split up, according to those close to them. The rumors

have not been verified or refuted by Veer or Tara. The precise cause of the split has not yet been made public. Tara and Veer, who were apparently doing well, found themselves in the public eye for an unanticipated cause. Tara and Veer responded to widely shared footage from AP Dhillon’s Mumbai performance, in which Tara and the singer had a cordial exchange

on stage. Social media users focused on Veer’s audience response, perceiving it as unease. Tara used Instagram to dispel rumors and criticize “false narratives” and “paid PR.”Veer also explained that the widely shared video had been deceptively altered.Later, Veer was seen supporting Tara and AP Dhillon in an uncut video shared by social media personality Orry. With the caption, “The truth always wins (What the media will never show you),” Veer shared the video. Tara Sutaria soft-launched Veer Pahariya on social media by posting a number of intimate photos with him on Diwali.

Tara and Veer posted a couple photo on Ganesh Chaturthi.In recent months, they have also walked the ramp as show-stoppers.After beginning to date earlier in the year, Veer and Tara made their relationship public around the middle of July 2025. It all began when Tara shared a photo of herself with AP Dhillon from his song “Thodi Si Daaru.”Veer Pahariya responded to the post by saying, “My,” along with a red heart and star emoji. “Mine,” Tara replied, confirming their bond with a red heart and an evil eye Veer Pahariya’s most recent film appearance was in Sky Force.

Shahid Kapoor Reveals a Bloody First Look at the Vishal Bhardwaj Movie : O’ Romeo

Mumbai: The first poster for O’ Romeo, which stars Shahid Kapoor, was released earlier today. In the billboard, the actor is yelling while maintaining a scary smirk. The poster appears intense, covered in wounds, bruises, and blood.In January 2025, filming on O’ Romeo began. Sajid Nadiadwala began with posting a preview of Muhurat Day on Instagram.Shahid Kapoor used Instagram at the time to share his enthusiasm for the movie. “Every story has its time, and this one starts right now. We’ll see you in theaters on December 5, 2025, and filming begins on January 6, 2025,” he stated. Triptii Dimri plays

the starring role in the film O’ Romeo. The project was produced by Sajid Nadiadwala’s Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment and directed by Vishal Bhardwaj.The movie, which was initially scheduled for release in December 2025, will now open in theaters on January 13, 2026.After Kaminey, Haider, and Rangoon, O Romeo is Shahid Kapoor’s fourth film with Vishal Bhardwaj. Additionally, Shahid and Triptii Dimri appear together on screen for the first time in this project. Disha Patani and Nana Patekar have joined the cast. On Friday, January 9, actor Shahid Kapoor revealed the eye-catching first-look poster for his forthcoming



movie O Romeo. Fans were captivated by his ferocious and gory persona. Shahid shared the poster on social media with the comment, “Romeo O Romeo where art thou O’ROMEO!” and revealed that the movie’s trailer will be available on January

10.Shahid’s face, neck, and hands are covered with blood, cuts, bruises, and tattoos, and he can be seen screaming with his mouth open in the poster. The actor radiates raw intensity while wearing a dark, partially unbuttoned shirt and accessorizing with

a chain necklace, bracelets, rings, and a belt. This suggests a dark and emotionally charged story. Shahid Kapoor and renowned director Vishal Bhardwaj, who are renowned for producing strong and unorthodox cinema, have collaborated once more on O Romeo. The two have previously worked together on critically praised movies like Haider (2014) and Kaminey (2009), both of which featured Shahid in some of his most well-known roles. O Romeo is expected to be another addition to their cinema because of their collaborations, which are renowned for their bold narratives, complex characters, and powerful storytelling.

In response to Yash’s poisonous teaser, Alia Bhatt calls it “dynamite”

Mumbai: Fans have been giddy about the much-anticipated teaser for actor Yash’s next movie Toxic: A Fairytale for Grown-Ups since it was revealed on his birthday today, January 8. Alia Bhatt joined in on the flurry of compliments.The Raazi actor responded to the teaser on her Instagram Story. She shared it and added, “Dynamite.”Fans are immediately excited by the teaser, which provides a powerful insight at Yash’s intense and mysterious character, Raya. It begins with a flurry of action against the backdrop of a graveyard, with gunfire breaking the stillness and announcing Yash’s presence as the calm, fearless, and unflinching Raya, brandishing a Tommy gun. Geetu Mohandas is the director of Toxic: A Fairytale for Grown-Ups. Yash plays important roles in the movie alongside Huma Qureshi, Tara Sutaria, Kiara Advani, and Nayanthara. Following KGF: Chapter 2, Yash returns to the big screen with Toxic. The movie, which is being produced by Yash and Venkat K. Narayana under KVN Productions and Monster Mind Creations, is scheduled to open in theaters on March 19, 2026.Regarding her career, Alia Bhatt’s upcoming film is Alpha. Taran Adarsh, a trade expert, claims that the film’s producers have chosen to delay its release in order to prevent conflict with Salman Khan’s upcoming war epic Battle of Galwan. Alpha is the sixth film in the YRF Spy Universe, which also features War, Pathaan, Tiger Zinda Hai, and Ek Tha Tiger. It was directed by Shiv Rawail. Bobby Deol and Sharvari play important roles in the movie alongside Alia Bhatt. Since the release of its teaser, Yash’s much anticipated movie Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups has generated a lot of talk, and Alia Bhatt’s response has further heightened expectations. The actress praised the preview on her Instagram Story, calling it “dynamite.”Alia Bhatt posted the Toxic teaser on her Instagram Stories with the caption, “Dynamite.” Additionally, she tagged the movie’s cast and crew, including Yash, Kiara Advani, Nayanthara, Huma Qureshi, Tara Sutaria, and Rukmini Vasanth, among others, and added fire emojis.

The Madras High Court grants Jana Nayagan a UA certificate, which greatly relieves Vijay

Mumbai: The Madras High Court on Friday ordered the Censor Board to provide a UA certificate for Vijay’s film Jana Nayagan, which is said to be his final project before entering politics full-time, following the high-stakes drama surrounding the censor certificate.After the changes were completed, the Madras High Court mandated that the Censor Board issue the certificate.The court declared that “entertaining such complaints is a dangerous trend” and condemned the Censor Board. The complaint against Jana Nayagan seems to be a “afterthought,” according to the Madras High Court.The



movie will not be submitted to the CBFC review panel. The case was scheduled for hearing today, the day the movie was originally scheduled to be released, after the Madras High Court reserved its ruling on Wednesday, January 7.The film’s release date was delayed by the producers following the hearing on Wednesday. KVN Productions filed a lawsuit after the

movie was submitted more than a month ago but did not receive a certificate from the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). The board recommended muted dialogue and cuts on December 19. The producers announced the postponement on their X handle late on Wednesday night, citing unforeseen circumstances.“We share this update with our valued stakeholders and audiences with a heavy heart,” the production company remarked. Due to unforeseen events outside of our control, Jana Nayagan’s much anticipated January 9 publication has been delayed.”

Dhurandhar Acquires Aditya Dhar Praises Priyadarshan and Thanks Mentor



Mumbai: Since its December 5, 2025, debut in theaters, Dhurandhar has been showered with love and praise from critics, fans, and celebrities. Now, seasoned director Priyadarshan has posted a touching message on social media complimenting his “disciple,” the film’s director, Aditya Dhar.”There is no greater happiness than witnessing my disciple rise with such remarkable success,” Priyadarshan commented, sharing an old photo with Aditya Dhar. Best wishes for Dhurandhar 2 and congratulations on Dhurandhar, Aditya Dhar. Aditya Dhar replied, “My Dearest Priyan Sir... this means more to me than I can ever put into words!”

in response to Priyadarshan’s article. When I had nothing except conviction and a few penned pages, you had faith in me.” ”You treated me like an equal and gave me something far more precious than just work—dignity, trust, and love,” he continued. You showed me exactly what to do—not just as a filmmaker, but as a human being—in a field where I frequently learned what not to do.””Every move you take, from crafting dialogue for Aakrosh and Tezz to standing here right now, leaves your mark.I will always be your first pupil. I’m grateful for everything, Sir. “This achievement is equally yours and mine,” Aditya said in closing.

The re-release of Kapil Sharma’s Kis Kisko Pyaar Karoon 2 has been postponed

Mumbai: Kis Kisko Pyaar Karoon 2’s re-release has been postponed due to the movie’s ongoing issues with a lack of theaters and unfavorable showtimes. Following ongoing challenges since the film’s initial release, which was eclipsed by another significant box office rival, the producers, led by Ratan Jain of Venus, took this decision. On December 12, the comedy starring Kapil Sharma debuted in theaters one week after Dhurandhar, which led to limited public access. Sources claim that the movie had a limited number of screens and was frequently scheduled at strange times, making it challenging for audiences to see it. Kis Kisko Pyaar Karoon 2 had a difficult time drawing the anticipated crowd because the majority of the venues were already booked for Ranveer Singh’s movie. In an attempt to give the movie a fair chance at success, the lack of opportunity led the producers to think about a rerelease.”We’re delight-



ed to return with a film that celebrates joy, laughter, and wholesome family entertainment,” producer Ratan Jain said, highlighting the goal of bringing the comedy back to theaters. Aiming for a more favorable window to reach

moviegoers, the re-release was planned with audience demand and the joyous New Year season in mind. When attempting the re-release, the producers faced similar challenges despite these attempts. The film’s potential to reach

a larger audience was constrained by the ongoing fight to get sufficient screens and appropriate showtimes. Once more, the decision to postpone the release was largely influenced by the rivalry for movie theater space.

The Karnataka Cabinet intends to file a lawsuit against the G Ram G scheme

New Delhi, Jan 09: According to state Tourism, Law, and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil, the Karnataka cabinet decided to file a lawsuit against the recently introduced VB-G RAM G scheme after discussing the Union government’s withdrawal of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) on Thursday.Patil informed the media about the decisions made during the cabinet meeting and stated that the new plan will also be brought before the people’s court. Decentralization was reinforced throughout the nation following the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, yet this plan undermines its core basis. He claimed that the Union government had taken away rural residents’ employment rights by eliminating MGNREGA. He claimed that while the new “draconian law” compels laborers to work on national highway projects being carried out by contractors, MGNREGA allowed asset development through panchayats. He claimed that instead of caring about the wellbeing of laborers, the Union government has taken away their right to work.In the past, panchayats held the power to determine what projects should be undertaken in villages. He claimed that the Center will now give instructions on where and what work should be done as that authority has been totally removed. He stated that the Karnataka administration is adamantly against this



“draconian legislation” and will battle it in the people’s court, in court, and politically. Patil questioned where the money would come from, saying that although it is stated that 125 days of labor will be provided, there is no clarification on how this can be accomplished. According to him, state governments would be responsible for about 40% of the expenses, which would be extremely costly. He claimed that the Center should have engaged the states before imposing such a hardship. He claimed that the plan was unveiled following the execution of the recommen-

dations made by the 15th Finance Commission.Additionally, Patil stated that the government has made the decision to hold panchayat elections as soon as possible. The state administration has been asked by a number of panchayats to take the matter to the Supreme Court. He stated that a decision on this matter will be made in a day or two.On the grounds of excellent behavior, the cabinet has authorized the early release of 33 life inmates housed in several central prisons throughout the state. He stated that two of these offenders will only be released with the approval of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.In order to build a Congress Bhavan, the government has decided to provide the “Congress Bhavan Trust, Bengaluru” ten guntas of land in Survey No. 2.2.39 in the Sirwar limits of Sirwar taluk in Raichur district. Additionally, within the boundaries of urban local bodies throughout the state, the cabinet has approved the issuance of “A-Khata” to “B-Khata” sites, structures, apartments, and flats situated in layouts created without the consent of the appropriate authorities.According to Patil, the program would cover almost 10 lakh properties.Additionally, the Cabinet has resolved to work with the Home Department to implement the “Akka Pada” system in five police commissionerates and 31 districts around the state.

Bangladesh suffers a severe financial setback

New Delhi: In the midst of growing cricketing and political tensions between the two neighboring countries, renowned Indian sports company SG opted not to continue its connection, perhaps forcing Bangladeshi cricket players to switch bat sponsors. After the BCCI ordered the IPL side Kolkata Knight Riders to remove Bangladesh’s top spinner Mustafizur Rehman from their roster, tensions between the two Asian countries began. The Bangladesh Cricket Board initially declined to provide Mustafizur a no-objection certificate for participating in the IPL following the pacer’s release. Citing security concerns, it also asked the ICC to move its matches from India to Sri Lanka for the forthcoming T20 World Cup 2026, which is scheduled to begin on February 7. Top players from Bangladesh, like as captain Litton Das, Yasir Rabbi, and Mominul Haque, are presently sponsored by Indian sports brand SG. The players’ agents have alluded to SG’s decision not to extend the contract, but the players have not been formally told. Following an emergency meeting on January 4, the BCB formally asked the ICC to reschedule Bangladesh’s matches in order to protect players and officials. The Asian squad is now scheduled to play in Group C of the T20 World Cup 2026, however the ICC’s decision to move Bangladesh Cricket squad matches to Sri Lanka is still pending. Bangladesh will play its final group match against Nepal in Mumbai on February 17 after playing matches against the West Indies, Italy, and England in Kolkata on February 7, 9, and 14, respectively.

After two years, Virat Kohli posts training photographs



New Delhi: A almost three-year streak has been broken by Virat Kohli. The former India skipper posted pictures from a training session at Kotambi Stadium on Instagram a few days before the first match of the ODI series against New Zealand in Vadodara.This is it: For the first time since the 2023 World Test Championship final, Kohli shared pictures from a training session on his Instagram feed.In all, the star batter posted three pictures: one of him hitting the ball in the nets, another of him participating in running drills with his teammates, and a third of him carrying his kit bag as he makes his way to the training area. It’s a welcome shift for Kohli and his supporters. The veteran’s social media presence has been mostly lacking in recent years, which has long piqued fans’ interest in seeing a glimpse of his preparation before big series.Kohli has primarily limited his Instagram activity to messages commemorating significant career milestones, holiday images with his wife Anushka Sharma, and commercial sponsorships. These have included festivities in the wake of India’s victory in the T20 World Cup, the Champions Trophy, and Royal Chal-

lengers Bengaluru’s IPL 2025 championship. Kohli’s decreased social media activity has previously disappointed a number of fans. The former captain, who was formerly well-known for being quite active on the internet, has since decided to restrict his posts to a few themes, which makes this most recent training update all the more noteworthy.Virat Kohli started preparing as soon as he landed in Vadodara earlier this week, which will host a men’s ODI for the first time on Sunday. When Kohli arrived at the airport on Wednesday, he was surrounded by supporters. Before heading back to India for the ODI assignment, Kohli celebrated the New Year in Dubai with his loved ones. The 36-year-old made his 16-year absence from the local 50-over competition when he participated in two Vijay Hazare Trophy matches in December.So far, Kohli has appeared to be in command, having followed up an outstanding 131 with a fluid 77 in his two appearances. During this run, Kohli surpassed Sachin Tendulkar’s record and became the fastest player to reach the 16,000-run mark in List A cricket.

Real Madrid defeats Atletico Madrid thanks to a spectacular free kick by Fede Valverde

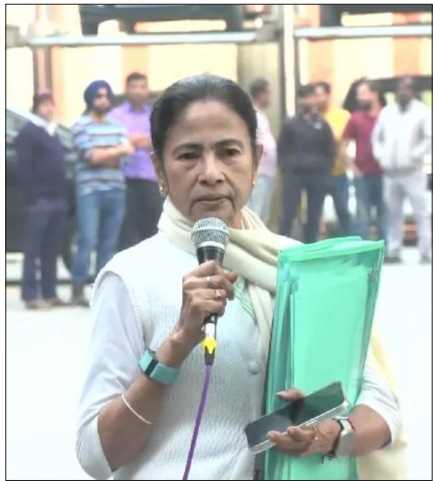
New Delhi: In a close Spanish Super Cup semi-final in Saudi Arabia on Thursday, Xabi Alonso’s Real Madrid defeated Atletico Madrid 2-1 to advance to the Clasico final against rivals Barcelona. In all competitions, Madrid won for the fifth time in a row thanks to a blazing free kick from Fede Valverde and a goal from Rodrygo Goes. Diego Simeone’s Atletico lost in Jeddah thanks to a goal from Alexander Sorloth.After a period of patchy play towards the end of 2025, Alonso was on the verge of being fired, but his squad has gradually rediscovered its footing in the form of successful outcomes, even though some performances have not been totally convincing. Before his club started to falter, the Spanish coach guided Madrid to victory against Barcelona in his first Clasico as manager in October.”After so many games without scoring, today was a great game to get back to it, to help the team win,” Valverde said to Movistar following his season-opening goal.”We have to keep being self-critical too, we had chances but they had



more and played much better than us, we have to keep correcting that and improving.”Alonso kept youthful striker Gonzalo Garcia in the center of the attack following his hat-trick against Real Betis on Sunday, while French sensation Kylian Mbappe is sidelined while he recovers from a sprained knee. In a September La Liga rivalry, Atletico defeated their city rivals 5-2, but this match was much closer.After just two minutes, Los Blancos seized the lead thanks to a fierce free kick from Valverde that shot past Jan Oblak and beyond Sorloth in an ill-positioned wall.Oblak grabbed his hand to the shot but was unable to stop it due to the sheer force, and the Norwegian Atletico striker may have done more to block it.

Mamata Banerjee spearheads a demonstration in Kolkata against ED searches on I-PAC

New Delhi, Jan 09: Mamata Banerjee, the chief minister of West Bengal, led a protest march on Friday in the state capital of Kolkata against the Enforcement Directorate’s searches of I-PAC chief Pratik Jain’s home and workplace.Ahead of the 2026 assembly elections, Banerjee began the march from the 8B Bus Stand area, accompanied by senior TMC leaders, ministers, MPs, MLAs, and a large number of supporters. She chanted anti-BJP slogans and accused the central government of “misusing central agencies for political vendetta.”One day after Mamata Banerjee’s dramatic visit to Jain’s Loud-on Street home on Thursday during an ED search operation, the march is moving in the direction of Hazra More. After TMC MPs Mahua Moitra and Derek O’Brien, among others, were arrested outside union home minister Amit Shah’s office while demonstrating against the ED raids on I-PAC president Pratik Jain’s Kolkata residence, Mamata Banerjee earlier attacked the center and the BJP.Banerjee described the MPs’ treatment as “arrogance in uniform.””I vehemently denounce the deplorable and intolerable abuse of our MPs. It is hubris in uniform, not law enforcement, to



drag elected officials out into the streets for using their democratic right to demonstrate outside the Home Minister’s office. The West Bengal chief minister wrote on X, “This is a democracy, not the BJP’s private property. While protesting against the alleged abuse of probe agencies by the Center outside Shah’s New Delhi office on Friday, a number of TMC MPs were arrested. MPs were dragged and physically hauled away by police officers while TMC leaders were forcibly removed from the scene.

After the high drama on coal smuggling scam, the governor of Bengal received a threat email

New Delhi, Jan 09: Following an email threatening to “blast” West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose, the authorities increased security at his official residence and office, Lok Bhawan. They also reported the threatening email to Bose to Amit Shah’s Ministry of Home Affairs.Mamata Banerjee, the leader of the Trinamool Congress and the chief minister of West Bengal, was criticized by BJP leader Amit Malviya for the state’s law and order condition, citing the incident. Elections are scheduled for April of this year.”Welcome to Mamata Banerjee’s government, where not even the governor is safe.” In West Bengal, law and order has totally disintegrated, according to Malviya.”To shield a private company accused of money laundering and coal smuggling, Home Minister Mamata Banerjee is actively stealing damning documents from the ED. “Mamata Banerjee is an absolute catastrophe,” he continued. Malviya alluded to the intense political drama that transpired yesterday during



an Enforcement Directorate (ED) action against I-PAC, a political consulting firm, in relation to a coal smuggling case.BJP leaders, including Malviya, have claimed that Banerjee entered the IPAC office during the ED action and left with documents, laptops, and pen drives. It had nothing to do with politics; it was an official action. There was some intelligence in the ED. However, her behavior indicated that she had anything to conceal, BJP leader Subhas Sarkar told reporters. The Bengal government and the ED have both filed law-

suits. The ED complained of hindering an inquiry, while the state claimed that the ED action was motivated by a political grudge.”The party in power in the center has attacked the federal framework. Trinamool leader Bedabrat Dutta told reporters, “Our Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is the only leader in India who can challenge the BJP.”Banerjee accused Amit Shah of abusing central agencies and claimed the ED attempted to steal party-related materials, such as hard drives, candidate lists, and strategy plans.

Five days after being passed over for the ODI, Ruturaj Gaikwad sets a new record with the Vijay Hazare Trophy

New Delhi: Batsman Ruturaj Gaikwad has set a huge record in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, India’s top domestic 50-over competition, just days after being left out of the country’s ODI team for the series against New Zealand. Gaikwad, the captain of Maharashtra, hammered a superb 134 off 131 balls on Thursday against Goa. With 15, Gaikwad tied the record for the most hundreds by a batter in the Vijay Hazare Trophy. It just so happens that Ankit Bawne, Gaikwad’s Maharashtra teammate, was the man who previously held the record. Gaikwad reached his second century of the current Vijay Hazare Trophy season by walking in to bat at number five and hitting eight boundaries and six sixes on his way to a knock of 134. Maharashtra reached a decent total of 249/7 in



50 overs thanks to his performance alone.Bawne was out for a duck while batting at number three.Despite making his first century in the format against South Africa in December 2025, Gaikwad, who cap-

tains Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in the Indian Premier League (IPL), was unexpectedly left out of India’s ODI selection for the New Zealand series. The 28-year-old reached the milestone in just 59 innings. In

contrast, Bawne has already participated in almost 100 games.Devdutt Padikkal and Mayank Agarwal of Karnataka, who each have 13, closely trail Gaikwad and Bawne’s total of 15. In the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy, both hitters have been in scorching form. With 13 hundreds in just 35 innings, Padikkal, an IPL player for Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), is quickly approaching Gaikwad’s recently accomplished achievement. In the current season, the 25-year-old left-hander has already amassed four hundreds. When it comes to the Vijay Hazare Trophy, India’s renowned ODI batting stars, like as Virat Kohli, Sachin Tendulkar, Rohit Sharma, Sourav Ganguly, or MS Dhoni, are far from the record.

Shubman Gill’s Astonishing Test Decision Draws Attention



New Delhi: India’s captain, Shubman Gill, has made a significant decision to alter the team’s preparation for assignments in the longest format as the team’s performance graph in Test match cricket struggles to show any signs of improvement. According to a report, Gill has asked the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to allow his squad to rehearse for 15 days prior to each Test match. Many previous cricket players are impressed

by Gill’s choice; former Indian batsman Robin Uthappa described it as a “insane decision.”Over the past year or so, India has not performed well in Test cricket. India is in danger of being eliminated from the World Test Championship competition after series losses to New Zealand, Australia, and England. Gill’s request for an extended time for preparation has been viewed as a significant step toward improving performance.”I believe that a leader’s call is crazy. That is the best call there is. In that way, he is leading Test cricket. It’s excellent. A team must prepare for a Test series for at least two weeks. To win the WTC, we are competing in test series. Therefore, we cannot win it by simply playing Test cricket. You must organize, get ready, and construct. As a board and a team, you must respect Test cricket. He posted on his YouTube channel, “I’m glad he brought it up. There are other former cricket players who support Gill’s call besides Uthappa.

Sialkot and Hyderabad are sold for record prices as the Pakistan Super League grows

New Delhi: Following a record-breaking auction, Hyderabad and Sialkot are expected to join the league as its seventh and eighth franchises, bringing the total number of clubs in the Pakistan Super League to eight starting with the next season. Both new teams sold for the largest franchise prices in PSL history, easily exceeding expectations in the bidding process. The Hyderabad franchise was acquired for PKR 1.75 billion by FKS, a US-based aviation and healthcare corporation



that already manages the Chicago Kingsmen. According to reports,

a real estate partnership called OZ Developers got the rights to the Si-

alkot team with a price of PKR 1.85 billion (USD 6.55 million). The base price at the start of the auction was PKR 1.1 billion, which is the annual cost that must be paid to the Pakistan Cricket Board in order to run a franchise for ten years. When FKS, led by CEO Fawad Sarwar, made an initial bid of PKR 1.4 billion, the numbers increased dramatically. The auction swiftly became competitive even though bidders were just needed to increase the sum by PKR 10 million each time.

SPORTS

Vinicius Jr vs Diego Simeone explained: Atletico boss condemned, criticised for crossing the line

Real Madrid victory marred by Vinicius-Simeone sideline clash

Jeddah: Real Madrid booked their place in the 2026 Spanish Super Cup final with a hard-fought 2-1 victory over city rivals Atletico Madrid in the semifinal in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, but the result was overshadowed by a tense sideline exchange between Real's star forward Vincius Jr. and Atletico manager Diego Simeone. The match, played at King Abdullah Sports City Stadium, saw Real Madrid take control early thanks to goals from Federico Valverde and Rodrygo, putting Los Blancos ahead in a fixture that pitted two of Spanish football's fiercest rivals against each other. Atletico struck back through a header from Alexander S,rloth, but Real held on to secure victory and set up a Super Cup final clash with Barcelona. However, much of the post-match attention centred on an altercation on the touchline late in the game, when Vincius was substituted in the 81st minute. Broadcast cameras captured Simeone addressing the Brazilian winger with provocative remarks as he walked off the pitch, reportedly telling him: "Florentino is going to kick you out," referring to Real Madrid president Florentino Prez.

The exchange, which unfolded in front of millions watching worldwide, drew immediate reactions from both benches. Vincius appeared animated in response and was later shown a yellow card as emotions flared. Real Madrid coach Xabi Alonso intervened, visibly displeased with Simeone's conduct and defending his player. After the match, Alonso did not hold back in condemning



the incident, saying that Simeone's behaviour "crossed the line" and lacked respect. "I heard what Simeone said to Vini, and I didn't like it," Alonso said. "You cannot talk like that, some things cross the line. It's unacceptable and it's a lack of fair play." Speculation around Vincius has resurfaced in recent months, with reports linking the Real Madrid forward to interest from clubs in the Premier League and Saudi Pro League. However, Real Madrid officials have consistently dismissed any possibility of a move. Simeone, mean-

while, downplayed the exchange when questioned by the media, saying he believes that "what happens on the field stays on the field," and declined to elaborate on his comments.

The incident sparked significant reaction on social media and from supporters of both clubs. Despite the distraction, Real Madrid's focus now shifts to the final against Barcelona, a fixture that promises another fierce Clasicso showdown on Sunday, January 11. Officials have consistently dismissed any possibility of a move.

Nick Kyrgios withdraws from Australian Open singles, set to compete in doubles



New Delhi: Australian tennis star Nick Kyrgios announced on Friday that he will not compete in the singles draw at the upcoming Australian Open, admitting he is not yet ready for the physical demands of five-set matches. Kyrgios was expected to be one of the three remaining wildcard recipients from Tennis Australia for the grand slam

event, but has now pulled just a few days ahead of its start. The 30-year-old, who reached the quarter-finals of his home Grand Slam in 2015, has endured a prolonged battle with injuries in recent years. He will now feature only in the doubles competition at Melbourne Park alongside compatriot Thanasi Kokkinakis, with the tournament set to begin

on January 18. Announcing his decision to withdraw from the singles event, Kyrgios revealed that his body was not quite ready for the demands of five-set matches and that he wanted the wildcard to go to someone who could "make their moment count".

"After some good conversations with TA, I've made the call to focus on doubles for this year's AO. I'm fit and back on court, but five-setters are a different beast and I'm not quite ready to go the distance yet. This tournament means everything to me, but I'd rather give my spot to someone who's ready to make their moment count. It's all building blocks, and I will be back next year and pumped to compete. See you

out there," Kyrgios wrote on his Instagram story. Since losing the 2022 Wimbledon final to Novak Djokovic, Kyrgios has undergone wrist reconstruction surgery and two knee operations, setbacks that have seen his world ranking slip to 670. He suffered a straight-sets defeat to Aleksandar Kovacevic in the opening round of the Brisbane Open on Tuesday and had been expected to seek a wildcard entry for the singles draw in Australia. Kyrgios previously lifted the men's doubles title at the Australian Open in 2022, partnering Kokkinakis to defeat compatriots Matthew Ebden and Max Purcell in straight sets in the final. Nick Kyrgiosis set to participate in a Kyrgios.

Tilak Varma recovering

New Delhi: Tilak Varma offered an injury update to his fans after undergoing surgery and assured that he is on the road to recovery. The 23-year-old left-hander was admitted to hospital after suffering acute testicular pain while turning out for Hyderabad in the Vijay Hazare Trophy in Rajkot. He subsequently underwent a successful surgical procedure earlier this week. Sources confirmed to India Today that he was discharged on Thursday morning and is recovering well. It is understood that Tilak will return to Hyderabad on Friday. He is expected to resume light physical training once his symptoms subside completely the surgical wound heals satisfactorily, following plan.

WPL 2026: Mumbai Indians face revamped RCB opener

New Delhi: Defending champions Mumbai Indians Women will kick off their Women's Premier League 2026 campaign against Royal Challengers Bengaluru Women in what promises to be a blockbuster opener. With both sides the only champions in the league's short but impactful history, the contest sets the tone for a season that could push women's cricket to unprecedented heights, especially on the back of India's recent ODI World Cup triumph. As the spotlight on women's cricket grows brighter than ever, familiar stars will once again be expected to shoulder responsibility. At the same time, the opening fixture offers a golden opportunity for young and uncapped players to announce themselves on the big stage. There could scarcely be a better stage or occasion to make a statement than the first match of WPL 2026.

The 2026 season marks the first major reset in the league following the mega auction, and the contrast in team-building philosophies is stark. Mumbai Indians have doubled down on continuity, backing their proven match-winners and core group that delivered the title last season. Royal Challengers Bengaluru, on the other hand, arrive with a reworked squad, having parted ways with several established names. The absence of Ellyse Perry, Renuka Singh Thakur and Asha Shobana has altered the complexion of the RCB side significantly. For a team that relied heavily on Perry's all-round brilliance



during their title-winning run, the challenge now lies in redistributing those responsibilities across a younger, more dynamic group.

Ellyse Perry's withdrawal from WPL 2026 due to personal reasons was confirmed well before the auction, allowing RCB to plan accordingly. Captain Smriti Mandhana admitted that clarity around Perry's availability shaped their strategy. "We knew that she's not going to be available pre-auction. We had a call with her that she wanted some break for herself so the auction strategy also was around that," Mandhana said. The difference this time, Mandhana explained, was preparation. "Knowing it before the auction is a little better. Last season, we got to know about a lot of our injuries post-auction which is very hard."

While Perry's influence cannot be replicated, RCB believe depth and versatility can soften the blow. Australia batter Georgia Voll, explosive all-rounder Grace Harris, and South Africa's reliable Nadine de Klerk are expected to shoulder the bulk of the batting responsibility auction which is very hard.

PV Sindhu advances to Malaysia Open semifinal after Yamaguchi retires

Kuala Lumpur: Indian star shuttler PV Sindhu reached the semifinals of the ongoing Malaysia Open 2026 as third seed Akane Yamaguchi of Japan retired hurt after losing the opening game 21-11, giving Sindhu a semis spot a day after she played a solid match to beat 8th seed Tomoka Miyazaki, according to ESPN. Sindhu's win against Yamaguchi means she will now face the winner of the match between China's Wang Zhiyi and Indonesia's PK Wardani, who will square off later on Friday. PV Sindhu, ranked 18, had outplayed eighth seed Tomoka Miyazaki of Japan to book her place in the final eight of the ongoing Badminton World Federation Super 1000 event. India's two-time Olympic medallist,



PV Sindhu, defeated world No. 33 Sung Shuo-yun of Chinese Taipei 21-13, 22-20 earlier to advance to the second round in her first-round match. Sindhu dominated the opening game, 21-8, and maintained momentum to seal the match 21-13 in the second game. While Sindhu advanced to the semis, India's men's singles star Lakshya Sen crashed out of the Malaysia Open, losing to Hong Kong's Lee Cheuk Yiu in the singles pre-quarterfinals at the Stadium Axiata Arena on Thursday. Lakshya Sen, 13th in the badminton

rankings, lost 22-20, 21-15 against world No. 18 Lee Cheuk Yiu of Hong Kong, China, in 53 minutes, as per Olympics.com. The 24-year-old Indian shuttler had a promising start, leading 11-9 at the interval and even holding four game points in the opening game. However, Lee Cheuk Yiu's six consecutive points turned the tide, and he took the opener in a tie-break. Sen couldn't recover, losing the second game as well.

This was Lakshya Sen's third defeat in five matches against Lee Cheuk Yiu. Eyes will also be on India's star duo, Satwiksairaj Rankiredy and Chirag Shetty, who will be facing off against Indonesia's Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Shohibul Fikri in the men's terfinals.

Martinelli apologizes to Bradley

New Delhi: Arsenal winger Gabriel Martinelli has issued an apology for pushing injured Liverpool defender Conor Bradley off the pitch during the 0-0 draw in the Premier League clash. The incident happened in stoppage time when Bradley, who represents Northern Ireland, landed awkwardly near the touchline while chasing the ball. He immediately went down, clutching his knee in pain. As play continued, Martinelli dropped the ball beside the Liverpool defender and then pushed him from behind in an attempt to get him off the field and restart the game. The moment sparked outrage among fans and football pundits, many of whom felt Martinelli should have been sent off. However, the Arsenal forward was only shown a yellow card, a decision that drew angry reactions from the Liverpool players. Bradley received treatment on the pitch before being taken off on a stretcher. He was later seen leaving the Emirates Stadium on crutches and wearing a knee brace, raising concerns about the severity of his injury. Manchester United legends Gary Neville and Roy Keane were among those who strongly criticised Martinelli for his behaviour. In stoppage time, Bradley fell awkwardly near the touchline .

It was meant to be: Young India spinner Vaishnavi reflects on cricket journey

Vaishnavi disappointed after missing WPL auction

New Delhi: It was written in the stars, or so believed her father. Long before Vaishnavi Sharma picked up a cricket ball, she says her future as a sportsperson was known to her astrologer father, Narendra Sharma. The 20-year-old left-arm spinner from Gwalior made her India debut in the T20 International format just last year in a home series against Sri Lanka. When I was four years old, my journey in sports began. As you all know, my father is an astrologer. He looked at my horoscope and said that I should either go into sports or into the medical field," Vaishnavi told 'PTI Videos'. After that, it was a question of where my own interest was. After some time, he understood that my interest was in sports. When I was seven, I started playing more seriously, like going for evening practice sessions. And when I was 11 12 years old, I played my first Under-16 match for Madhya Pradesh. It wasn't under the BCCI then, but that's where my journey really started," she recalled. In the five-match series against Sri Lanka, she finished as the joint-highest wicket-taker for India with Five scalps. The youngster says she has been certain about cricket from the very first day. "When I started cricket, this was always my goal. I never focused



on any other goal. Whenever I go to the ground, I just forget everything else, because the feeling I get after playing cricket, I don't get it from anything else," she said. I can't sit idle at home. Even if I'm doing my favourite things, when I have that love for cricket, I don't think about anything else," she added. Her journey, however, hasn't been without disappointment. Vaishnavi admitted she had hoped to be picked by a franchise during the Women's Premier League auction before the Sri Lanka call-up but when it did not happen, she felt disappointed. However, she ensured that it didn't affect her performance at a Domestic age-group event. Of course, it feels very bad when you have expectations. I had them too, and I felt really bad. But I was playing a tournament at that time, so my whole focus was on my team. Under-23 was a big stage for me, so I kept my focus only on that," she said.

Then I thought that I can only do what is in my hands and leave the rest to God. And when I left it to God, He gave me something even better." Instead of dwelling on the setback, Vaishnavi focussed herself on domestic cricket, determined to control what she could. I never showed that disappointment on the field. I was sad in my room, I spoke to my family. My friends, parents, brother and seniors all called me. "Yes, I was a little sad, but I never let that come onto the ground. I focused on what I had in My hands, and at that time, it was Under-23 cricket for Madhya Pradesh," she said. A few weeks later, her perseverance paid off with a maiden India call-up and she said walking into a dressing room filled with World Cup winners was an emotional moment. "I was very nervous. I was thinking, what will their reaction be, what will they say, how will I start the conversation? But when I reached

there, everyone welcomed me warmly, spoke to me and made me feel very comfortable. I bonded really well with them," she said. Despite now being teammates, Vaishnavi admits to being a fan of captain Harmanpreet Kaur. "I will always have those butterflies that I am going to meet Harman di. They are big stars. I used to watch them on television and now I am playing with them. So the butterflies and excitement will always be there," she smiled. Vaishnavi says she idolises Harmanpreet's fighting spirit, while Smriti Mandhana inspires her approach to the game. Smriti di and Harman di are my role models. I once saw an interview of Smriti di where she said that even if she contributes for the team, she celebrates I bonded really well with them she said. accuracy and control. Vaishnavi's father, Narendra Sharma, an astrologer, studied her horoscope and predicted she should pursue either sports or medicine She began serious training, attending evening practice sessions regularly. - Played her first Under-16 match for Madhya Pradesh, marking the start of her competitive cricket career. - Her father's belief in astrology shaped her path. He was convinced cricket was her destiny. - Vaishnavi herself recalls: "It was meant to be.

Kenya tennis admits wildcard blunder after player's defeat goes viral online



New Delhi: Kenya's tennis governing body has admitted to an error in judgment after a wildcard entry at the ITF W35 Nairobi tournament sparked widespread controversy and debate across the sport. In a statement issued on Thursday, Tennis Kenya acknowledged that granting a wildcard to Egyptian player Hajar Abdelkader was a mistake, following the circulation of a viral video that raised serious questions about her readiness to compete at professional level. "Tennis Kenya is aware of concerns regarding the participation of Egyptian player Hajar Abdelkader in the ITF W35 Nairobi tournament following the circulation of a video on social media that raised questions about her level of play," the federation said. "In hindsight, Tennis Kenya acknowledges that this wildcard should not have been granted." The controversy stems from Abdelkader's first-round match against Germany's Lorena Schadel, which ended in an emphatic 6-0, 6-0 defeat in just 37 minutes at the Parklands Sports Club in Nairobi. Abdelkader won only three points in the entire match, two of which came from her opponent's double faults and one from an unforced error. Footage from the match quickly went viral, with viewers highlighting Abdelkader's struggles with even the basic

skills of competitive tennis. Match statistics showed that the 21-year-old committed 20 double faults and landed just 8.3 per cent of her first serves. At one stage, she was even guided by the chair umpire on where to stand to begin a point, an unusual sight at a professional ITF event. In its statement, Tennis Kenya explained the circumstances under which the wildcard was awarded. Abdelkader was granted entry for the tournament after submitting a formal request and travelling to Nairobi on Tuesday morning. The opportunity arose after the original main-draw wildcard recipient withdrew at short notice and opted to compete in the qualifying draw instead. "At the time, Ms Abdelkader was the only other player who had requested a wildcard, and the decision was taken on the information provided and in the interest of maintaining a full and balanced draw while supporting the development of tennis in Africa," the federation said. The federation also said Abdelkader had support. Tennis Kenya admitted the wildcard "should not have been granted." Abdelkader was given a last-minute entry after another player withdrew, to maintain a full draw. The decision was based on details provided by the player, which organizers later realized were misleading.