

Mizoram Governor inaugurates independent NCC Group Headquarters in Aizawl

Aizawl, Jan 30: In a landmark development for the National Cadet Corps (NCC) in Mizoram, Mizoram Governor General Vijay Kumar Singh today graced the ceremonial raising of the NCC Group Headquarters, Aizawl as the Chief Guest.

The event, held at the Mizoram University (MZU) Auditorium, formally inaugurated an independent Group Headquarters dedicated to NCC operations in the state. During the programme, the Governor handed over the NCC Group Headquarters Aizawl flag to Group Commander Brig Gunjit Singh Arora, thereby officially raising the headquarters. He also released a special commemorative “My Stamp” to mark the occasion.

The ceremony was attended by Sports and Youth Services Minister Lalnghinglova Hmar as guest of honour, together with Lt Col Clement Lalhmingthanga (Retd), MLA; Prof. Dibakar Chandra Deka, Vice-Chancellor, Mizoram University; Maj Gen Anurag Vij, Additional Director General, NCC, North Eastern Region and other distinguished guests and senior officials.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor expressed his pleasure at Mizoram now having its own dedicated NCC Group Headquarters, describing it as a proud and significant milestone for the state. He noted that since its establishment in Mizoram in 1964, the NCC has recorded impressive progress and achievements. He emphasised that no other youth



organisation equals the NCC in instilling discipline and offering a wide range of opportunities to young people. Recalling his own days as an NCC cadet during his student years, the Governor remarked that for those aspiring to join the Armed Forces, there is no better preparation than participation in the NCC.

He added that the organisation plays an exceptionally effective role in moulding individuals into respon-

sible, well-rounded citizens.

The Governor expressed confidence that the formal raising of the NCC Group Headquarters in Aizawl would lead to a substantial expansion of NCC activities among Mizoram’s youth. He urged all NCC cadets to faithfully adhere to their motto of “Unity & Discipline”. He commended the consistent praise earned by the Mizoram NCC Band at Republic Day parades and encouraged continued

striving for excellence. Highlighting the diverse activities conducted under the NCC - such as community service, disaster response, blood donation camps, environmental protection initiatives, and social awareness programmes - the Governor observed that these efforts foster patriotism and help shape young people into valuable contributors to society. He praised the Mizoram Government’s initiatives to promote adven-

ture tourism and expressed the hope that greater numbers of NCC cadets would participate in such adventure activities in the future. He reaffirmed the state government’s full commitment and continued support for the sustained development of the NCC in Mizoram.

As part of the programme, a documentary video tracing the history and achievements of the NCC in Mizoram was also screened.

DC Office picnic circular triggers online debate in Keyi Panyor

Itanagar, Jan 30: A circular issued by the district administration in Arunachal Pradesh’s Keyi Panyor district has drawn wide attention on social media after it announced the closure of the deputy commissioner’s office for a day due to an office picnic. The circular, dated January 29, informed that the office of the deputy commissioner in Keyi Panyor district would remain closed on January 30. The notice stated that the closure was on account of the annual picnic of the office and requested all concerned to take note of the decision.

The order was signed by Shweta Nagarkoti, the deputy commissioner of the district. Soon after the circular began circulating online, it went viral across social media platforms. Several users shared screenshots of the notice, accompanied by jokes and memes. Many questioned how a deputy commissioner’s office, which handles key administrative and public service functions, could be shut for a picnic, even for a day. Some users also raised concerns about inconvenience to the public, especially in a newly formed district where administrative offices play a crucial role. The development sparked a wider debate online about office discipline, work culture in government offices, and the balance between official duties and staff welfare activities. While some users criticised the decision, others defended it, saying staff morale activities are common in many workplaces and that a one-day closure may not be unusual.

Assam Court to rule on bail pleas of three accused in Zubeen Garg death case

Guwahati, Jan 30: The Kamrup Metropolitan District and Sessions Court is scheduled to hear and decide the bail petitions of three accused in the Zubeen Garg death case on Friday, January 30. The order on the bail pleas is expected later in the day, according to court officials. The court is considering the bail applications of singer Amritprabha Mahanta and two personal security officers of the late singer—Pareesh Baishya and Nandeshwar Bora. All three are accused in connection with the case and are currently in judicial custody. Earlier, during a hearing held on January 22, two other accused—Shyamkanu Mahanta, director of the North East India Festival, and Sandipan Garg, a cousin of the late singer—

had withdrawn their bail petitions. Shyamkanu Mahanta has been charged with murder, while Sandipan Garg faces charges of culpable homicide not amounting to murder. Two more accused named in the case—Siddhartha Sharma, who served as Zubeen Garg’s secretary, and Shekhar Jyoti Goswami—have not applied for bail so far, officials said. During the previous hearing, the accused persons appeared before the court through video conferencing. Meanwhile, Zubeen Garg’s wife Garima Garg and his sister Palmee Borthakur were present in court. Speaking to reporters outside the courtroom, Garima said the prosecution had strongly opposed the bail pleas and ex-

pressed satisfaction with the arguments presented by the state. Zubeen Garg died under mysterious circumstances on September 19 last year while attending the North East India Festival in Singapore. He was reported to have drowned while swimming in the sea. The incident led to widespread public concern and demands for a thorough investigation in Assam. Following the public outcry, the Assam government constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT), which filed its chargesheet on December 12. According to the SIT, Shyamkanu Mahanta, Siddhartha Sharma, Shekhar Jyoti Goswami and Amritprabha Mahanta have been charged with murder.

Congress questions BJP, alleges Northeast neglect

Guwahati, Jan 30 : As Union Home Minister Amit Shah arrived in Assam for his second visit in a month, the Congress on Friday launched a sharp attack on the BJP, accusing the ruling party of neglecting the Northeast and leaving its people “politically orphaned.” Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said Shah’s presence in the state was a welcome step but insisted that the BJP must answer for its decade-long rule in Assam. He posed ten questions, ranging from the delay in granting Scheduled Tribe status to several communities, including Koch-Rajbongshi, Tai Ahom, Moran, Matak, Chutia and Tea Tribes/Adivasi, to the alleged sale of indigenous land and the erosion of Assamese identity. Khera alleged that 1.5 lakh bighas of land belonging to indigenous people had been sold to cronies and questioned why Assamese youth were forced to migrate in search of jobs. He also raised concerns about the disappearance of indigenous voters from electoral rolls, the absence of minimum support price quality.

In Brief

Zubeen Garg death case

Guwahati: The Kamrup Metropolitan District and Sessions Court is scheduled to hear and decide the bail petitions of three accused in the Zubeen Garg death case on Friday, January 30. The order on the bail pleas is expected later in the day, according to court officials. The court is considering the bail applications of singer Amritprabha Mahanta and two personal security officers of the late singer—Pareesh Baishya and Nandeshwar Bora. All three are accused in connection with the case and are currently in judicial custody. Earlier, during a hearing held on January 22, two other accused—Shyamkanu Mahanta, director of the North East India Festival, and Sandipan Garg, a cousin of the late singer—had withdrawn their bail petitions. Shyamkanu Mahanta has been charged with murder, while Sandipan Garg faces charges of culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

Govt aims to resettle over 10,000 IDP families by March 31

Imphal: Informing that more than 2,200 families consisting of about 10,000 IDPs had been resettled by December 2025, the Government of Manipur has announced that it is aiming to resettle more than 10,000 displaced IDP families consisting of more than 40,000 IDPs by March 31 this year. According to a statement issued by Chief Secretary Dr. Puneet Kumar Goel, the Government of Manipur, from time to time, has been apprising the people of Manipur regarding the progress of resettlement of IDPs in the State. As stated in earlier communications, a State Level Committee under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary, Government of Manipur and with Commissioner - Home Department, Director General of Police, and other senior officials of the Government as members, has been formed to monitor the rehabilitation process in the State. Similarly, District level committees are formed under the District Magistrates.

Manipur joins nation in observing Shaheed Diwas

Imphal: Manipur joined the nation in observing Martyrs’ Day, also known as Shaheed Diwas, to honour those who sacrificed their lives for the country’s independence. The day holds significance as it marks the 78th Death Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. The Chief Guest of the function, Governor of Manipur, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, led the people in paying homage by laying wreath at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at Gandhi Memorial Hall, Imphal. Members of the Legislative Assembly, Chief Secretary, Security Advisor, DGP, along with senior civil and police officers, also laid wreaths at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi, paying tribute to his enduring legacy of truth and non-violence. Besides the singing of bhajans, a two-minute silence was observed as a mark of respect to the departed freedom fighters.

Manipur joins nation in observing Shaheed Diwas



Imphal, Jan 30: Manipur joined the nation in observing Martyrs’ Day, also known as Shaheed Diwas, to honour those who sacrificed their lives for the country’s independence. The day holds significance as it marks the 78th Death Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. The Chief Guest of the function, Governor of Manipur, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, led the people in paying homage by laying wreath at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at Gandhi Memorial Hall, Imphal. Members of the Legislative Assembly, Chief Secretary, Security Advisor, DGP, along with senior civil and police officers, also laid wreaths at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi, paying tribute to his enduring legacy of truth and non-violence. Besides the singing of bhajans, a two-minute silence was observed as a mark of respect to the departed freedom fighters.

Tripura Government honours Shija Hospitals for healthcare and economic impact

Agartala, Jan 30: The Department of Industries and Commerce, Government of Tripura, felicitated Shija Hospitals and Research Institute Pvt. Ltd. during the inaugural programme of the 36th Tripura Industries and Commerce Fair 2026, held on January 29 at the Hapania International Fair Ground, Agartala. The award was presented by Dr. Manik Saha, Chief Minister of Tripura. Santosh Shekhar, General Manager, Shija Hospitals, received the award on behalf of the organisation. The recognition was conferred in appreciation of Shija Hospi-

tals’ valuable contribution to the economic development of Tripura, particularly its role in strengthening industrial growth, generating employment, and enhancing investor confidence in the state. The Government of Tripura noted that Shija’s sustained engagement has played a meaningful role in reinforcing the State’s investment ecosystem and advancing the vision of inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development. Shija Hospitals laid the foundation stone for a 700-bed Shija Super Specialty Hospital at R K Nagar, Agartala, on November 5,

2025. The multi-speciality and super-speciality hospital is planned to be implemented in four phases over a period of nine years. Once operational, the hospital is expected to significantly reduce medical migration and promote regional healthcare self-reliance. The new hospital, along with the envisioned academic ecosystem, reaffirms Shija’s commitment to compassionate care, collaborative growth, and affordable excellence in healthcare for every citizen.

Shija Hospitals has also actively contributed to academic collaboration and capacity

building in Tripura. A kidney transplant team from AGMC, Agartala, received structured training and

hands-on experience at Shija Hospital. In addition, Continuing Medical Education programmes focusing on reconstructive techniques, trauma management, and post-burn rehabilitation were conducted at TMC and AGMC, facilitating meaningful knowledge exchange among healthcare professionals. In collaboration with AGMC Agartala, the Shija transplant team successfully performed five kidney transplants in the state.

Govt aims to resettle over 10,000 IDP families by March 31

Imphal, Jan 30: Informing that more than 2,200 families consisting of about 10,000 IDPs had been resettled by December 2025, the Government of Manipur has announced that it is aiming to resettle more than 10,000 displaced IDP families consisting of more than 40,000 IDPs by March 31 this year. According to a statement issued by Chief Secretary Dr. Puneet Kumar Goel, the Government of Manipur, from time to time, has been apprising the people of Manipur regarding the progress of resettlement of IDPs in the State. As stated in earlier communications, a State Level Committee under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary, Government of Manipur and with Commissioner - Home Department, Director General of Police, and other senior officials of the Government as members, has been formed to monitor the rehabilitation process in the State. Similarly, District level committees are formed under the District Magistrates. These committees are meeting regularly and conducting rigorous Vreviews of the rehabilitation process. The primary aim of the Government is to gradually and securely reha-

ilitate IDPs, restore stable living conditions, and enable resumption of livelihoods, education and normal community life. The Government’s vision extends beyond mere relocation of IDPs from camps to their homes, rather a holistic transition out of Relief Camps with focus on livelihood, education and overall wellness of the IDPs, the statement said. By December 2025, more than 2,200 families consisting of about 10,000 IDPs had been resettled. To further this momentum, approximately 7,000 houses have been sanctioned under the Special PMAY-G (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin) for the reconstruction of fully damaged houses and these units are currently in various stages of completion, it conveyed. The Government has so far released about 1 124.00 crore for the resettlement of IDPs at various locations. As on today, 2026 about 3,700 families consisting of about 16,500 IDPs have been successfully resettled, it said. The Government aims to resettle more than 10,000 displaced IDP families consisting of more than 40,000 IDPs by March 31 this year, it informed. The Government remains committed to ensure timely and safe rehabilitation of all displaced persons at the earliest, the statement said.

Mizoram Governor opens NCC HQ

Aizawl, Jan 30: In a landmark development for the National Cadet Corps (NCC) in Mizoram, Mizoram Governor General (Dr) Vijay Kumar Singh, PVSM, AVSM, YSM (Retd), today graced the ceremonial raising of the NCC Group Headquarters, Aizawl as the Chief Guest. The event, held at the Mizoram University (MZU) Auditorium, formally inaugurated an independent Group Headquarters dedicated to NCC operations in the state. During the programme, the Governor handed over the NCC Group Headquarters Aizawl flag tcasion.

NE/EAST

Assam CM links Gandhi's ideals to rural-led governance as Delhi tightens security

Guwahati, Jan 30: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary, stressing the state's emphasis on rural development and social harmony as a continuation of Gandhi's core principles. In a message shared on X on January 30, Sarma said Assam's development approach draws from Gandhi's ideas of Gram Swaraj and non-violence, with villages positioned as the backbone of growth. He said these values continue to shape the state's pursuit of a peaceful and inclusive rise, driven primarily by rural communities. India marks January 30 as Martyrs' Day to commemorate Gandhi's assassination in 1948 and to honour his role in the freedom movement. An official ceremony is scheduled at Rajghat in New Delhi, where senior leaders and dignitaries are expected to pay their respects. Ahead of the event, the Delhi Traffic Police issued an advisory announcing enhanced security and possible traffic diversions in parts of central Delhi. Restrictions may be enforced between 9 am and 12 noon, depending on crowd movement and security requirements. Key stretches likely to be affected include routes around ITO Chowk, Delhi Gate, Shantivan Chowk, Guru Nanak Chowk, the Rajghat DTC Depot and the IP Flyover. Arterial roads such as BSZ Marg, Asaf Ali Road and Nishad Raj Marg may also see regulated movement during the ceremony. Police have urged commuters to plan travel in advance, use public transport where possible and avoid roadside parking. Citizens have also been advised to report any suspicious objects or



persons to emergency services by dialling 112. Gandhi was assassinated on January 30, 1948, at Gandhi Smriti in New Delhi, just months after India gained independence.

persons to emergency services by dialling 112. Gandhi was assassinated on January 30, 1948, at Gandhi Smriti in New Delhi, just months after India gained independence.

Arunachal CM lays foundation stone for government officers' quarters

Agartala, Jan 30: Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh Pema Khandu on January 29, laid the foundation stone for the project titled "Construction of Accommodation for Government Officers and Staffs at Namsai, Namsai District" under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) 2024-25 scheme. The project, with an estimated cost of Rs 1,865.70 lakh, will be completed within 18 months. It will be executed by the Department of Urban Affairs, Namsai Division.

As per official details, the project includes the construction of 24 modern Type-III government residential units in two blocks, with 12 units each. The scope of work also covers site development, internal cement concrete roads, paver block parking facilities, a main entry and exit gate, and a compound wall. Provision has also been made for an additional residential block with 12 units in the future. The new quarters will replace 12 old NEFA-era buildings, as part of the state government's phased plan to demolish dilapidated structures and upgrade them with modern facilities. Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, Minister Kento Jini, MLAs Chau Zingnu Namchoom, Jikke Tako and Oken Tayeng, Chief Secretary Manish Kumar Gupta, IAS, along with senior officers and



officials, were present at the programme. Briefing the media, Chief Minister Khandu said the government is systematically reconstructing outdated government quarters across the state to provide better living conditions for employees. He added that two such residential units are being inaugurated on the same day, while construction of another unit is currently ongoing. Officials said the project will strengthen residential infrastructure for government officers and staff and support planned urban development in Namsai district, while also improving administrative efficiency.

Mizoram Governor hails youth as key drivers Vikshit Bharat vision



Aizawl, Jan 30: Mizoram Governor Vijay Kumar Singh on Thursday hailed the youth as foundational contributors to the vision of Vikshit Bharat, the Centre's plan to transform India into a fully developed, self-reliant, and prosperous nation by 2047, the centenary of independence. Addressing the general assembly and ruby jubilee celebration of the Students' Self-Support Union (SSU) in Aizawl, Singh urged students to identify and master their unique talents to contribute to the growth of Mizoram and the nation. He described the youth as key drivers of the Vikshit Bharat vision and reminded them of the significant responsibilities they carry. The Governor also lauded the SSU for consistently promoting self-reliance among students, noting that such dedication serves as a powerful source of inspiration. Singh also advised students to remain resolute in their goals while prioritizing compassion, respect, and community service. "True success is measured not only by personal accomplishments but also by

how we support and uplift those around us," he said.

Founded on May 27, 1985, at Hrangbana College in Aizawl, the SSU has played a long-standing role in empowering students, officials said. "Those who achieve self-reliance through their own efforts become stronger, develop greater self-discipline, and are better equipped to face life's challenges," he said. Singh stressed that genuine progress is unattainable without a clear sense of purpose and steadfast integrity, describing the union's initiatives as an essential pillar of support for the academic community. He encouraged SSU leaders to explore microfinancing schemes to provide targeted assistance for students in need. The Governor further highlighted the union's focus on the dignity of labor, financial self-discipline, and independence gained through personal merit, emphasizing that this philosophy moves education beyond qualifications to the shaping of responsible, well-rounded citizens.

Indian bison sighted in Ukhrul district

Imphal, Jan 30: In a significant boost to biodiversity conservation, the Indian bison (*Bos gaurus*) has been captured on camera traps for the first time in Manipur's Ukhrul district, which shares its eastern border with Myanmar. The sighting confirms the presence of the endangered species in the district's hilly ecosystem after several decades. Forest officials in Manipur said the Indian bison is listed as Vulnerable on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, with habitat loss, hunting and fragmentation posing major threats to its survival in the region. The animal was documented through camera-trap evidence in Nongman village and surrounding areas with the support of local villagers. The exercise was carried out by Environmental Force at the Grass Root Level (ENFOGAL), a Ukhrul-based registered

non-governmental organisation, as part of its wildlife diversity documentation project. As part of the initiative, ENFOGAL installed Artificial Intelligence-enabled equipment, including camera traps, binoculars and research tools, at suitable locations in Ukhrul and Kamjong districts, which are predominantly inhabited by the Tangkhul Naga community. Modern AI-enabled camera traps are increasingly being used to monitor bison movement, with systems such as Trail Guard AI enabling real-time detection. The technology provides images critical for tracking population size, mapping habitats and assessing overall ecosystem health. ENFOGAL project director Patrick Shangh said the organisation has begun strengthening awareness and conservation efforts in Nongman and neighbouring villages, noting that only a few bison populations are

believed to remain in the area. He added that protecting and conserving the species would be a top priority. Historically, the Indian bison had a sparse presence in Manipur, largely confined to dense forest tracts and hilly regions along the eastern border near Myanmar. While part of the broader Northeast Indian ecosystem, its population has sharply declined due to poaching, habitat fragmentation and competition with domestic livestock. The domesticated form of the species, known as Gayal or Mithun (*Bos frontalis*), believed to have originated through hybridisation of the wild gaur, has a long-established presence in Manipur, particularly in border areas adjoining Nagaland and Myanmar. The animal was documented through camera-trap evidence in Nongman village and surrounding areas with the support of local villagers.

Assam: APL signs MoU with Deendayal Port Authority for E-Methanol Plant

Dibrugarh, Jan 30: Assam Petro-Chemicals Limited (APL), a Government of Assam undertaking, on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Deendayal Port Authority, Kandla, Gujarat, to set up an E-Methanol Plant. The move marks a significant step toward green energy transition and port-linked industrial development. The project will see an investment of over Rs 1,200 crore and is expected to generate around 3,500 direct and indirect employment opportunities. The MoU was signed in the presence of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal at a formal ceremony at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Dibrugarh. The proposed E-Methanol plant will focus on producing green methanol, a low-carbon fuel increasingly viewed as a viable alternative for maritime shipping and industrial applications. Officials said the project aligns with India's national commitment to decarbonisation, clean fuels, and sustainable port-led development, while opening new avenues for industrial growth in Assam. The ceremony was also attended by Bimal Borah, Minister of Industries, Commerce and Public Enterprises and Cultural Affairs; Prasanta Phukan, Minister of Power, Skill, Employment & Entrepreneurship and Medical Education & Research; Rameswar Teli, Member of Parliament; Taranga Gogoi, MLA of Naharkatia, and other senior officials. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal congratulated APL and the Deendayal Port Authority for the forward-looking initiative. "This MoU is a clear statement of



intent that India will pursue economic growth without compromising environmental responsibility," he said. He highlighted green methanol's importance for the shipping sector, noting that such initiatives would help Indian ports transition toward cleaner operations. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma described the MoU as a "strategic milestone" that will strengthen Assam's petrochemical ecosystem and position the state as an emerging player in India's green fuel economy. "APL has traditionally produced fossil fuels for ships. With this project, it will produce green methanol, helping decarbonise shipping

transport. The MoU will bring a transformative change in green energy production," he added. The partnership between Assam Petro-Chemicals and the Deendayal Port Authority is expected to facilitate technology exchange, port-based logistics support, and long-term industrial collaboration. Officials noted the project would also create employment and boost ancillary industries in the region. Bikul Chandra Deka, Chairman of APL, said the MoU reflects the company's commitment to innovation, sustainability, and value addition while contributing to Assam's industrial and economic growth.

Assam Assembly to meet on Feb 16 for vote-on-account budget ahead of polls

Guwahati, Jan 30: The final session of the current Assam Legislative Assembly will commence on February 16, during which the state government will present a vote-on-account budget ahead of the upcoming assembly elections, according to an official notification issued on Thursday. An order issued by Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya said the House will assemble at 9:30 am on February 16. A senior Assembly official said the session will continue for four days.

"A vote-on-account budget will be tabled during these four days. The detailed programme has not been finalised yet, as the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) has not met so far," the official said. Elections to the 126-member Assam Assembly are likely to be held in March-April this



year. At present, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has 64 MLAs, while its allies — Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) with nine members, United

People's Party Liberal (UPPL) with seven, and Bodoland People's Front (BPF) with three — together bolster the ruling coalition. In the opposition, the Congress has 26 MLAs, the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) has 15, and the CPI(M) has one member. The House also has one Independent legislator. The final session of the current Assam Assembly is scheduled to begin on February 16, during which the state government will present its vote-on-account budget ahead of the upcoming elections, an official notification stated on January 29. Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya has directed that the House convene at 9:30 am on February 16. A senior assembly official told PTI that the session is expected to run for four days. "

Manipur police arrest three militants in coordinated security operations

Guwahati, Jan 30: Security forces intensified counter-insurgency operations across Manipur on January 29, leading to multiple arrests, recovery of arms and explosives, and the neutralisation of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) near the Indo-Myanmar border. In Imphal East district, Manipur Police arrested two active cadres of KCP (MC Progressive) from the Palace Gate area under Porompat police station. The arrested individuals were identified as Akhom David Singh alias Atomba (24) of Ngangkha Lawai Maning Leikai, Bishnupur dis-

trict, and Potshangbam Johnson Singh alias Abungo (25) of Moirang Khuthekpi, also in Bishnupur. Both were residing in Khumbong Khaidem Awang Leikai under Patsoi police station in Imphal West district. Two mobile phones were seized during the arrest. In a separate operation the same day, security forces apprehended an active cadre of PREPAK (Pro) (G-5) from his residence at Nongada Awang Leikai under Lamalai police station, Imphal East district. The arrested individual, Yumnam Pancha-yaiphaba Meitei alias Yaikhomba (30), was found

in possession of a mobile phone, which was seized. Significant recoveries were also reported from border and hill districts. From the general area of Tarao Lamkhai under Tengnoupal police station, security forces recovered three improvised Pompi mortars, one IED, three hand grenades, and a walkie-talkie set with charger. Along the Indo-Myanmar border near Border Pillars 72-73, three IEDs recovered from Yangoubung village under Moreh police station were safely neutralised, averting potential threats in the sensitive border zone.

Nagaland elders question delay in Naga Political Solution

Kohima, Jan 30: A group of senior leaders from Nagaland, cutting across politics, administration and civil society, on Wednesday raised serious concerns over the prolonged delay in resolving the Naga political issue, despite the signing of two key political agreements with the Government of India several years ago. Around 24 former legislators, ministers, bureaucrats and intellectuals met at the farmhouse residence of veteran Naga leader and former chief minister and governor Dr. S. C. Jamir in Dimapur, where a press conference was later addressed. Briefing the media, Dr. Jamir said the meeting focused on the urgent need for an early political solution, describing Nagaland as “a wounded person groaning in pain” despite the people’s long-standing desire for peace and stability. He pointed out that the political issue should have been resolved long ago following the signing of the Framework Agreement with NSCN (I-M) on August 3, 2015, and the Agreed Position with the Working Committee of NNPGs on November 17, 2017. Dr. Jamir alleged that the solution had been pushed to the backburner due to what he described as delaying tactics by NSCN (I-M), even though other Naga Political Groups had committed to the agreements they signed. He recalled that there was no dissent when the agreements were signed and that the occasion was marked by celebrations in the presence of the Prime Minister, Union Home Minister, Naga leaders and top officials.

DoNER Ministry spends Rs. 9195.65 cr on development projects in NE

Aizawl, Jan 30: The Ministry of Development of North East Region (DoNER) has spent Rs 9195.65 crore under its various schemes for the development of the region.

This was stated by the Minister of State of Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region Dr Sukanta Majumdar in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha today.He said that under the “Act East, Act Fast, Act First” principle, the Ministry is undertaking proactive measures in the North Eastern Region (NER) transforming it into India’s growth engine.“Under the 10% Gross Budgetary Support mechanism, all non-exempted Ministries/Departments are mandated to spend at least 10% of their budget allocation for the development of North Eastern Region (NER). In the last four financial years, a cumulative expenditure of Rs. 3.46 lakh crore has been made against the cumulative allocation of Rs. 3.20 lakh crore for development in the NER in various sectors,” the Minister said.

Tripura to bring EVMs from Madhya Pradesh for April TTAADC elections

Agartala, Jan 30: As preparations pick up for the upcoming elections to the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), election authorities have decided to bring Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) from Madhya Pradesh for use in the polls, sources said. The decision is part of a wider effort to ensure that all arrangements for the April elections are completed well in advance. Officials said the focus is on proper planning, secure handling of election materials and smooth coordination between states. Aspart of this process, senior officials from the Madhya Pradesh State Election Commission visited Tripura’s Sepahijala district on Friday

Arecanut processing unit inaugurated in Mizoram

Aizawl, Jan 30: Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma today inaugurated the Arecanut (Kuhva) Processing Unit established by SSB Agro at Buhchangphai.

P.C. Vanlalruata, Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, attended the event as the Guest of Honour, along with Lalfamkima, Deputy Speaker, and Lalmuanpuia Punte, MLA and Adviser to the Chief Minister.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said Mizoram has around 30,000 hectares under arecanut cultivation, with an estimated production of about 2 lakh quintals in 2024–25. Recog-

nising arecanut as a stable and profitable livelihood, the Government continues to support expansion through schemes such as the Hand-holding Scheme and CM Special Package.

He noted that large-scale arecanut tree loss since 2021 was primarily due to water stress and nutrient deficiency, as assessed by scientists from the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI), and stressed the need for better plantation management and water conservation.

The Chief Minister highlighted the Government’s strong action against illegal arecanut trade, which has sig-



nificantly improved market outcomes for farmers. He also underlined the importance of local processing to ensure better prices. Government-run processing units are under

construction at Chemphai and Zamuang, expected to be operational next year.

Praising SSB Agro’s initiative, he said the company set up a high-capacity unit

capable of processing 3,000 nuts per hour within a short time. He welcomed the procurement arrangement with MAMCOS and expressed confidence that the project would benefit a large number of farmers.Agriculture Minister P.C. Vanlalruata emphasised that processing adds value and ensures stable markets for growers, and informed that similar initiatives are planned for crops like ginger, turmeric, and chilli.A technical report was presented by Sangbiak Lal Khuptong, and the programme concluded with a dedication prayer by Rev. Solomon Lalmuanpuia Khiange.

30 Cadets Wrap Up Army Attachment at Changsari



Guwahati, Jan 30: Thirty SD cadets from Guwahati, Rangia and Dhubri have successfully completed a 12-day Army Attachment Camp at Military Cantonment Changsari under the aegis of Red Horn Division. The camp aimed to instill discipline, leadership, and teamwork among the cadets, while also providing them with an opportunity to learn from the Indian Army’s expertise. During the camp, the cadets attended classes on weapon training, map reading, leadership, and drill. Apart from imparting knowledge and functioning of different

arms and services of the Army the cadets were also acquainted with modern technologies like Drone Handling , Virtual Reality based training and combat medical aid. The camp was designed to provide the cadets with hands-on experience and exposure to military life, helping them develop their skills and confidence.

The successful completion of this Army Attachment camp is a testament to the cadets hard work and commitment of the Indian Army alongwith NCC in guiding the youth of Assam towards Nation building.

CARA hosts regional consultative workshop to strengthen rehabilitation of children with special needs in NE

Aizawl, Jan 30: The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA), under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, successfully organized a Regional Consultative Workshop on “Promoting Non-Institutionalised Rehabilitation of Children with Special Needs (Divyaang Children)” today in Guwahati.

The day-long consultation witnessed participation of 122 stakeholders, including representatives from State Adoption Resource Agencies (SARAs), Specialised Adoption Agencies (SAAs), District Child Protection Units (DCPUs), Chief Medical Officers, health professionals, child protection functionaries, and adoption practitioners from across the North-east region. The large turnout reflected growing institutional commitment towards strengthening adoption and rehabilitation mechanisms for children with special needs.

The workshop commenced with an overview of CARA’s initiatives aimed

at promoting family-based care for children with special needs, followed by the screening of a film showcasing a successful adoption of children with special needs. Further in the programme, representatives from each state shared their respective insights on existing challenges, best practices, and innovative approaches being undertaken to facilitate adoption and non-institutional care.

A group discussion was also organized to bring out recommendations spanning specific subjects which were provided to the representatives beforehand. The deliberations were structured on subjects, such as health and medical assessment of children with special needs, legal and procedural aspects of adoption, financial and administrative challenges, grievance redressal and institutional coordination.

Each group presented actionable recommendations aimed at strengthening identification, certification, counselling, placement, and post-adoption support mechanisms. The workshop

also reviewed state-wise adoption data for FY 2024–25 and deliberated on strategies to address bottlenecks in adoption of children with special needs. Emphasis was laid on enhancing inter-sectoral coordination, building capacities of frontline functionaries, and promoting informed decision-making among prospective adoptive parents.

The consultation concluded with a collective resolve to develop a strategic roadmap for promoting domestic adoption of Divyaang children, strengthening non-institutional care mechanisms, and intensifying awareness efforts during Adoption Awareness Month 2025.

CARA reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that every child, irrespective of physical or developmental challenges, grows up in a safe, nurturing, and permanent family environment, and that adoption continues to be guided by the principles of child welfare, transparency, and best interest of the child.



ing vision problems early. During the free eye check-up camp, eye specialist Dr.

Ginthianmung emphasised the importance of regular eye examinations for drivers. The doctor advised drivers to priotize their eye health to prevent vision-related accidents and ensure safer roads. The event aimed to promote road safety and ensure drivers’ eye health, ultimately contributing to accident prevention and safer roads in Churachandpur district.

RIMS observes National Anti-Leprosy Day



Imphal, Jan 30: The Department of Dermatology, Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Imphal, observed National Anti-Leprosy Day at the General OPD Complex, RIMS Hospital, on the theme “Ending Discrimination, Ensuring Dignity.” The programme was part of the nationwide initiative to raise awareness and strengthen efforts towards leprosy elimination. Prof. G. Sunil Kumar Sharma, Director, RIMS, attended as Chief Guest, while Prof. N. Sanjib Singh, Medical Superintendent, presided over the function. The dignitaries present included Dr. Chitralekha Keisham, HOD (i/c), Department of Dermatology; Dr. Salam Bocha Singh, State Leprosy Officer, Manipur;

and Prof. Th. Nandakishore Singh, Professor, Department of Dermatology, RIMS, highlighting coordinated institutional and public health involvement. The observance focused on promoting early detection, complete treatment, and reducing stigma and discrimination, while ensuring social inclusion and dignity. Leprosy-affected patients were felicitated to recognize their resilience and encourage rehabilitation. The programme was attended by the Dean (Academics), Heads of Departments, Principals of the Dental and Nursing Colleges, faculty, staff, students, MSS, CRED, and patient parties, reflecting RIMS’ collective commitment to public health awareness and compassionate care.

Lalsawmzuala wins confidence

Aizawl, Jan 29: C Lalsawmzuala, the newly appointed Chief Executive Member (CEM) of Mizoram’s Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC), secured a vote of confidence on Thursday, ending months of administrative uncertainty following last December’s fragmented elections. The MNF leader, sworn in as council chief on Tuesday, won the majority with 15 votes in favor from the United Legislature Party (ULP) a post-poll coalition of MNF and Congress against 9 votes opposed. Speaking after the victory, Lalsawmzuala urged members across party lines to work together for stable governance. “Our primary goal is a stable and effective government. I urge all members, including those who voted against, to join hands for the welfare and progress of the Lai people,” he said. The 25-member LADC, formed in 1972 under the Sixth Schedule for the Lai tribal people, saw no party secure the 13-seat majority in the December 3 polls. The MNF won 8 seats, Congress 7, Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM) 6, BJP 2, and two independents, including former CEM V. Zirsanga. Post-election developments included.

Bishnupur DC launches mobile canteen run by IDPs

Imphal, Jan 30: Deputy Commissioner, Bishnupur, Pooja Elangbam today launched a Mobile Canteen Initiative run by Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) for school students at New Model Public School, Kumbi. Speaking at the occasion, the DC stated that the mobile canteen is a commendable initiative that would greatly benefit the IDPs by providing them with a source of income through the sale of food items at schools. She further informed that the mobile canteen facility will be extended to all schools across the district, with the initiative formally beginning at Kumbi today. Through this mobile canteen facility, students will have access to tasty and nutritious

meals whenever the canteen is set up, thereby benefiting both the students and the IDPs. The canteen will operate in schools two to three times a week, depending on the demand of the respective schools, she added. During the launching programme, the Deputy Commissioner also interacted with the students and encouraged them to study sincerely and stay focused during their student life, emphasizing that these formative years would never return. She remarked that with determination and the will to excel, students can achieve success in whatever they aspire to do. The launching programme was also attended by Rohan Philem, Social Activist, along with representatives



from the Zonal Education Office (ZEO), Bishnupur. Later in the day, the Deputy Commissioner also attended a Community Solidarity Event organised by Solidarity and Action Against The HIV Infection in India (SAATHI) and Empowering Trans Ability (ETA), supported by the American Jewish World Service, at Kiyamba Shanglein, Bishnupur. Addressing the gathering,

Pooja Elangbam appreciated SAATHI and ETA for their efforts in empowering people affected by HIV through various initiatives. She lauded the spirit of community support and assured that the District Administration will extend all possible assistance to the transgender community, including the issuance of identity cards, awareness on rights, and initiatives aimed at their upliftment.

37th National Road Safety Month wraps up in Jiribam

Imphal, Jan 30: The 37th National Road Safety Month, observed from January 1 to 31 in Jiribam district, came to a close with a simple ceremony held at the Conference Hall of the Deputy Commissioner’s Office in Jiribam on Friday. The event was organised by the District Administration, Jiribam, in collaboration with the District Transport Office. Deputy Commissioner Krishna Kumar, IAS, thanked all stakeholders, especially the District Police Jiribam, the newly opened District Transport Office, and other line departments, for their successful observation of the 37th Road Safety Month. He highlighted that during the month-long observation, awareness and enforcement drives were carried out in different areas of the district, Road safety pamphlets, stickers, helmets, and other items were distributed to the general public to promote road safety awareness. A district-level competition was also organized, featuring painting and debate competitions. A bike rally was conducted, which was actively participated by the district police, CRPF, students from colleges and schools, and different youth organizations. Additionally, a wall painting competition on the theme of road safety was held at different locations, which was highly appreciated. The Deputy Commissioner also extended heartfelt appreciation to all officers and stakeholders who actively participated in the month-long campaign. The dedicated efforts of the district police, under the leadership of the Superintendent of Police, and the district transport offi-



cer, as well as all line departments, were acknowledged. Krishna Kumar urged the citizens of Jiribam to follow traffic rules sincerely and encourage others to do the same. He emphasized that collective action is necessary to achieve the goal of reducing road accidents and saving precious lives. With the conclusion of the Road Safety Month, the district administration reiterated its commitment to promoting road safety and reducing road accidents. The event was marked with a sense of accomplishment and a renewed commitment to work towards a safer and more responsible community. The closing ceremony was attended by senior officials, including the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Jiribam Th, Manoranjan Singh, MCS, SDC Jiribam,S. Sitaranjit Singh, DTO Jiribam, M. Vikash and other departmental officials.

North East Chronicle

JANUARY 31 2026 VOL 01 NO. 329



Why Sports Matter More Than Ever

Sports are not a luxury—they are a necessity for developing well-rounded individuals and thriving communities. From childhood through adulthood, athletic participation shapes character and builds foundations for success. The classroom teaches theory, but the playing field teaches life. Sports instill time management as athletes balance practice with academics. They teach goal-setting when players work toward improving their performance. Most crucially, they provide immediate feedback: effort and preparation produce results, while shortcuts lead to failure. These lessons prove invaluable in careers and relationships. Beyond individual development, sports address pressing public health concerns. Childhood obesity rates have tripled in recent decades, contributing to preventable diseases and healthcare costs. Regular physical activity through sports offers a proven solution while making fitness enjoyable rather than burdensome. Sports also bridge divides that few other activities can. On the field, socioeconomic status, race, and background fade into irrelevance. What matters is contribution to the team. This environment cultivates empathy, respect, and unity—values our society desperately needs. Communities that prioritize sports create opportunities for growth, health, and connection. The investment pays dividends for generations. (DB)

British American Tobacco accused of helping North Korea fund terrorism in lawsuit

Hundreds of US military service members, civilians and their families have filed a lawsuit for unspecified damages against British American Tobacco (BAT), one of the world’s largest tobacco companies, and a subsidiary, claiming the company spent years illicitly helping North Korea fund terrorism weapons that were used against Americans. BAT formed a joint venture in 2001 with a North Korean company to manufacture cigarettes in the country.

The venture quietly continued, a 2005 Guardian investigation revealed, even as the US government publicly warned North Korea was funding terrorism and imposed sanctions on the country. Amid mounting international pressure in 2007, the company claimed it was ending business in North Korea, but secretly continued its operation through a subsidiary, the US justice department said in 2023. BAT’s venture in North Korea provided around \$418m in banking transactions, “generating revenue used to advance North Korea’s weapons program,” Matthew Olsen,

then the justice department official in charge of its national security division, said during a 2023 Senate hearing. In 2023, BAT entered into a deferred prosecution agreement and along with the subsidiary, which pleaded guilty, agreed to pay the US \$629m in fines for conspiring to violate sanctions and bank fraud. “On behalf of BAT, we deeply regret the misconduct arising from historical business activities that led to these settlements, and acknowledge that we fell short of the highest standards rightly expected of us,” Jack Bowles, then the company’s chief executive, said in a statement at the time.

“Adhering to rigorous compliance and ethics standards has been, and remains, a top priority for BAT. In recent years we have transformed our compliance and ethics programme, which encompasses sanctions, anti-bribery, anti-corruption and anti-money laundering. The significant steps already taken, as well as the continued refinements to the programme that will be made as part of these settlements, will leave us even better equipped to lead a responsible and sustainable business.”

The civil lawsuit filed on Thursday seeks compensation under a federal law that allows victims of terrorist attacks to not only sue the organization allegedly responsible for damages, but also any third parties said to have aided and abetted, or conspired to assist, in an act of terrorism. “This case alleges a clear nexus between BAT’s clandestine scheme in North Korea and the weapons used in deadly terrorist attacks,” said Ryan Sparacino, a lawyer at Sparacino PLLC who is representing the plaintiffs. The lawsuit argues BAT should be liable for damages because North Korea used profits from the cigarette venture and cigarette smuggling to fund the development of weapons of mass destruction for Iran’s revolutionary guard and Hezbollah.

The complaint says those weapons were used in attacks on 8 January 2020 on the al-Asad airbase and Erbil airbase in Iraq and a 2022 missile attack in Kurdistan. More than 100

soldiers were diagnosed with traumatic brain injuries in the 8 January 2020 attack and more than a dozen people were killed. Many more were injured in the 2022 attack in Kurdistan.

“The devastating harm caused by terrorist violence does not fade with time – families carry it every day,” said Raj Parekh, the former acting US attorney for the eastern district of Virginia and a partner at Sparacino PLLC who is also representing the plaintiffs in the case. “This case is about pursuing justice for American service members, civilians, and their loved ones, and about seeking accountability for conduct that allegedly enabled the terrorist attacks against them.” The plaintiffs include about 200 service members who suffered a range of injuries from the attacks, including traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Also included among them is the widow and the estate of a man killed while assisting refugees during the 2022 attack in Kurdistan. Several family members who also say they suffered harm from the attacks are plaintiffs as well. “Defendants knew – or recklessly disregarded – that by operating an illicit joint venture with a North Korean state-owned tobacco company, they were financing the missile and rocket attacks carried out by the IRGC and Hezbollah against Americans,” says the lawsuit, which was filed in federal court in the eastern district of Virginia. “For at least a decade, Defendants persisted in this scheme, funneling hundreds of millions of dollars to North Korean terrorist fronts financing missiles used to attack Americans, including Plaintiffs, and defying repeated warnings that their conduct would enable these attacks.” In 2023, the US supreme court unanimously ruled that victims of a 2017 Islamic State attack were not entitled to damages from Facebook, Twitter, and Google. The plaintiffs argued the companies were liable for damages because they knew IS was using their platforms for recruitment and did not do enough to stop it. The supreme court

said that inaction was not enough – the plaintiffs had to show that the companies “consciously and culpably” assisted in the terror act to make it succeed.

Last week, a federal appellate court in the District of Columbia revived a lawsuit seeking damages against pharmaceutical companies who are alleged to have funded terrorism in Iraq by paying bribes to a Hezbollah-controlled militia to win contracts at the ministry of health. The companies deny wrongdoing. The suit against BAT argues the company knew its money was funding terrorism and continued the venture anyway. It points to numerous public statements, as well as public and private reports. The company was also aware of reports and public statements detailing North Korea’s support for terrorism, the suit alleges. “Its in-house personnel closely monitored U.S. government and media reports, and its own corporate filings confirm it was acutely aware of the terrorist finance risks presented by the illicit cigarette trade,” the complaint says.

‘Women hold our power in our orifices’: Kristen Stewart on her audacious feature directing debut

The movie is to be eaten alive and re-metabolised and shat out differently, from everyone’s perspective,” says Kristen Stewart, bracingly. The actor’s directorial debut, *The Chronology of Water*, has been doing the rounds at film festivals, and when we meet in London the reviews are coming in. Stewart knows that this impressionistic, arthouse collage of a film – adapted from an experimental memoir about a woman’s pain and loss, the elusive nature of memory and the reclamation of desire – is not going to be for everyone. “My favourite Letterboxd review is: ‘The Chronology of what the fuck did I just watch?’” But it matters to her that people respond to it. “Whether it’s your least favourite movie or your most favourite, it’s not lying, it’s genuine. And I’m so fucking proud of that.”

Stewart is sitting next to the film’s star, a slightly more sanguine Imogen Poots. Watching Stewart talk, her leg bouncing, her vocabulary ferocious, feels a bit like being sandblasted. It is invigorating and strangely galvanising, but you don’t go into a conversation with her half asleep. The same can be said for the film itself. “Language is a metaphor for experience,” writes the author Lidia Yuknavitch, at the beginning of the book on which it is based. “It’s as arbitrary as this mass of chaotic images we call memory.” Stewart first read the book in 2018, while on the set of the movie *JT LeRoy*. She saw the visual potential in this mass of chaotic images and quickly decided it would be her first feature-length film as director. “Forty pages in, I was so rallied and so viciously adamant that nobody else could make the movie but me,” she says. “It was so physical. So vital. Such a permeating secret. There’s an unearthing quality to the way that [Yuknavitch] talked about trespass, and how your desires are carved into your body. As a woman, we have these seeping birthplaces that are our orifices, and it’s where we hold our power, but it’s also where we’re taken advantage of.” At this point, less than two minutes in, it’s fair to say that it isn’t quite turning



out to be your run-of-the-mill movie-star promotional chat. “We’re all so muzzled,” Stewart says. “And it just felt like the muzzle was off. That’s the fun part. It’s got a loud mouth. A big, wide-open mouth.” So she sent Yuknavitch an email. “A wildly exciting email,” the author says, from her home in Portland, Oregon. “She was explaining to me why I could never let this book be a regular biopic movie, and how I had to let her make a piece of art out of it. The language she used went under my skin immediately, because it wasn’t regular-person language.” Yuknavitch, obsessed with films since she was five, was, of course, familiar with Stewart’s work. “I even wrote a novel with her in mind, a while ago. She was younger. She had just punched through the *Twilight* experiences, and she was moving toward independent art films, and I pictured her in my brain when I wrote this novel.” It is called *Dora: A Headcase*. It sounds like a spooky connection, if she believes in that kind of thing? Artists, Yuknavitch replies, have a tendency to find each other. “They run across each other’s work, and these threads or streams we don’t entirely un-

derstand touch each other. And I think that’s what happened.” It was not an easy film to finance. Poots and Stewart, both big readers, get into a meaty discussion about how confessional literature is taken seriously when men write it, and “belittled, constantly”, Stewart says, when it comes from women. “There are so many examples within modern literature of men laying it all bare, but as soon as you do something overtly personal as a woman, it’s less serious,” Stewart continues. “We’ve just been fully X-ed out of modernism in the canon. It’s like we don’t exist in it whatsoever. And it’s such a fucking crock of shit. You have to be Virginia Woolf to be considered a good writer.” Reese’s Book Club, this is not. Did they come up against those attitudes when making the film? “Yes, because I think when people read it, it was reduced to how to sell it,” says Stewart. “OK, well, what’s it about, incest and rape? Fun!” It was not an easy pitch, she admits. “It’s about the gouging out of desire, and the reframing of that, and how empowered that is. In a slug line, it’s a really tough sell.” It took eight years of development before they finally got to work, mostly on

location in Latvia. In the meantime, Stewart continued to act, and directed smaller projects: a couple of short films and a music video, for the band Boygenius. Chronology ticked away in the background, sometimes unpromisingly, until eventually it somehow came together. Even Stewart’s longtime producer, Charles Gillibert (*On the Road*, *Personal Shopper*), had told her that he couldn’t finish the script. “And he’s not the only one. He really encouraged me not to make this movie,” she smiles. “I was like: we’re gonna cease being friends if you keep saying this to me.”

Poots plays the adult Lidia with bodily gusto. The film is a collection of fluids and fragments. Poots read Stewart’s screenplay, and then the book, and then sent Stewart “a really pretentious email, which she lapped up”, she teases. Was she nervous about taking on a role that is so stark and exposing? It pulses with sex and drugs and violence. Bleeding and sobbing and grief wash over it. “Any actress I know would have wanted to play this part,” says Poots. In fact, she explains, casting her as the lead meant that the film was harder to make. “If Kristen had hired a massive movie star,

then it would have made getting the money a hell of a lot easier,” she says.

Poots is a best-kept-secret kind of actor, and her performance here is immense, but I ask Stewart why she felt so loyal to her. “She’s my favourite actor, and everyone else sucked,” she shrugs. “There was literally no one else, and she’s been a fave of mine for ever.” “And we have the same teeth,” says Poots, showing them off.

Stewart flashes hers in unison. “Because we have the same teeth, I thought: this is my girl. Bucktooth!”

The film also stars Kim Gordon, Thora Birch and Jim Belushi, who plays the late One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest author Ken Kesey. It is a merry band of misfits. “What’s really cool, and you wouldn’t have been aware of it, is that these people, who have all been at the centre of these incredibly creative community movements, wanted in on what you were doing,” says Poots to Stewart.

Did she pull in any favours to get them involved? “Nobody did me any favours, trust me,” Stewart says, gravely. “In fact, we got fucked. In the face. Over and over.” She pauses. “Like a

real woman!” she jokes. To be honest, she says, Belushi came on board after a couple of other actors dropped out. “I don’t think it was an easy yes. But the feeling of him supporting you, a nice pat on the back from Jim Belushi, could make you cry. He’s kind of a radical, and he’s a hippy, and he was perfect to play this part.” As the film deals in memories, it rejects any sort of conventional narrative structure. Men come in and out of Lidia’s life, which meant that actors would come on set briefly and leave again. “sort of like a conveyor belt”, says Poots.

“Or chapters,” suggests Stewart. “These insanely brilliant, talented actors,” says Poots. “And they serviced you,” grins Stewart. “It was fucking incredible to watch male actors come in and have it not be about them. I would be like: sorry, but we’re actually not gonna shoot you. We’re just gonna shoot her. But talk to her. You’re here, kind of, but this is about her.” Poots cackles. I’m guessing this is not a typical experience? “Mmmm,” says Poots. “For so many reasons.” Both say they plan to make “a lot more movies” together.

A few weeks later, Birch video calls from her home in Los Angeles, her dog lounging happily in the background. “You cannot enter a conversation with Kristen Stewart without coming locked, loaded and ready to go,” she laughs. “It’s intimidating!” Birch plays Lidia’s older sister, Claudia, in a brief but mighty role. In one of the film’s earliest scenes, she holds a sobbing, grief-racked Poots in the bath, following the death of Lidia’s stillborn baby girl. “Imogen is just a knock-down, one-two-punch, hazelnut-popping actress out of the Brit academy if I ever saw it,” Birch says, brilliantly.

Birch and Stewart had met at an event where they did some “mutual fangirling”. A few months later, Stewart called and said she was making a movie. Birch signed on straight away, and then she read the script. “I’m not going to lie, it was a little bit of a daunting process,” she says. “But I just trusted her already.” Partly, she thinks, that’s because they have some

shared experiences. Both became famous as children. Stewart was 12 when she starred in *Panic Room*, while Birch’s run of 1990s and early 2000s films – from *Hocus Pocus* to *Now and Then* to *Ghost World* – defined adolescence for a whole generation of girls.

“Maybe I related to her because we’re both performers who started out very, very young, and so we had a common language. I say she’s my spirit animal. She does a lot of things that I do, but just way better,” Birch says. She had followed Stewart’s career from afar. “Different times, different generations, but the way she handled [getting famous young], I was just like: dude, that’s with aplomb. You knocked it out of the park, because you held on to your individuality and your point of view, which can really be difficult to hold on to.” She waves a hand. “But let’s not get too far into that.” In its boldness and experimental form, *The Chronology of Water* may well be a surprise to those more familiar with Stewart, the movie star, who might not expect a film like this from her. “I sort of did,” counters Birch. “This is a very Kristen Stewart movie.” She is glad, she says, that this is the story Stewart chose to tell. “She will hate me for saying it, but I’m sorry, this is emblematic of a female experience that not a lot of people are ready, willing or even able to dissect and talk about.” The movie covers some “heavy shit”, Birch says. “We’re talking about period blood and stillborns and familial sexual abuse. Nobody wants to talk about this stuff, and yet she presents it in such a way that it marries fantasy and poeticism, and but also the human experience. It’s a punk rock arthouse movie that is like a non-psychedelic ayahuasca trip.”

It makes sense, then, that Birch had no idea how it would turn out. She just had to have faith in what they were doing. “And then when I saw it, I was like: oh, that’s what she’s doing. One reviewer said: homegirl can direct. And coming from LA, I was like: yeah, that’s it. Homegirl can direct. She knows what’s up.”

Nifty Metal index slides up to 5% on profit booking

New Delhi: Metal stocks came under sharp selling pressure on Friday, with the Nifty Metal index sliding as much as 5 per cent to 11,855.85 on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) during intra-day trade, as investors locked in profits after a strong recent rally. This marked the sharpest intra-day fall for the metal index in nearly nine months. The previous steep decline was seen on April 7, 2025, when the index had plunged 8.6 per cent during the session.

At around 13:02 AM, the Nifty Metal index was down over 5 per cent, emerging as the top loser among sectoral indices, while the benchmark Nifty 50 slipped 0.56 per cent. Both ferrous and non-ferrous metal stocks witnessed heavy selling. Hindustan Copper led the decline, plunging 11 per cent to Rs 680 in intra-day trade. National Aluminium Company (NALCO) dropped 10 per cent to Rs 387.50, while Vedanta slipped 8 per cent to Rs 702.4. Market participants attributed the sharp fall largely to profit booking, as metal

stocks had significantly outperformed the broader market over the past month. Several stocks in the sector had surged as much as 56 per cent till Thursday, prompting investors to pare positions. Other major losers included Hindustan Zinc, down 7 per cent at Rs 663.25, Hindalco Industries, which fell 6.5 per cent to Rs 957.90, and NMDC, lower by 6 per cent at Rs 79.87. Shares of Jindal Steel, Steel Authority of India (SAIL), Lloyds Metals, Tata Steel, Jindal Stainless and JSW Steel declined in the range of 3 per cent to 5 per cent. Most metal stocks had also touched all-time highs on January 29, 2026, adding to near-term valuation concerns. Over sector had surged as much as 56 per cent till Thursday, prompting investors to pare positions. Most metal stocks had also touched all-time highs on January 29, 2026, adding to near-term valuation concerns. Over the past one month, the Nifty Metal index jumped 16 per cent, sharply outperforming the Nifty 50, which declined 2 per cent during the same period.

Vedanta targets mid-May listing for four demerged units; demerger to take effect

New Delhi: Vedanta Chief Financial Officer Ajay Goel said the conglomerate aims to list its four planned demerged units on stock exchanges by mid-May. The natural resources group is nearing the end of a planned restructuring, which won approval from the National Company Law Tribunal in December after initial government pushback. “We intend to make demerger effective from April 1, and it will take maybe four to six weeks, so mid of May all the five companies will get listed,” Vedanta Ltd. Chief Financial Officer Ajay Goel said in an interview with Reuters. Goel also said US President Donald Trump’s move last year to double tariffs on aluminium imports to 50 per cent has been of “insignificant” impact on the company, offset by strong domestic demand in India. Vedanta’s demerger structure

Vedanta’s restructuring will spin off four businesses – steel and ferrous metals, oil and gas, aluminium, and power – into separately listed companies, while its base metals unit will remain with the parent. First announced in 2023, the plan was designed to support growth as its UK-based parent Vedanta Resources carried heavy debt, which it has since reduced significantly. Earlier, Vedanta’s Chairman Anil Agarwal stated that the demerger was chosen over asset sales or alternative restructuring to unlock the full growth potential of each business, including zinc, aluminium, oil and gas, power, and iron ore and steel, amid strong and rising demand, particularly in India. he Rs 48,000 crore of debt on Vedanta’s books will be allocated to the demerged entities based on their respective cash flows. Each company will have an independent board and professional management, and promoters will hold around 50 per cent stake without



involvement in day-to-day operations, Agarwal said, adding that aggressive capital expenditure and regular dividend payouts will continue post-demerger. Vedanta Q3 results Vedanta reported a 61 per cent profit growth in the third quarter of FY26. The company posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 5,710 crore in Q3 FY26. The company’s revenue in Q3 FY25 was at Rs 3,547 crore. Vedanta reported 37 per cent YoY revenue growth in the quarter. The company posted a consolidated revenue of Rs 23,369 crore from its operations in Q3 FY26. Its consolidated revenue in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal year was at Rs 17,063 crore.

Canara Bank Q3FY26 performance signals broad-based credit recovery, strong balance sheet gains

Aizawl: Canara Bank’s financial results for the quarter ended December 31, 2025 point to strengthening macro-linked credit demand and improving balance sheet resilience, supported by steady deposit mobilisation and sharp gains in retail lending. The bank’s global business expanded 13.23 per cent year-on-year to ₹27,13,594 crore, with global deposits rising 12.95 per cent to ₹15,21,268 crore and global gross advances increasing 13.59 per cent to ₹11,92,326 crore.

Domestic deposits grew 11.10 per cent to ₹13,97,045 crore, while domestic advances rose 13.34 per cent to ₹11,19,289 crore, reflecting sustained credit offtake. Retail, Agriculture and MSME (RAM) credit increased 18.70 per cent to ₹7,04,041 crore. Retail lending emerged as the key growth driver, jumping 31.37 per cent to ₹2,73,395 crore, led by housing loans of ₹1,21,172 crore, up 17.58 per cent, and vehicle loans growing 26.20 per cent. Profitability metrics improved in line with operating leverage. Operating profit rose 16.36 per cent to ₹9,119 crore, while net profit climbed 25.61 per cent to ₹5,155 crore. Fee-based income stood at ₹2,327 crore, up 6.50 per cent, and earnings per share increased 22.11 per cent.

Asset quality indicators strengthened materially, with gross NPA ratio improving to 2.08 per cent and net NPA to 0.45 per cent. Provision coverage rose to 94.19 per cent, while credit cost and slippage ratio declined to 0.64 per cent each. Capital adequacy remained comfortable at 16.50 per cent.

Priority sector lending exceeded regulatory benchmarks across agriculture, MSMEs and weaker sections, indicating inclusive credit expansion. As of December 2025, the bank operated 10,066 branches and 7,048 ATMs, alongside



overseas branches in London, New York, Dubai and GIFT City, positioning it to benefit from both domestic growth and global trade-linked opportunities.

India needs proactive to global turbulence

New Delhi: The Economic Survey has been presented in midst of heightened geopolitical conflicts and global uncertainties. While the Indian economy has been doing well in terms of domestic macro parameters, there could be severe risk to capital flows in midst of the global uncertainties. This in turn could de-stabilise the economy. The survey emphasises on the need to maintain adequate buffers in these uncertain times. In the last one year, India has seen sharp FII outflows and net FDI flows have also been subdued, and we are seeing consequences of that on Indian rupee. The survey emphasis on the need for improving India’s investment attractiveness and export competitiveness. Services strong, manufacturing needs infra and skills

India’s services exports have been performing well even in midst of the global turmoil. While services exports have been a big supporting factor, the survey emphasises that we cannot reduce our focus on the manufacturing sector. Success in the manufacturing sector requires improvement in infrastructure, skilling manpower, scaling up MSMEs, easing of regulatory hurdles and improving the institutional capacity. Broadly, this would involve upgrade in State capacity, which will reap further dividend over a long period of time. Even in midst of global uncertainties, the year 2025 turned out better than what was being feared at the beginning of the year. However, there is still a lot of uncertainties for 2026 and the coming years. Hence, the survey emphasises on the need for pro-active strategy and not a defensive mechanism. In midst of growing

global protectionism, India should continue focussing on global integration through trade agreements like the recent India-EU FTA, India-UK FTA and others signed in the last few years. However, at the same time, India should also move towards Swadeshi, but through intelligent import substitution and not blanket protection. We should focus on indigenisation in sectors that have critical vulnerability for the nation and where domestic production is feasible. For FY27, the Economic Survey expects GDP growth in the range of 6.8-7.2%. This is broadly in line with our GDP growth expectations of 7%. However, global uncertainties loom high and any further disruption to exports or capital flows could disturb the growth trajectory. Importantly, the survey has revised India’s potential growth rate to 7%, up from 6.5% three year ago. In the last few years, Centre’s focus on capital expenditure has grown strongly aiding the economy’s potential growth rate. Moreover, structural reforms, like tax rationalisation, new labour code, easing of regulatory hurdles, FDI liberalisation, logistics improvement would be supportive of higher potential growth rate. Overall, the Economic Survey, has highlighted the need for smart and pro-active strategies to counter the heightened global risks. Broadly the message is that the turbulent times are here to stay and we should gear. With several states going for unconditional cash transfers in the last few years, stress has developed in state government finances. It is not enough if the Centre manages fiscal consolidation, but there is fiscal profligacy at the state level.

Deeper shift towards entrepreneurial policy making needed

New Delhi: India’s development strategy is undergoing a quiet but consequential shift—from rule-bound administration to entrepreneurial policy-making amid uncertainties. The Economic Survey frames this transition as essential for navigating a world defined by geopolitical fragmentation, supply chain realignments, technological disruption, and recurring global shocks. At the centre of this shift lies a three-part architecture: stronger state capacity, an engaged society, and deep, sustained deregulation—together powering India’s journey toward Viksit Bharat and greater global influence, the finance ministry economists said. Survey urges an entrepreneurial state

The Survey noted that today’s environment is volatile and contested. Rules are evolving, risks are compounding, and certainty is scarce. Under such conditions, the state must not merely regulate—it must anticipate, experiment, coordinate, and adapt. This is the essence of what Mariana Mazzucato calls the entrepreneurial state: not state capitalism, nor favouritism, but a government capable of acting before full certainty emerges, structuring risk rather than avoiding it, learning from failure, and correcting course without paralysis, the economists said. India is already exhibiting early signs of this approach. Mission-mode initiatives in semiconductors and green hydrogen, innovation-oriented public procurement, and state-level reform compacts that replace inspection-heavy control with trust-based compliance reflect a movement from a compliance state to a capability state. The emphasis is shifting from policing activity to enabling productivity and problem-solving. This transformation

depends critically on system-level institutional capacity. State capacity is not a single reform or ministry; it is the composite outcome of how decisions are made, how risks are managed, how incentives shape behaviour, and how regulation functions in practice. Weakness in any one dimension can undermine progress elsewhere. That is why process reforms matter as much as policy reforms. Processes define everyday interaction between the government and the governed; they determine whether intent translates into outcomes. Here, deregulation becomes a core instrument of capacity-building, not a retreat of the state. The Compliance Reduction and Deregulation Initiative illustrated this logic. By simplifying rules, eliminating redundancies, clarifying responsibilities, and digitising approvals through integrated single-window systems, administrative effort is redirected from low-value oversight to higher-value coordination and execution. Risk-based inspections, third-party certifications, and standardised reform templates across states increase predictability while preserving safeguards. The Task Force on Compliance Reduction and Deregulation, constituted in 2025, institutionalises this approach through cross-agency coordination and real-time learning—embedding reform into governance routines rather than treating it as a one-off drive. This institutional strengthening underpins India’s strategic trajectory—from Swadeshi to strategic resilience, and ultimately to strategic indispensability. Indispensability goes further: building capabilities that others depend on, making India a source of stability in global systems, the Survey noted.

Airtel–Adobe tie up brings free express premium to 360 mn users

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel announced a partnership with Adobe as it continues to grow its bundled digital products offerings. Under the partnership, Bharti Airtel will offer all its customers free access to Adobe Express Premium for one year, a subscription valued at around Rs 4,000. The offering covers Airtel’s mobile, Wi-Fi and DTH users and can be activated through the Airtel Thanks app without requiring a credit card.

The rollout, described by the companies as a global first, puts Adobe’s AI-powered design tools in the hands of Airtel’s 360 million customers. Adobe Express Premium is positioned as an easy-to-use creation platform aimed at consumers, students, creators and small businesses alike with access to a catalogue of professional templates. For telcos, this approach serves multiple objectives. Bundled digital products help differentiate otherwise similar data plans, deepen customer stickiness and drive sustained usage without directly resorting to price cuts. As connectivity becomes increasingly commoditised, partnerships that embed everyday digital tools into telecom plans are emerging to defend relevance and remain part of consumers’ daily digital lives. The strategy is limited to Airtel and Jio right now, both with mature 5G deployments. Vodafone Idea is currently focusing on its 5G deployment, and building the customer base. In fact, the telco recently raised the price of its post-paid family plans, making them more expensive than Airtel for the same benefits. State-owned BSNL has increased the data allowance on its pre-paid packs,



though it is building is 4G userbase for now. AI editing tool added, supports four languagesUsers also get AI-led features such as instant background removal, custom image generation, one-tap video editing, auto captions and instant resize, alongside premium. The app supports English, Hindi, Tamil and Bengali, widening its presence across geographies and use cases This partnership is about more than technology. It is about empowering millions of Indians with cutting-edge AI tools to create and innovate. With Adobe Express, world-class creative tools are no longer a luxury—they’re

a reality for every Indian,” Siddharth Sharma, chief executive — connected homes and director — marketing, Bharti Airtel, said.

David Wadhvani, president, digital media at Adobe, said, “We are excited to partner with Airtel to bring Adobe Express Premium to millions of people across India for free, accelerating the growth of India’s vibrant creator economy and enabling people to easily produce standout content – whether boosting their careers, growing their businesses or promoting their passions.”The Airtel–Adobe tie-up fits into a growing trend where telcos

are bundling digital productivity and AI-led services to stay relevant in a crowded market. While entertainment partnerships once dominated bundling strategies, operators are now experimenting with tools that encourage creation, learning and continuous engagement, rather than passive consumption. Earlier, Airtel announced a similar partnership with Perplexity, offering the generative AI platform’s paid services as part of a bundle. Competitor Reliance Jio announced a partnership with Google which targeted the 18–25-year-old cohort 5G user for bundling of Gemini 3.0.

Iranian Security Forces Killed 5,777 Protesters in Anti-Gov’t Protests

London: The U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency estimates that at least 5,777 protesters, including 86 minors, were killed by Iranian security forces in recent anti-government protests. The group also claims that 49 civilians who weren’t demonstrating were killed in Iran’s crackdown on the protests, and that nearly 42,000 people have been arrested. Meanwhile, a U.N. expert on Iran said she’s receiving reports of Iranian security forces detaining protesters at hospitals.Mai Sato: “And I think this creates a really chilling effect. I mean, medical facilities need to be a safe place for everyone.”

This comes as the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group arrived in the Middle East. President Trump referred to the warships as an “armada” after the commander of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps warned that his forces had their “finger on the trigger.”is now possibly playing a role, it’s a form of pressure”.Large centralised installations bring about efficiencies of scale, is acutely aware of this vulnerability, and is planning to reduce it by making individual heating points mandatory at apartment blocks. However, undoing decades of Soviet urban planning will not be quick or easy. The Trump administration is removing Border Patrol Commander Greg Bovino from Minnesota after border agents beat and fatally shot Alex Pretti, a 37-year-old ICU nurse, Saturday morning. Bovino had claimed Pretti intended to “massacre law enforcement,” but eyewitness video directly contradicted the claim. Pretti was attacked by agents as he attempted to help a woman who had been violently shoved by officers.Greg Bovino has led Trump’s paramilitary-style immigration crackdown in Minneapolis, Chicago and other cities. The Atlantic magazine reports Bovino will return to his previous job as chief patrol agent in El Centro, California, and that he may soon retire. On Monday night, protesters gathered outside a Minnesota hotel where Bovino was believed to be staying.Protester: “Getting fired is not justice. It’s not enough. Their man needs to be brought to trial for what he’s wrought on Minneapolis and the state of Minnesota.”The shooting of Alex Pretti has sparked bipartisan outrage across the country and has forced the White House to reassess its operations in Minnesota. On Monday, the White House announced border czar Tom Homan would head to Minnesota. Homan is a longtime immigration hard-liner who was an architect of Trump’s first-term family separation policy. In September, House Democrats began investigating Homan amid

revelations he was recorded in 2024 accepting a Cava bag containing \$50,000 in cash from a pair of FBI agents who were posing as business executives.On Monday, President Trump held calls with Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey. Trump said he and Walz “seemed to be on a similar wavelength.” Walz talked to Minnesota Public Radio after the call.Gov. Tim Walz: “First of all, I asked that we have a fair and independent investigation into the murder of both Renee Good and Alex and that we have to be able to do that. And he said, ‘We’ll look at that. We’ll take a look at that.’ And I said, ‘We just have to reduce these numbers.’

We started out with that. And he pledged that, ‘Look, I’m going to send Tom Homan in. We’ll do things differently.’On Monday, Trump also held a two-hour meeting at the White House with Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, who had called Alex Pretti a “domestic terrorist” shortly after he was fatally shot. One hundred forty Democratic lawmakers are calling for Noem to be impeached. In legal news, the Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit has sided with the Trump administration and blocked a lower court order that would have prevented officers from arresting, detaining, pepper-spraying or retaliating against protesters in Minneapolis without probable cause.In a separate legal case, The agreement opens parts of India’s famously protectionist domestic market with a focus on exporting manufacturing and services; in return, middle-class Indian consumers will find it cheaper to buy European cars and wine.Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison was in court Monday seeking to halt the immigration crackdown known as Operation Metro Surge. The judge did not issue a decision on Monday. We will speak to Keith Ellison after headlinesThis all comes as protests continue in Minnesota over the Trump administration’s crackdown on immigrants. Students at the University of Minnesota walked out of classes on Monday.Protester: “I’m really angry. I’m angry, and I’m sad, like all of the time. I’m a university student. I can’t focus on my classes. I have a lot of friends who are really scared to go outside right now, you know, regardless of their citizenship status. Like, people are really afraid, and they have a right to be, you know? Just on our campus, we have ICE agents staying just a few streets away here in Cedar-Riverside, in the neighborhood nearing ours. They’ve faced so much brutality and violence the past couple of weeks.”

EU Slams Pakistan Over Lawyers’ Conviction, Islamabad ternal

London: The European Union has criticized Pakistan’s conviction of two human rights lawyers, Imaan Mazari-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chattha, for their social media posts, stating it contradicts democratic principles. The lawyers were detained and booked under Pakistan’s Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act for allegedly promoting ethnic divisions and criticizing the military. Pakistan’s Foreign Office rejected the EU’s remarks, calling the case a domestic judicial matter. The incident brings scrutiny to Pakistan’s GSP+ trade status with the EU, which is contingent on upholding human rights conventions. The European Union expressed concern over Pakistan’s sentencing of two human rights lawyers over their social media posts, describing it as a setback to democratic norms. Pakistan dismissed the criticism, calling the matter an internal legal issue, according to a report by Samaa TV.On Thursday, the European Union censured Pakistan following the conviction of human rights lawyers Imaan Mazari-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chattha. The EU said the verdict contradicts the democratic principles Pakistan has pledged to uphold at the international level. Mazari and her husband Chattha were detained last Friday while en route to attend a court hearing. They were later placed in two weeks of judicial remand after being booked under Pakistan’s Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA).Authorities alleged that the couple shared content on X that supposedly promoted ethnic divisions and depicted Pakistan’s military as being involved in “terrorism.” Both lawyers rejected the accusations and asserted that their posts constituted lawful expression. Anouar El Anouni,



the EU spokesperson for foreign affairs and security policy, said the conviction undermines freedom of expression and the independence of lawyers, as reported by Samaa TV.He emphasised that these principles are not only core democratic values but also part of Pakistan’s international human rights obligations.Pakistan is among the largest beneficiaries of the European Union’s Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+), which grants duty-free access to most European markets. In exchange, beneficiary states must implement 27 international conventions related to human rights, labour rights, environmental protection, and good governance. Pakistan’s GSP+ status has previously come under review. In April 2021, the Europe-

an Parliament adopted a resolution urging an immediate reassessment, citing concerns over violence against religious minorities, curbs on media freedom, and wider human rights concerns, Samaa TV reported.Responding to the EU’s comments, Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrabi termed the case a “domestic affair” of Pakistan. He said the conviction occurred under national laws through a judicial process. Andrabi stressed that the convicted lawyers retain the right to appeal and seek legal remedies. He added that although Pakistan continues engagement with the EU on various matters, it maintains a clear boundary regarding internal legal and judicial issues, as noted by the Samaa TV report.

As seen by the significant trade agreement between the EU and India, the post-US world

London: The year was 2007. Steve Jobs had announced the launch of the first iPhone, the sub-prime mortgage crisis was bubbling up in the US, the EU had enlarged to include Romania and Bulgaria, and India had for the first time become a trillion-dollar economy. This was when trade talks between Delhi and Brussels were initiated for the first time. But it wouldn’t be until this very week, almost 20 years later, that a deal was signed after a few final months of unusually accelerated negotiations.

On Tuesday, the president of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Council António Costa and India’s prime minister, Narendra Modi, announced the “mother of all deals”, which promises to bring together about 2 billion consumers and a quarter of the world’s GDP. The agreement opens parts of India’s famously protectionist domestic market with a focus on exporting manufacturing and services; in return, middle-class Indian consumers will find it cheaper to buy European cars and wine. The overarching EU-India comprehensive strategic agenda is really much larger in scope, taking in defence and security, commitments to multilateralism, mobility and cooperation in a range of areas.

Why the sudden change of pace, after 20 years of stops and starts? The answer has everything to do with Donald Trump. The EU-India free trade agreement unveils the emerging silhouette of a post-US world order amid relentless threats to territorial sovereignty, punitive tariffs and the weakening of multilateral institutions.

The original talks had proceeded slowly over differences on cars, alcohol, agriculture and dairy – and were abandoned in 2013. They were resumed in 2022 as the post-pandemic world sought to “de-risk” and diversify supply chains beyond China. Ironically what brought the deal to the finish line was not China but the looming shadow of Trump. In December 2024, even before the inauguration of his second presidency, the US president had spooked Europe by reviving the idea of owning Greenland. That a close ally was threatening territorial sovereignty prompted a widely shared sense of Europe being “home alone” amid frictions in the tightly woven transatlantic relations.

To add to the chaos, on his first day in office Trump imposed punishing tariffs on America’s neighbours, Canada and Mexico – a move that culmi-



nated in the “liberation day” taxes levied on 90 countries across the world. India was hit with one of the highest tariff rates of 50%, which included an additional 25% because of its purchase of discounted Russian oil. And most recently the tariff weapon was wielded once again against the EU and the UK when eight countries sent a few Nato soldiers to Greenland. As a result, the US is not just seen – as recent public opinion surveys show – as undependable in Europe, but as an outright threat.

Now “de-risking” and “decoupling” are back in vogue in Europe – except that the target is Trump’s America, rather than China. And what is at stake is not just supply chains but also the strategic capacity to act against coercion. The recent move by the French government to ban officials from using US video-conferencing software like Zoom and instead promote its home-grown Visio platform is a case in point.The wide scope of the evolving India-EU partnership suggests a move towards greater convergence in terms of the commitment to multilateral institutions, and cooperation in a range of areas of security and defence, research, mobility and connectivity, including enhanced engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. As the US withdraws to the western hemisphere (through the so-called Donroe doctrine), the Indo-Pacific region, which

was once central to US engagement in Asia, is now more open to collaboration with the EU. The year was 2007. Steve Jobs had announced the launch of the first iPhone, the sub-prime mortgage crisis was bubbling up in the US, the EU had enlarged to include Romania and Bulgaria, and India had for the first time become a trillion-dollar economy. This was when trade talks between Delhi and Brussels were initiated for the first time. But it wouldn’t be until this very week, almost 20 years later, that a deal was signed after a few final months of unusually accelerated negotiations.On Tuesday, the president of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Council António Costa and India’s prime minister, Narendra Modi, announced the “mother of all deals”, which promises to bring together about 2 billion consumers and a quarter of the world’s GDP. The agreement opens parts of India’s famously protectionist domestic market with a focus on exporting manufacturing and services; in return, middle-class Indian consumers will find it cheaper to buy European cars and wine. The overarching EU-India comprehensive strategic agenda is really much larger in scope, taking in defence and security, commitments to multilateralism, mobility and co-operation in a range of areas.

Why the sudden change of pace, after 20 years of stops and starts? The answer has everything to do with Donald Trump. The EU-India free trade agreement unveils the emerging silhouette of a post-US world order amid relentless threats to territorial sovereignty, punitive tariffs and the weakening of multilateral institutions.The original talks had proceeded slowly over differences on cars, alcohol, agriculture and dairy – and were abandoned in 2013. They were resumed in 2022 as the post-pandemic world sought to “de-risk” and diversify supply chains beyond China. Ironically what brought the deal to the finish line was not China but the looming shadow of Trump. In December 2024, even before the inauguration of his second presidency, the US president had spooked Europe by reviving the idea of owning Greenland. That a close ally was threatening territorial sovereignty prompted a widely shared sense of Europe being “home alone” amid frictions in the tightly woven transatlantic relations. connectivity, including enhanced engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. As the US withdraws to the western hemisphere (through the so-called Donroe doctrine), the Indo-Pacific region, which was once central to US engagement in Asia, is now more open to collaboration with the EU.

Minneapolis revolt tells us even in Trump’s America

New Work: For most politicians and journalists, the answer to nearly every question is to look up. Not at the moon, the stars or even the chimney tops, but at their leaders: the people who sit atop institutions, wield power and set the line that others follow. The top of the totem pole is the sole focal point, and the stories that count usually come from the heights of power.Bend your neck back far enough and Davos becomes not a talking shop in a Swiss ski resort, but a gathering of world leaders; Keir Starmer flying into Beijing is a summit of great powers; even who should be the MP for Gorton and Denton is really all about the Labour leadership.

For this piece, the Guardian’s research librarians counted how many times the words “leader” or “leadership” appeared across the British press. Over the past week alone, the rough total stands at 2,000. A third of those stories concern one man: Donald Trump.“We know a lot about what fifth-century Greece looked like to an Athenian citizen,” observed EH Carr in his classic What is History?, “but hardly anything about what it looked like to a Spartan, a Corinthian, or a Theban – not to mention a Persian, or a slave or other non-citizen resident in Athens.” Sixty-five years later and our daily news remains wall-to-wall Athens, with scarcely a Spartan vox pop.Until a week such as this one, which reminds us that power doesn’t belong only to the powerful. Just look at the disarray inflicted on Trump, head of the world’s sole superpower, by Minneapolis, a city with barely more people than Croydon.After months of resistance by Minnesotans, the president’s immigration chief, Gregory Bovino, has been forced out of the city. Trump’s head of homeland security, Kristi Noem, faces either the sack or impeach-

ment. Key members of his team are tearing strips off each other. And the Republicans’ signature domestic policy – the terrorising of multicultural Democratic cities by thousands of mercenary bullyboys, masked up and kitted out like they’re taking Basra – is now opposed by a clear majority of Americans.

Left to conventional leaders, this would not have happened. Just last week in Washington, a crucial number of Democratic representatives defied their own party to side with Trump and pump more money into the immigration crackdown. Just last week in Davos, thousands of the highest-paid executives in the world – billionaires such as Stephen Schwarzman, who takes more in an hour than the average American earns in a year – dutifully queued up to hear the Orange Ego ramble on. Facing the administration’s classic mix of sweeteners and threats, the US’s media empires, its best universities and top law firms have folded like origami.Trump doubtless expected the same in the icy midwest. Instead, his troops faced a nonviolent fightback. Tens of thousands across Minneapolis and Saint Paul turned out week after week to protest, even when it was so cold, wrote one reporter, that he couldn’t take notes: “The ink in my pens had frozen.” Despite the state executions that have been all over the world’s news, despite being teargassed and assaulted, ordinary Minnesotans still turned out.When others went into hiding rather than face the immigration gangsters, their neighbours made sure they got food and supplies. And yet others acted as ICE-watchers, monitoring the violence and barbarism of armed thugs whose salaries come from US taxpayers. Many have kept on their civic duties despite the killing of Renee Good, a poet and

mother who ICE employees shot in the face then called a “fucking bitch”; and Alex Pretti, a nurse executed by a gang of seven agents, apparently for holding up a phone.These two ordinary people were murdered by their own government, then slandered by it. Their corpses were tagged as “domestic terrorists”. Their fellow Minnesotans have been attacked as an “organised illegal insurgency” by Joe Lonsdale, a cofounder of Palantir. On one thing, he was right: the activists have been very organised, providing training to newbies, turning restaurants into field hospitals, running elaborate networks to get provisions to those Minnesota families in fear for their own safety. But an insurgency this is not, not when mums tooting whistles are battling masked men toting guns, paid up to \$50,000 just for signing up to ICE; not when a smartphone camera is wielded against teargas; or when hecklers are handcuffed and hauled off.The hub of this work is south Minneapolis, last in the world’s headlines six years ago as the site where George Floyd was killed by police officers. Some of those who rose up in the Black Lives Matter protests of that period have clearly reawakened their old networks. Others note that Minnesota regularly tops measures of social trust: in other words, its residents are among the most likely to place their trust in their neighbour across the road, rather than the leader at the top of the pile. o or his protesting crowds is never settled once and for all, but debated forever by those looking back with questions of their own age. As he wrote, “The historian belongs not to the past but to the present”. All of us will one day form the raw material of history; we will all belong to the future. That should change how we act now.

Jess Cartner-Morley on fashion: Still wearing a cross-body bag and French-tucking your shirt? Sorry to say, your wardrobe is cringe

Is your wardrobe cringe? Does it make you look out-of-touch and cause younger and cooler people to look upon you with pity? Do you really want me to answer that? Never mind, I'm going to anyway, so buckle up. Brutal honesty is very January, so I will give it to you straight. But before we get down to dissecting your wardrobe, two quick questions for you. Do you put full stops in text messages? Were you baffled by Labubus? If the answer to those two questions is yes, then I'm afraid the signs are that your wardrobe is almost certainly cringe.

Being cringe is essentially being old-fashioned, but worse. Being old-fashioned is what happens when you grow older with grace and dignity. Cringe is when you lose your touch while convincing yourself you are still down with the kids.What does a cringe wardrobe look like? French-tucking your shirt, the height of sophistication a decade ago, is now cringe. A crossbody bag, which seemed such a novel and youthful thing not long ago, is now on the wrong side of the generational divide. And then there is wearing your clothes too tight. Do I hear a sigh of relief at the back? Not me, you're thinking, my clothes aren't too tight at all, they fit like a glove! Well, I hate to break it to you, but the glove-analogy is exactly the problem here. If you are generation X, then you probably think that the size that fits you best is the smallest one you can get into eas-



ily. But if you are generation Z, then you think that the size that fits you best is one that hangs off you. There is no real reason why the younger generation should have the last say here, except that is how pop culture works and we didn't complain about it when we were young and cool, did we, so we can't start making a fuss about it now. The fact is that fitted clothes are ageing. Also: sorry to be disloyal to my peers, but trousers or jeans that grip the knee actually make me feel a bit ill.

The cringe factor of close-fitting

clothes is not just about the size in the label, it is about what styles you wear. Leggings, for example, are no longer fashionable streetwear. If you want something you can wear to the gym that looks cool out in the wild, then switch to a tracksuit bottom or a flared workout pant. And while I've got you, a word about leather jackets. Leather jackets are a major trend this winter. But if I say the words "leather jacket", what springs to mind? Because your leather jacket needs to be big and blowy. If it looks like the jacket the controller

of your local minicab office used to wear in the days before Ubers, then you are on the right track. But if it is a close-fitting biker style, it will do your cred more harm than good. Next up, ankles are cringe. For some reason, gen Z are positively Victorian in their horror of ankles. Trainer socks have been deemed a fashion crime, and ankles should be concealed under a sturdy sock. Your ankles will also be covered by your trousers, since the correct length is no longer a hem at the ankle bone, which is the silhouette many of us are accustomed to. Long enough to pool on the top of your shoe is what looks right now, according to the whippersnappers. This is a challenge for us oldies to get our heads around. I don't want the bottom inch of my trousers dragging on the pavement – so unhygienic, since you'll be wearing them in your home, and also it bothers me that the fabric will fray and wear out, but apparently that just shows my age.I am cringe. I have made my peace with this. Being cringe is the price that millennials and generation X pay for refusing to accept they are getting older. Like many of my contemporaries, I am enjoyably deluded about my age. I am convinced I'm still young – in the right lighting – and have no intention of being disabused of this belief. So I invite you to consider this a wake-up nudge. The kids will keep reinventing fashion, and we'll keep embarrassing ourselves trying to keep up. But if being called cringe is the cost of feeling alive, I call that a bargain.

My rookie era: I wanted to think about something that wasn't grim, so I enrolled in gardening school

We had a family veggie patch growing up, and even in share houses I've gardened. I've always been interested in what you can grow – fruit, vegetables, flowers. All good gardeners know you need good dirt but understanding why is a different thing, and I'd been thinking about learning more for a long time.

I researched short courses on permaculture but found they were really expensive. Studying at a university can cost even more, and you can only learn so much from reading gardening blogs. When I found out I could do a free Tafe (technical and further education) course, I was really excited. I was worried my existing qualifications would exclude me because I have a diploma in writing and editing but it's something that's offered free to anyone willing to invest the time. This year I signed up for a part-time certificate III qualification in horticulture and started attending classes one night a week after work and every Saturday. Re-entering formal learning as an adult is an adjustment. You finish school and forget instantly but it is like having another job that you need to pay attention to, and you actually have to do your homework.

Everyone in my class is very lively, supportive with one another and we're all from very different backgrounds. Everyone's into slightly different things too, so we're all just swapping advice.

We started by learning how to safely use garden power tools – who knew



hedge trimmers could be so much fun? Then we moved on to plant identification, which is fantastic. Everyone in the class has had lightbulb moments and for me it was plant ID. Understanding the genus and species – the order of things. Now I'll say: "Did you know asparagus and ponytail palms are in the same family?" And everyone else will say no. It's a different way of seeing the world.

The time commitment has



been a bit hectic but it says a lot about free education that none of my classmates have dropped out. We've all stuck with it despite everyone admitting it's a lit-

tle intense. When my term ends I think I'm still going to spend my Saturdays on botanical excursions, to nurseries I've heard about way out in the suburbs.I've already started helping friends and family with their gardens. When we went to the Maranoa botanical gardens, I saw this great little prostrate grevillea and told my sister about it, so she asked me to buy it for her birthday.

I'm trying new things with my own garden, too. I repotted and moved my blueberries, I've planted more thickly for mulch, and I have high hopes for this year's veggie harvest.I love my job but it's a bit grim. We see a lot of grim stuff, deal with a lot of hard situations, and studying horticulture is something to put my mind to that's completely not grim. It's fun – and who doesn't like free Tafe? A new year calls for trying new recipes. With over 7,000 to choose from, the Feast app puts world-class chefs right in your pocket. Plus smart features that make everyday cooking easier: build personalised recipe collections, create shopping lists, search smarter and cook hands-free with cook mode.

'It's cooler than saying I bought this on Asos': the big car boot sale rebrand

It's a crisp Sunday morning in south-west London. Tucked within rows of terrace houses, the playground of a primary school has been transformed into an outdoor treasure trove. Tables are filled with stacks of books and board games; clothes hang from metal racks or are piled into boxes which are strewn over a hopscotch. It's the 10am opening of Balham car boot sale. A modest queue filters through the entrance: families, pensioners, fashion influencers, TikTokers.Three friends – Dominique Gowie, Abbie Mitchell (both 25 years old) and Affy Chowdhury (26) – arrived an hour earlier, to set up. They are selling at a car boot for the first time, enticed by the growing hype circulating on social media. "If you go out and say: 'Oh I bought this at the car boot,' I think it's actually cooler than saying I bought this on Asos," says Dominique."If you go into Zara and H&M, it'll be the same stuff. But here I think you'll find something really unique, especially on this stall," says Affy, gesturing towards three bedroom floors' worth of hardlyworn clothing flung over a picnic table.Like a pub roast or a needless apology, a car boot sale is a quintessential British pastime; a staple weekend activity for those willing to venture into a field at 6am to flog old DVDs from the boot of their car at 50p a pop. But the Balham organisers, like others across the country, have rebranded the British car boot to represent something slightly more en vogue."It's not like a traditional market in a field filled with tools and stuff," says owner Steven Lopes, 36, who first founded Balham and its sister car boot in Peckham in

2019 with his partner, Erin Murphy, 34, who also runs a vintage store in east London."I have been going since I was young, always buying bits to wear and then selling them. There was a bit of a gap in south-east London," says Murphy. The pair envisioned a car boot that would represent the style of the city while maintaining a family-friendly, nostalgic atmosphere. The fashionably later start (car boots typically kick off at the crack of dawn) feels typical of this new breed of sale. "It's a chill Sunday," says Lopes. "Go and meet your mates, have a little mooch around. You can be hungover, there's no real pressure." Murphy estimates that about 20 people showed up in the first few months of the car boot opening six years ago. Now, she guesses that 1,000 to 2,000 people attend every other weekend.A similar surge has been observed at Rummage in the Range, a car boot sale in Manchester, which sees "a queue down the street with probably 300 people at 10am," says organiser Andrew Newens, 43. The upmarket rebrand of the "car boot style meets flea market" is something Rummage has also embraced. "Although we consider ourselves a car boot, it's not got that old-school thing that people might be used to. You can get something for 50p or £50. I think that brings different demographics together," he says.A card machine is rarely in sight. Part of the joy of a car boot is that it offers a quaint, charming al-

ternative in an increasingly cashless society – something that Lopes believes helps a more considered habit of spending. "It's a nice feeling when you've got cash in your hand: it sets a limit and it's more fun," he says, although he admits he puts through the occasional PayPal transaction."It has an inner-city feel," says Lopes of his London iterations. "There's cool stuff." It's this element of "coolness"

many shoppers and sellers attest, the growing interest in car boot sales is directly in alignment to the younger generation's affinity with secondhand shopping in general, for a list of reasons: the cost of living crisis, the higher quality of vintage fabrics, the thrill of "the hunt" and the desire to find something unique.With the popularity of reselling apps such as Depop and Vinted, secondhand shopping has shot

on secondhand items, compared with £58.40 five years ago. But like other social media platforms, reselling apps dictated by algorithmically fed content often promote overconsumption rather than a discipline of mindful, sustainable shopping. Emily Jenkins first opened her shop on Depop 10 years ago when she was a teenager. But now, she has retired the apps and exclusively sells at markets and car

boots. "I can get a bit triggerhappy on Vinted – I think it's quite addictive," she says. "People want to get clothes that they know they're actually going to wear. I think people are quite conscious about what they're buying." Much of the increased interest is also due to the work of secondhand fashion influencers putting the British car boot on the digital map. Becky Chorlton, 27, a fashion reseller and car boot content creator from Cheshire, trails the country looking for the best bargains, and documents her journey online. "I've definitely noticed the popularity grow," says Chorlton, who has made her hobby a full-time job, amassing more than 30m likes on TikTok.Freddie Stoten, 25, a vintage clothing reseller who has been selling at car boots in and around London for seven years, has witnessed the shifting demographic and increased popularity, much to the benefit of his business pursuits. "There's definitely been a spike," he says. But there's also a downside: "Seven years ago it was



that has attracted the Salomon-wearing crowd who may ordinarily be found at a pop-up for a designer sample sale – seemingly ushering in the gentrification of the British car boot into a revolving door for fashion-focused resellers and influencers.As

up in recent years. Research shows that the market for secondhand goods has increased to £4.3bn this year (including "open-box" items, where an item has been returned unused, and refurbished goods). The average person in the UK spends £124.80 a month

at car boots in and around London for seven years, has witnessed the shifting demographic and increased popularity, much to the benefit of his business pursuits. "There's definitely been a spike," he says. But there's also a downside: "Seven years ago it was

ENTERTAINMENT

The Anupamaa scene “Ghuma ghumake marungi,” which features Rupali’s Ganguly, goes viral



Mumbai: Actor Rupali Ganguly drew headlines in a recent episode of Anupamaa with an explosive verbal outburst, where she shouted angry threats including the now-viral statement “ghuma ghumake marungi.” A meme fest has been sparked by the high-voltage incident on social media, with many people jokingly referring to her as “Sunny Deol pro max.” Anupamaa, played by Rupali, and Rajani,

played by Rinku Dhawan, engage in a heated confrontation in the most recent episode. When Rajani dares to doubt Anupamaa’s true abilities, what begins as a confrontation quickly devolves into an explosive situation. Anupamaa is then seen launching into a ferocious verbal outburst. Anupamaa, played by Rupali, may be heard exclaiming, “Maarungi! Tujhe baalon se pakad ke, chotti se ghasitte hue beech bazaar laa-

kar tujhe marungi. Tujhe ghuma ghuma kar marungi, gira gira kar marungi, dauda dauda kar marungi, bhaga bhaga kar marungi, joota bhigo ke marungi, sandal todke marungi, saari lihaaz chhodke marungi. Dono haathon se marungi. Haath thak gaye toh laathon se marungi, or pair thak gaye toh baaton se marungi. Itna marungi, itna marungi ke dard bhi confuses hojayega ke kis kis haddi par, kis kis chhot par dhyani do. Bahot marungi!” “I’ll grab you by the hair, drag you into the middle of the market by your braid, and beat you” is how it roughly translates. I’ll beat you while spinning you around, knock you down and beat you, follow you and beat you, run after you and beat you, beat you with damp shoes, and beat you with absolutely no self-control. I’ll use both hands to strike you. When my hands get tired, I’ll kick you, and if my legs get tired, I’ll beat you with words. Even the agony will be confused about which bones and ailments to concentrate on after I beat you so severely. I’ll severely beat you! The intense conversation became viral very fast. People turned the occasion into memes and reels as clips from the scene went viral on X, Instagram, and other social media sites.

Netflix will start streaming Ranveer Singh’s Blockbuster film Dhurandhar today

Mumbai: Dhurandhar, starring Ranveer Singh, has finally started its journey on the digital platform after making waves at the box office and becoming one of the biggest blockbusters in recent times.

The movie’s worldwide reach was further expanded on Friday at midnight when it debuted on streaming behemoth Netflix. Dhurandhar is available for streaming in Tamil and Telugu in addition to its original Hindi version, allowing viewers from many linguistic backgrounds to enjoy the movie. In a press release, Monika Shergill, VP of Content at Netflix India, discussed the excitement surrounding Dhurandhar on Netflix, saying, “Dhurandhar has become a true pop-culture moment, a blockbuster that has captured audience imagination and conversation at scale.” We are thrilled to release this movie on Netflix, where it will be accessible to viewers in more than 190 nations. Dhurandhar is a bold and ambitious film directed by Aditya Dhar and produced by Jio Studios and B62 Studios.

Its Netflix journey symbolizes our creative cooperation, which has evolved with numerous successful films over the years.” Shergill highlighted the performances, pointing out that the movie’s ensemble cast makes it one of the most eagerly awaited releases on streaming services.” The fantastic performances by Ranveer Singh, Akshaye Khanna and the brilliant ensemble make it one of the most anticipated films on streaming.



It’s amazing when we are able to surprise and please our members with the greatest of Indian cinema for fans here and throughout the world,” she added. The film’s digital release excites director Aditya Dhar as well.

He said that the audience’s reaction during the theatrical run had been incredibly humble. “The theatrical response to Dhurandhar was deeply humbling, especially witnessing audiences connect with its story, characters, and scale,” he said. The movie starts a new chapter with its Netflix release, extending its reach and allowing new viewers to explore its facets and relive its moments at their own pace.” “Dhurandhar not only reset the bar and set new box office records worldwide for an Indian film, it equally raised the bar to showcase

India’s command over the craft of cinema and brave new style of storytelling that transcends language or geography and drew the audiences into an unforgettable immersive experience,” stated producer Jyoti Deshpande. Dhurandhar’s stories are based in India and have a universal narrative, which embodies our vision for India to the globe.

For the movie, we essentially chose an OTT-style binge-watch chapter format, which appealed to viewers all around the world. We fully expect to amplify Dhurandhar’s role in popular culture with the film’s Netflix premiere, which will help reach it to even more audiences in India and across the world.” Similar thoughts were expressed by B62 Studios producer Lokesh Dhar, who described the movie’s

box office performance as a proud moment for Indian cinema and said, “From script to screen, Dhurandhar has been driven by vision and scale.” With its Netflix release, the film is expected to reach and resonate with audiences globally, and its record-breaking box office run represents a proud moment for Indian filmmaking.” By overtaking “Pushpa 2: The Rule” to become the highest-grossing Hindi movie ever, Dhurandhar has completely changed the history of the box office. In addition to Ranveer Singh, key roles in the movie are played by Akshaye Khanna, Sanjay Dutt, Arjun Rampal, and R Madhavan.

The sequel is slated to be released on March 19, 2026, and the movie has been designed as a two-part franchise.

Rani Mukerji Discloses How Her Miscarriage Caused Her to Play Mrs. Chatterjee vs. Norway



Mumbai: Mardaani 3, directed by Rani Mukerji, opened in theaters today. It also commemorates 30 years since her introduction into the cinema profession. The actress discussed her movie Mrs. Chatterjee vs. Norway, for which she also received a National Award in the Best Actress category, in a recent interview. She was suffering the loss of her second child in 2020 when she received the script for the movie. Rani Mukerji talked about why, when she was asked, Mrs. Chatterjee v. Norway made more sense to her. “Woh jo kahaani thi woh mujhe bhi aise ek mod pe hua tha, matlab woh film mere paas aayi thi, jab maine mera dusra baccha kho diya tha,” she remarked in an interview with Pinkvilla. Mera bahut aur woh kahani sunke mai itna judd gayi aur maine bola ye kahaani mujhe batani hai. (That story came to me at a time when I had lost my second child. Because of my intense sense of loss, I became linked to the film’s narrative and wanted to share it with others. Furthermore, she indicated how she wanted to present this story, which was

about the desperation and intense loneliness of a mother who is separated from her children.

“Mujhe Hindustan ko yeh kahaani batani hai aur unko bataana hai ki humara jo obsession hai ki hum bahar jayein, hum wahan pe settle karenge, ye sacchai nahi hai, sacchai bahut hatke hai,” Rani said, emphasizing how the reality of living abroad differs greatly from people’s aspirations. (I wanted to present this movie to Indians, who are fixated on relocating and residing abroad. I wanted to show the truth. ”Apne bacchon ke bina ek maa ka kya haal hota hai aur aapka baccha aapse leke koi chale jaye aapki aankhon ki saamne toh uss maa pe kya gujarti hai, bacchon pe kya gujarti hai woh dikhana tha (I wanted to show how a mother suffers when her child is taken away from her right in front of her eyes, and how the kids also feel it),” said Rani Mukerji. Mrs. Chatterjee Vs Norway, directed by Ashima Chibber, is based on a true story of an Indian mother whose life is completely turned upside down when the Norwegian foster care system takes her children away due to cultural issues. The difficulties she encountered in obtaining custody of her children are chronicled in the film. Mardaani 3, which debuted in theaters today, January 30, 2026, marks Rani Mukerji’s comeback to the screen. For the first time, in Mardaani 3, Rani Mukerji will confront a female enemy. 2014 saw the release of the franchise’s debut movie. Despite having a small budget of Rs 21 crore, the movie made Rs 59.55 crore at the box office.

As Shivani Shivaji Roy, a strong police officer pursuing criminals, Rani Mukerji joined the cast. In the first movie, Shivani embarks on the task of tracking down Karan Rastogi (Tahir Raj Bhasin), who is in charge of a narcotics and child trafficking ring.

The second movie, Mardaani 2, came out in 2019. The sequel also had the concept of kidnapping a girl child. In this movie, the criminal Vishal Jethwa (also known as Sunny) is the focus of police officer Shivani Shivaji Roy. Rani demonstrated her star power once more as the movie became a box office success. According to reports, the movie earned Rs 67.12 crore despite having a Rs 27 crore budget.

Sara Arjun says that after watching Dhurandhar, her parents sobbed

Mumbai: The Ranveer Singh-starring sequel to Aditya Dhar’s film Dhurandhar will hit theaters in precisely two months. Along with Ranveer Singh’s Hamza Ali Mazari, an Indian intelligence agent who goes deep undercover in Pakistan’s Lyari, Sara Arjun will also return as Yalina Jamali. While promoting her next Telugu film Euphoria, Sara Arjun recently disclosed that her parents’ happy tears after seeing Dhurandhar was the best day of her life. “There was a day when both my parents were

crying tears of joy because of something I did,” Sara Arjun said in a recent interview with actress, producer, and television host Suma Kanakala. That was the happiest day of my life. It was quite meaningful to me. The actress claimed that Dhurandhar was what brought her parents such joy, not her academic achievements.” The audiences already have high expectations after part one, but you can just expect a lot more of everything that you loved already in part one, be it action, be it the story, everything,”

Sara Arjun stated in an exclusive interview. Part two will contain much more of all of it. The 20-year-old actor went on to say that in Dhurandhar, she portrays Yalina Jamali, the obstinate daughter of cunning Pakistani politician Jameel Jamali (Rakesh Bedi), who eventually marries Hamza after falling in love with him.

Sara Arjun mentioned that she used to talk about her journey with Aditya Dhar and that she spent some time attending courses to better understand her character.

When Parineeti Chopra unfollowed Saina Nehwal on Instagram

Mumbai: In her biographical film Saina, Parineeti Chopra portrayed Saina Nehwal.

The 2021 film, which was directed by Amole Gupte, followed the badminton player’s development from a little Hyderabad girl to a world No. 1 shuttler and Olympic medalist. While the film earned mixed reviews overall, Parineeti’s performance was widely applauded. Saina has returned to the spotlight years after the movie’s debut, this time as a result of social media buzz. Although Saina had previously followed the actor on Instagram, fans recently discovered that Parineeti does not follow



Saina Nehwal. Online rumors of a potential confrontation between the two soon followed the observation.

Now, Saina Nehwal has addressed the matter and made everything plain. In

an interview with Subhojit Ghosh on his YouTube channel, the athlete emphasized that there was no personal problem involved and said she never really noticed the follow-unfollow conversation.

an interview with Subhojit Ghosh on his YouTube channel, the athlete emphasized that there was no personal problem involved and said she never really noticed the follow-unfollow conversation. Saina added, “It was totally professional work for which she was there, and I knew that,” while discussing the format of their meetings. I was occupied with my training. I was likewise unable to allot a lot of time. We hardly rarely went out to eat lunch or dinner.

That was never the case. The director was always present when we got together for an hour or two, once every two or three weeks.

Rasha Thadani asks for the blessings of Lord Shiva

Mumbai: Actor Rasha Thadani, the daughter of Bollywood icon Raveena Tandon, recently made her singing debut with the Laikey Laikaa song Chaap Tilak. The actor went to a Shiva temple after the release to dedicate her artwork to the Almighty and ask for blessings. On social media, she posted photos from her spiritual visit. Rasha shared pictures from her recent trip to the Shiva temple on Instagram. In one of the photos, the actor is seen wearing a saffron shawl and kneeling knee-deep in water, praying with folded hands. Rasha is seen posing with her crew in the old temple complex in the other photos. “Shiva has always been so important to me,” Rasha

commented with the images. I’m really attached to the song Chaap Tilak. I’m no longer in Chhap Tilak. presenting my tilak and artwork to the cosmic dancer Nataraja. I continue to wear the sky today since His cosmos is always around me. Baje damru on the beat of my thoughts—the rhythm of Shiva’s dumroo beats will always remain in my heart. Thank you. Om Namah Shivay. The actor has previously disclosed that, by the time she was 19, she had visited 11 Jyotirlingas. In 2025, while promoting her first movie, Azaad, she made her 12th Jyotirlinga visit with her mother, Raveena Tandon. In Laikey Laikaa, Rasha will star alongside Abhay Verma.

Akshay Kumar Gives Credit for Selecting “Discipline Over Comfort”

Mumbai: Recently, Akshay made a comeback to television with Wheel of Fortune on Sony TV. The actor, who is renowned for being on time, recently talked about his path and strict way of living. Over the course of his more than thirty years in the Hindi film industry, Akshay Kumar has developed a varied and reliable profession. He has acted in a variety of movies over the years, such as Dhadkan, Namaste London, Bhool Bhulaiyaa, Housefull, Jolly LLB 2, and Toilet: Ek Prem Katha. Shedding light on his journey, Akshay claimed there was no single incident that



impacted his career. Rather, he feels that his success was the result of a number of decisions and experiences over time, each of which shaped his career path. He also gave credit to his choice to prioritize discipline above comfort. “I think the day I chose discipline over comfort was the moment that truly spun the

wheel of fortune in my life,” Akshay said to the Hindustan Times. From modest beginnings, every chance I was given came about as a result of my punctuality, diligence, and commitment to my trade.

“There wasn’t one magical spin, but a series of choices that gradually changed my life,” he contin-

ued. I really think that when opportunity and preparation come together, everything works out for you, and that’s precisely what this program is all about. Khiladi Kumar discussed hosting the reality show in the same interview, saying, “I wanted to do something that truly felt meaningful and joyful.” I was immediately drawn to Wheel of Fortune since it is straightforward at its core but has a strong character. It honors involvement, critical thinking, and family unity—values that I really identify with.” Akshay is working on several projects, like as Haiwaan and Bhooth Bangla.

Rajinikanth’s autobiography is in the works, according to his daughter



New Delhi: Rajinikanth is currently writing his autobiography, as confirmed by his daughter Soundarya Rajinikanth. The book will cover his journey from being a bus conductor in Bengaluru to becoming a superstar in Indian cinema, detailing significant events that shaped both his career and personal life. Soundarya emphasized that the autobiography will reveal pivotal moments that have remained largely undisclosed, and she expressed confidence that it will be a global sensation. Rajinikanth has been dedicated to this project, writing daily even while working on film sets, and his remarkable 50-year career includes films in multiple languages and a brief foray into Hollywood. He is concurrently involved in projects including Jailer 2 and a new film titled Thalaivar 173, directed by Cibi Chakravarthy.

A deadline of March 31 for Bengal to transfer land for border fencing



New Delhi, Jan 30: The West Bengal government has until March 31 to turn over previously acquired land for fencing along the border between India and Bangladesh, according to a deadline imposed by the Calcutta High Court.While considering a petition alleging that the state had failed to provide land for fencing, a bench made up of Chief Justice Sujoy Paul and Justice Partha Sarathi Sen issued the ruling.

The division bench stated that in order to build barbed wire fencing along the Indo-Bangladesh border, the land that has already been acquired in nine districts must be promptly turned over to the Border Security Force (BSF). The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter lists, election preparation, and other grounds should not be recognized to explain non-compliance with the order, the court

emphasized, adding that national security requirements cannot be postponed due to administrative or electoral factors.Bengal shares half of India’s overall border with Bangladesh, however it also noted that despite several Cabinet decisions made in this direction since 2016, a substantial portion of the border is still unfenced.The petitioner, a retired army officer named Subrata Saha, had previously charged that the state had failed to turn up land for fence, which he said had aided in cross-border infiltration and smuggling.

The center’s attorney claimed that although though the land is within state control, the state is required by the constitution to provide it to the BSF because compensation has been paid and approvals have been given.The attorney informed the court that despite repeated reminders from the Union Home Ministry, the Bengal government only turned over a few plots out of the 235 km needed for fence.Concerned about the impending land transfer, the bench requested affidavits from the Bengal and central governments regarding the possibility of acquiring

land in an emergency due to security concerns. On April 2, the issue will be discussed once more. According to Union Minister and BJP leader Sukanta Majumdar, Mamata Banerjee’s government has received a strong message from the court order. Declaring it a “slap on the face for the West Bengal government,” he expressed the hope that this would “wake up the (Bengal) government from its slumber.”Sudhanshu Trivedi, a Rajya Sabha MP for the BJP, called the order “appropriate, suitable, and commendable.” “It is also a very clear and unambiguous signal that exposes the Trinamool Congress government of West Bengal and proves that the INDIA alliance and all its constituent parties, including the Trinamool Congress, are frustrated due to their continuous defeats, and the Trinamool government in West Bengal is frustrated by its inevitable defeat,” he stated.

The ruling Trinamool Congress, meanwhile, targeted the BSF. Senior Trinamool politician Kunal Ghosh called it “political jugglery” since the military has not yet completely walled the property that the Bengal government turned over.

Telangana continues to murder large numbers of stray dogs, poisoning 150 more

New Delhi, Jan 30: Animal protection organizations said that the number of mass stray dog killings in Telangana has increased, with an additional 150 canines allegedly poisoned to death in two districts, bringing the total toll to nearly 1,500 in less than a month.Police have registered investigations following reports of large-scale abuse in Nagarkurnool and Siddipet districts, causing fresh indignation among campaigners and villagers.Almost 100 stray dogs in Nagarkurnool’s Thummaipally village were allegedly killed over the course of the previous ten days by giving them toxic injections. Mudavath Preethi, a Cruelty Prevention Assistant of the Stray Animal Foundation of India (SAFI), filed a complaint.

On January 27, police filed a formal complaint based on her petition. Preethi claimed to have learned that the Sarpanch was in charge of the systematic poisoning of dogs inside the village boundaries. According to the accusation, the panchayat secretary



and local sarpanch planned the murders.The FIR claims that in a purportedly taped conversation between the village sarpanch and animal welfare activist Adulapuram Goutham, the sarpanch acknowledged that poisonous injections were used to kill the dogs and that “dog killers” were paid Rs 18,000 to do so.About fifty stray dogs were allegedly taken from Boppapur village in Dubbaka mandal and illegally abandoned in a neighboring forest area in a second incidence that has been recorded from Siddipet district. Such move, according to animal welfare organizations, is against animal protection regulations. Adulapuram Goutham, SAFI’s Cruelty Prevention Manager, submitted a complaint alleging that the local Sarpanch

and Secretary were responsible for the operation. An FIR is being processed, according to the police.Animal rights advocates have warned that such occurrences represented an increasing trend of organized cruelty against strays and have called for harsh legal action and impartial authority. Police indicated that following preliminary investigations and evidence gathering, more action would be taken.

Over the past month, Telangana has seen an alarming increase in large-scale street dog murders. Before the most recent events, activists estimated that thousands of dogs had already died, primarily via deadly injections or oral poisoning. Additionally, they asserted that underreporting in rural regions may have led to greater actual numbers.

A collection of Nizam’s jewels are in high-security custody with the RBI



New Delhi, Jan 30: The government has notified the Rajya Sabha that Nizam’s jewels are under a “high-security custodial arrangement” with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and that the Ministry of Culture acknowledges the jewellery’s historical, cultural, and heritage value.In a written response to a question, Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat stated on Thursday that “no decision” had been made to move the collection to Hyderabad for a permanent public exhibition.The former Hyderabad State was ruled by the Nizams.

Following independence, the region became a part of the Union of India.

Shekhawat responded, “Yes, sir,” when asked if the government knew that “173 remarkable pieces of the Nizam’s jewels have been securely stored in the vaults of the RBI since 1995.” The minister was also questioned about if the government acknowledges the Nizam’s jewels’ profound cultural, historical, and emotional significance to the populace, Hyderabad’s legacy, and the long-standing public opinion that these artifacts need to be on display in the city where they originated.

He was also questioned about the government’s plans to move the collection to Hyderabad for a long-term public display. According to Shekhawat, the Ministry of Culture “recognizes the historical, cultural, and heritage significance of the Nizam’s Jewellery, including the public interest associated with these artefacts.”He added that “as per the existing MoU with the Reserve Bank of India for security, insurance and conservation considerations, the Jewellery is under a high-value, high-security custodial arrangement with the Reserve Bank of India” .The minister stated that no decision has yet been made to move the collection for a long-term public display in Hyderabad.

IndiGo flight from Kuwait to Delhi was rerouted to Ahmedabad

New Delhi: According to airport officials, an IndiGo flight from Kuwait to Delhi was diverted to Ahmedabad airport on Friday morning after the crew found a bomb and hijacking threat written on a piece of tissue paper on board.At approximately 6.40 am, the aircraft, carrying 180 passengers, including staff members, made a safe landing at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport. The handwritten note suggested there was a bomb inside the plane. As a precaution, the flight was redirected to Ahmedabad after the pilot notified air traffic control.After landing, every passenger was safely evacuated, and their bags are currently being inspected. The airplane was thoroughly searched by police, dog squads, and bomb disposal squads. According to officials, no suspicious items have been discovered thus far during the preliminary inspections.Shortly after

obtaining final approval, the flight is anticipated to take off from Ahmedabad to Delhi.After a serious security threat was identified while boarding, an IndiGo flight from Delhi to Bagdogra in West Bengal was rerouted to Lucknow two weeks ago. After the plane touched down safely at Lucknow Airport, security personnel conducted a comprehensive examination and all passengers were evacuated. Due to bomb threats, the airline grounded two flights on the same day last month. On December 4, a passenger on an IndiGo flight from Madinah to Hyderabad claimed to be carrying a bomb, forcing the airline to make an emergency landing at Ahmedabad airport. A few hours later, an email threatening to blow up the aircraft if it was let to land at its intended destination caused another IndiGo flight on the Sharjah-Hyderabad route to be diverted to Mumbai.

NCP Leader: Ajit Pawar Desired To Bring NCP Factions Back Together As A “Gift” To Uncle

New Delhi, Jan 30: Ajit Pawar attempted to unite the two factions of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) as a birthday gesture for Sharad Pawar on December 12. Despite his efforts, the merger was unsuccessful. NCP (SP) leader Ankush Kakade recounted Ajit Pawar’s request for collaboration, emphasizing his rapport with Sharad Pawar.

Ajit Pawar organized further discussions on January 16 and 17 to explore unity and decided to collaborate in upcoming local elections. Tragically, Ajit Pawar and four others died in a plane crash at Baranati airport during a land-



ing attempt. Following his death, there are considerations within the NCP regarding leadership, with a push for his wife, Sunetra Pawar, to assume a prominent role, though poten-

tial alternatives like Praful Patel are also mentioned. Concurrently, the NCP has reduced its election campaign activities, focusing on distributing flyers instead of organizing events.

Steven Smith is ready to serve as backup for the T20 World Cup



New Delhi: Steven Smith has often shown that he has the skills to be a true asset for Australia in the white ball formats if called upon, even though he will always be regarded as one of the greatest Test hitters of all time. Although he hasn’t been included in the T20I team and won’t be attending the World Cup in India and Sri Lanka, his incredible Big Bash League season has garnered him some notice.Playing in just six games after returning from the Ashes, Smith picked up 299 runs at a stunning strike-rate of 167, including a century, as his efforts helped send the Sydney Sixers to the final. As a result, Smith—a player with a ton of experience playing in the subcontinent—is now

being considered for a possible call-up in the event that Australia sustains an injury during the World Cup. If Mitch Marsh’s team needed him, Ricky Ponting supported him to take over in the top order.”His numbers are superior to everyone else’s.” But when you’ve been out and the side’s had some success, and Travis Head and Mitch Marsh are the incumbents, it’s hard to push one of those two men out of an opening slot,” Ponting said to The Western Australian. Additionally, poor Steve has likely been stereotyped as an opening batsman exclusively in Twenty20 cricket, which has likely hindered his selection in recent years. However, he is just one minor injury away. He backed his countryman, saying, “He’s the next cab off the rank and he’s ready to go.”Since February 2024, Smith has not played for Australia in a Twenty20 International. Over the past two years, the team has adopted a more power-oriented strategy. They have maybe the finest opening pair in the competition with Marsh and Head, and Tim David’s move up the order suggests that the Aussies are now known for their six-hitting.

Although Smith has demonstrated in the Big Bash that he is capable of playing in that manner, the World Cup might be a leap for the improved version of himself, and he could very well be the Australian team’s go-to player in an emergency.

“Winter Signing” Jamal Musiala Joins Weary Bayern Munich Again

New Delhi: For a Bayern Munich team that has become fatigued in recent weeks as they continue to fight on three fronts, midfielder Jamal Musiala has made a welcome comeback. The return of Musiala and other long-term injury absences Alphonso Davies and Hiroki Ito were described as “internal winter signings” by Bayern CEO Jan-Christian Dreesen in December, ruling out any significant winter purchases. During the Club World Cup, Musiala suffered a broken leg. Musiala is expected to start away against Hamburg on Saturday following two appearances off the bench and a standout performance in the Champions League midweek. In the Bundesliga, Bayern is still eight points ahead of Borussia Dortmund, but they will still be hurting from last week’s unexpected 2-1 home setback to Augsburg, which was their first league loss of the year. Augsburg, like the majority of the league, lacks the talent to take on the reigning champions, but the Bavarian minnows won by outplaying a team that was worn out from a lengthy season.Musiala’s freshness will be crucial in the second part of the campaign, even though he lacks match fitness after missing six months. The 22-year-old earned his first start since

returning in Wednesday’s 2-1 Champions League triumph over PSV Eindhoven, scoring Bayern’s opening goal. The objective demonstrated Musiala’s unique set of abilities. He played a deft one-two, dribbled through a packed penalty box, and then fired a deadly shot into the net’s roof.Harry Kane, a striker for Bayern, described Musiala’s goal as “a beautiful goal from a tight angle.” “He displayed his attributes. He was excellent, and I commend him.Bayern has recently developed a habit of crushing Hamburg, their opponents on Saturday.

Hamburg, one of just three German teams to win the European Cup, along with Bayern and Dortmund, has a sizable fan base, but their results versus the Bavarian powerhouses are not encouraging. Bayern has won 17 of their last 20 games and drawn three; Hamburg last defeated them in 2009. They have scored 36 goals in their last eight games, all of which Bayern has won, while Hamburg has only managed one. This season, Bayern has already defeated Hamburg 5-0 in Munich, but their home record gives the hosts optimism this weekend. This season, Hamburg has won 15 of their 18 games at home and hasn’t suffered a defeat there since October.

Sanju Samson gets teased by Suryakumar Yadav while arriving in his hometown



New Delhi: India’s final destination prior to the T20 World Cup is Thiruvananthapuram, where they will play New Zealand in the series’ dead-rubber final Twenty20 International. And when it comes to Thiruvananthapuram, local hero Sanju Samson is a name that appeals to the town’s cricket enthusiasts. Samson, a popular player among many, is lately struggling; his most recent fifty came in the Asia Cup in September versus Oman. Samson’s T20 World Cup destiny is in jeopardy after four straight

low scores in the current series.

He is still a member of the team, but every setback makes it less likely that he will continue in the starting lineup, especially with Ishan Kishan breathing down his neck. Suryakumar Yadav, the captain of India, was eager to tease Samson as the squad left the airport after landing in Thiruvananthapuram. “Move aside. Step aside. Please make room. As he made room for Samson to come in style, Surya murmured, “Don’t disturb Chetta.” A shy Samson got even borderline embarrassed, but it was all in good spirits. This is how the conversation continued after that.Samson was met with thunderous applause as soon as he left the airport by a sea of supporters who had come to see him and the rest of the Indian team. With a broad smile on his face, Samson headed for the team bus while the commotion persisted.

In actuality, Samson would play in front of his home crowd for the first time on Saturday during the fifth ODI. Before they start their World Cup campaign against the USA, India would like to give Samson another chance to get back among runs because they have nothing to lose.

Regarding the ICC-Bangladesh T20 World Cup 2026 dispute, Sri Lanka speaks out

New Delhi: Before the top cricket authority rendered its ultimate decision, the dispute between Bangladesh and the International Cricket Council (ICC) over the T20 World Cup lasted for more than three weeks. Bangladesh had asked the board to move their 2026 T20 World Cup matches from India. In the first round of the competition, they were scheduled to play four games in Kolkata and Mumbai. Citing security concerns in India, Bangladesh requested that their games be shifted to Sri Lanka. Following Mustafizur Rahman’s departure from the Indian Premier League, this request was made. Bangladesh’s request was denied by the ICC, but the side was given a day to decide. The top-ranked country among those who did

not qualify for the tournament, Scotland, took Bangladesh’s place after the apex cricket authority withdrew the team due to Bangladesh’s steadfast position.According to a number of sources, Pakistan might also choose not to play their matches against India or boycott the event in support of Bangladesh. Sri Lanka remained silent for a considerable amount of time despite all the drama going on around them. Their reluctance received a lot of attention because they are co-hosts of the competition with India. At last, the nation has raised its voice on the matter. Bandula Dissanayake, the cricket secretary, told AFP that Colombo wished to stay out of regional conflicts. “In these disputes among India, Pakistan and Bangladesh,

we are remaining neutral; all of these are friendly nations,” he stated.However, the official said that if asked, Sri Lanka would be open to hosting future competitions for any of the nations.Notably, when political tensions worsen, Pakistan and India now play their games at neutral locations. Pakistan’s T20 World Cup 2026 matches, including the match against India, will therefore be held in Sri Lanka. Sports Minister Sunil Kumara Gamage told the news agency that Sri Lanka is “paying special attention to the India-Pakistan matches” and has placed the “highest priority” on making sure the event goes well.The 2026 T20 World Cup will begin on February 7 and conclude on March 8.

Veteran Manpreet Singh, two teammates dropped over disciplinary issues report

Manpreet Singh dropped over disciplinary issues

New Delhi: Hockey India's decision to drop three players, including veteran midfielder Manpreet Singh, from the list of probables for the upcoming FIH Pro League season stemmed from disciplinary issues during the team's tour of South Africa in December. Sources said a serious case of indiscipline surfaced during the tour, following which Manpreet, Dilpreet Singh and goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak were omitted from the probables' list. India toured South Africa for a three-Test series from December 2 to 16, losing the series 2-0, with the third match ending in a draw. A serious case of indiscipline came to light during the South Africa tour, also involving a fourth player whose name has not been disclosed. The players later apologised for giving their teammate a banned substance, but the decision to exclude them from the upcoming camp was announced during a team meeting," a team source said. Hockey India announced the list of probables on Thursday, with the absence of former captain Manpreet raising eyebrows. The Pro League season will begin next month in Rourke-



la. Manpreet had co-captained the Ranchi Royals team to the Hockey India League final, and his performance in the tournament was commendable. Manpreet, 33, a member of two Olympic bronze medal-winning teams, has failed to make it to the list of probable players for the camp (February 1 to 7) for the first time in 15 years. He is just one match away from becoming the joint-most capped Indian player with 412 matches, a record currently held by Hockey India's incumbent president, Dilip Tirkey. The India leg of the FIH Pro League is scheduled from February 10 to 15 in Rourkela. India will play Argentina in their opening game on February 11. Hockey India has dropped veteran midfielder Manpreet Singh, forward Dilpreet Singh, and goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak from the probables list for the upcoming FIH Pro League due to disciplinary issues during the team's December 2025 tour of South Africa. The decision marks Manpreet's first absence from a national camp in 15 years. Hockey India's decision to drop Manpreet Singh, Dilpreet Singh, and Krishan Bahadur Pathak stems from a disciplinary breach during South squad.

Chirag Gandhi shines as Gurugram Thunders clinch maiden World Legends Pro T20 victory

Panaji: The sixth match of the World Legends Pro T20 League witnessed Gurugram Thunders register their first win of the tournament, successfully chasing a challenging target of 200 against Maharashtra Tycoons with three balls remaining. The chase was anchored by a composed, unbeaten half-century of 74 off 43 balls from Chirag Gandhi, whose innings proved decisive under pressure. Maharashtra Tycoons, batting first, endured a difficult start as they lost early wickets in quick succession. Gurugram capitalised on the early movement, with Sreesanth making an immediate impact by dismissing Sir Alastair Cook in his opening over. The Tycoons were placed under sustained pressure as wickets continued to fall during the powerplay. A period of consolidation followed, driven by a steady partnership between Shaun Marsh and Asghar Afghan. Marsh anchored the innings with a well-paced half-century, providing much-needed stability. Despite the rebuild, Maharashtra con-



Tinued to lose wickets at regular intervals and found themselves in a precarious position at 90 for 5. The innings was then transformed by Sarul Kanwar, who produced a commanding knock of 83 off just 36 deliveries. Batting through the middle overs, Kanwar controlled the tempo of the innings before accelerating in the latter stages, finding boundaries consistently to lift the Tycoons to a competitive total of 199 for 7. The innings was built on sustained scoring rather than a late surge, setting Gurugram Thunder a demanding target under lights. In reply, Gurugram Thunders made a solid start through Cheteshwar Pujara and Jermaine Blackwood,

Who added 53 runs for the opening wicket to provide a stable foundation for the chase. As the required run rate increased, Chirag Gandhi assumed responsibility, rotating the strike effectively and capitalising on scoring opportunities. Gandhi reached his half-century and remained unbeaten until the conclusion of the innings, displaying composure and sound judgment in the closing stages. He was well supported by Thisara Perera, whose timely contributions ensured Gurugram maintained momentum. The pair guided the Thunders to victory with three balls to spare, sealing a significant win for the side. Speaking after the match, Mauvin Godinho, Minister for In-

dustries, Transport and Panchayat, Govt of Goa, said, "I thoroughly enjoyed today's match between Gurugram Thunders and Maharashtra Tycoons. Cricket is something that binds all of us Indians together, perhaps a religion to many people in this country. Equally meaningful is the 1919 ground built which is owned by my very own friend and the sarpanch of Chicalim and inaugurated by Surya Kumar Yadav. This ground will help build and promote young cricketers who would be material for the Indian team perhaps. We cannot but stop saluting even, women cricketers who have recently won the world cup. This ground will certainly be the harbinger of cricket in a very big way." Earlier in the day's other fixture, Rajasthan Lions secured a 16-run victory over Dubai Royals. After an early setback at 23 for 2, Rajasthan recovered through a fluent 66 off 43 balls from Naman Ojha, with valuable late contributions from Jesal Karia and Bipul Sharma, despite a hat-trick from Piyush Chawla.

Virat Kohli Instagram mystery

New Delhi: Instagram went quiet, and Indian cricket fans knew something was wrong. Virat Kohli may not be at the crease right now, but his absence from Instagram has left fans on edge. Virat Kohli's verified Instagram account, followed by over 270 million users, suddenly disappeared from the platform on January 30, leaving followers both baffled and buzzing online. Kohli's Instagram account, long a hub for cricketing updates, personal moments and collaborative brand promotions, stopped appearing in searches early on Friday morning, with users instead greeted by the familiar message: "Profile isn't available." There has been no official explanation from Kohli, his team or Instagram on whether the disappearance is intentional, temporary or the result of a technical glitch. Adding to the mystery, Virat Kohli's brother, Vikas Kohli's Instagram account has also not been appearing in searches since Friday morning. Users attempting to access his profile were met with the same profile isn't available sage. Others sarcastically asked if

12th Shyam Lal Memorial Hockey Tournament kicks off February 2



New Delhi: The 12th Padma Shree Shyam Lal Memorial Invitational Hockey Tournament will be held from February 2 to 9, 2026. The top men's and women's teams from leading Delhi University colleges will participate in the tournament, as per a press release. According to Prof. Rabi Narayan Kar, Principal, Shyam Lal College, the Chief Guest, Prof. Balam Pani, Dean of Colleges, University of Delhi, will inaugurate the tournament on Feb. 2, 2026, Monday at 10:30 a.m. at the Shyam Lal College ground, Shahdara. On this occasion, Prof. Sarita Tyagi, Head of the Department, DPSS, DU; Dr. Jyoti Mann, Assistant Director, DUSC; and Sanjeev Gautam, ACP, Shahdara, will be present as guests of honour. Convener of the Sports Committee, V. S. Jaggi, informed that ten teams in the men's category and six teams in the women's category will compete on a league cum knockout basis. The top four teams will advance to the semifinals, followed by the final match between the two finalists. Last year, Shyam Lal College won the men's title, while the Delhi University Alumnae team emerged as champions in the women's category. According to the Principal of Shyam Lal College, Prof. Rabi Narayan Kar, such

tournaments are extremely important for promoting sports at the college level and keeping students aware of fitness through sports under the Fit India campaign. Shyam Lal College (Morning), Indira Gandhi Institute of Physical Education and Sports Science, Kirori Mal College, Amity University, Shyam Lal College B, Shri Ram College of Commerce, Shyam Lal College (Evening), Hansraj College, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College, Shyam Lal College (Alumni). Indira Gandhi Institute of Physical Education and Sports Science, Bharati College, Delhi University Alumna, Vivekananda College, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee College, Janki Devi Memorial College. Hockey India on Thursday announced a 33-member core probable group for the Senior Men's National Coaching Camp, scheduled to be held in Rourkela, Odisha, from February 1 to 7, according to a release. The camp will form part of the team's preparations for the upcoming phase of the FIH Men's Pro League, which is scheduled to be staged at the Birsu Munda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela from February 10 to 15. The home leg will mark the start of India's first campaign of the year. The squad assemblies following the recently concluded Hero Hockey India League, which provided competitive exposure to several senior players while offering younger prospects the opportunity to play alongside some of the finest international players. The camp will comprise Pawan, Suraj Karkera, Mohith Honnenahalli Shashikumar and Princedeep Singh as goalkeepers. Meanwhile, the defensive unit features Amit Rohidas, Jarmanpreet Singh, Sanjay, Harmanpreet Singh, Jugraj Singh, Sumit, Poovanna Chandura Lakra.

Unyielding Alcaraz defeats spirited Zverev in marathon, now just one win from Career Slam

New Delhi: Carlos Alcaraz is unlikely to forget January 30 for the rest of his life. Just last year, the Spaniard had battled for five hours and 29 minutes to claim the French Open final against Jannik Sinner. In 2026, he took that endurance to another level, producing an epic display of courage, skill, and sheer willpower to reach the Australian Open final. With the win, Alcaraz also kept alive his dreams of a Career Grand Slam. Alcaraz, who's looking to win his seventh Grand Slam title, defeated Alexander Zverev 6-4, 7-6, 6-7, 7-6, 7-5 in a gruelling men's singles semi-final that lasted five hours and 27 minutes, a match that will long be remembered as a modern classic. At just 22, he became the youngest man in the Open Era to reach the final at all four Grand Slam tournaments, surpassing the record set by Jim Courier in 1993. The victory also preserved Alcaraz's career record of never losing a match after winning the first two sets, a testament to his focus and composure. Alcaraz started the match in commanding fashion, winning the first two sets and appearing in full control.



But the tide turned as Zverev began to fight back, testing every ounce of the Spaniard's resilience. From the end of the second set, Alcaraz battled cramps that threatened to derail his campaign, while Zverev clawed his way back into the match with relentless energy. Yet, in the dying stages of the fifth set, Alcaraz summoned every bit of courage and mental strength, producing clutch shots under immense pressure to have the last laugh. For Zverev, it was heartbreak—he fought through the longest

match of his career, only to fall agonizingly short. In the final, Alcaraz will face the winner of the second semi-final between reigning Melbourne Park champion Jannik Sinner and 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic, who has also won the Australian Open ten times. Alexander Zverev set the tone early, opening the match with a booming hold of serve and immediately signalling his intent to dictate from the baseline. His backhand crosscourt created sharp angles and early pressure.

Aston Villa edges Salzburg 3-2 with thrilling second-half Europa League comeback victory

England : Jamaldeen Jimoh-Aloba's first-ever goal for Aston Villa was an 87th-minute winner in a 3-2 comeback victory over Salzburg to conclude the opening phase of the Europa League on Thursday. The 19-year-old Jimoh-Aloba's strike followed Tyrone Mings' equalizer at Villa Park. Morgan Rogers sparked the comeback in the 64th after the visitors built a 2-0 lead on own goal from Victor Lindelof and then Moussa Yeo's goal. Villa wasn't able to overtake Lyon atop the 36-team standings, however, after the French team beat 10-man PAOK 4-2 to remain in front of Unai Emery's team on goal difference. Both Lyon and Villa had already secured a spot in the round of 16. Like in the Champions League, the top eight finishers advance automatically to the last 16. The teams placed from nine to 24 enter a two-leg playoff. The rest of the top eight are: third-place Midtjylland, Real Betis, Porto, Braga, Freiburg, and Roma. Midtjylland, a Danish club, beat Dinamo Zagreb 2-0 to move up to third, two points back of Lyon and Villa. In Seville, former Manchester United winger Antony scored and set up Abde Ezzalzouli's goal in Real Betis' 2-1 win over Feyenoord. Porto rallied from a goal down to beat Rangers 3-1 and jump from ninth to fifth, Braga advanced in the sixth spot after a 0-0 draw at Go Ahead Eagles, and 10-man Freiburg slipped to ninth with a 1-0 loss at Lille. Jan Ziolkowski headed in an 80th-minute equalizer for Roma in a 1-1 draw with Panathinaikos. Celtic claimed one of the five playoff spots that remained Thursday by beating Utrecht 4-2. The playoffs draw is Fri-



day. The Scottish giant led 3-0 within the opening 20 minutes at Celtic Park on Benjamin Nygren's early goal, Nick Viergever's own goal and Arne Engels' penalty. Igor Jesus scored twice for Nottingham Forest in a 4-0 win over Ferencváros. The seven PAOK fans who died in a minibus crash in Romania this week on their way to attend a game between Lyon and their club were honored at stadiums in France and Greece. Lyon expressed its "sincere condolences" to PAOK and supporters' associations for rival Greek clubs Olympiakos, Panathinaikos, Aris, and others issued messages of unity and condolences. A moment of silence was observed at Groupama Stadium in Lyon — and in Athens where Panathinaikos played Roma. Also, players at the Lille game against Freiburg joined in a round of applause for the victims, UEFA said. Morgan Rogers scored two brilliant solo goals to down Manchester United 2-1 and keep Aston Villa in the hunt for the Premier League title.

The win at Villa Park on Sunday was a 10th straight victory in all competitions for Unai Emery's team, which is third in the standings and three points off leader Arsenal. Rogers whipped two curling shots into the top corner - either side of Matheus Cunha's goal for United. The midfielder fired Villa in front in the 45th minute when cutting in from the left. His second came in the 57th - again curling the ball beyond the dive of United goalkeeper Senne Lammens. The win maintains Villa's outstanding run, which has seen it win 11 of its last 12 games in the league. Villa's emergence as a surprise Contender comes after it lost two of its first three games run.

PWL: Turan Bayramov lifts Delhi Dangal Warriors into semi-finals after 5-4 win

Bayramov powers Warriors' semi-final qualification

Noida: Delhi Dangal Warriors sealed a spectacular semi-final berth with a 5-4 win over Punjab Royals in the final league match of the Pro Wrestling League (PWL)2026, at the Noida Indoor Stadium, as per a release from PWL. Delhi stunned Punjab with an outright win to secure second place, ruling out technical interference in their journey to the final four. Delhi's decisive moment arrived in the eighth tie of the match, where Player of the Match Turan Bayramov produced a dominant performance to outclass U23 Asian Champion, Chandermohan and level the tie at 4-4, effectively securing Delhi's place in the last four. Earlier, Fighter of the Match Ana Godinez kept Punjab firmly in contention with a high-quality win in the women's 62kg contest, ensuring the contest went down to the wire. Punjab Royals, already assured of a semi-final berth with six points, began the tie strongly in the 76kg women's category as Priya Malik edged Anastasiya Alpyeeva 2-0 in A



Disciplined tactical contest. Delhi responded emphatically in the 86kg men's category through Vafaeipour Hadi Bakhtiar, who overwhelmed Sandeep Maan with relentless offence to register a commanding 20-7 win and bring the tie level. Delhi then surged ahead as captain Sujeet Kalkal delivered a composed 10-1 victory over Anuj Kumar in the 65kg men's tie, before Shubham Kaushik followed up with a clinical 9-0 shutout against Chirag Chhikara to extend Delhi's advantage to 3-1. Punjab pulled one back in the 57kg women's category through Rajnita Jangra, who dictated proceedings against Karla Godinez Gonzalez to

Claim a 5-1 win. The momentum swung again in the 62kg women's bout, where Ana Godinez produced one of the standout contests of the night. Godinez opened up a decisive lead with a massive five-point throw in the first period and, despite resistance from Anjali in the second period, held her nerve to secure an 11-7 win and level the team score at 3-3. Punjab then moved ahead for the first time since the opening contest as Meenakshi dominated Saarika in the 53kg women's contest, forcing an injury stoppage after building a commanding lead to make it 4-3 in Punjab's favour. With Delhi's semi-final hopes

hanging in the balance, Turan Bayramov delivered when it mattered most. Facing U23 Asian champion Chandermohan in the 74kg men's bout, Bayramov absorbed early pressure before unleashing a scoring burst of takedowns and exposures across both periods, powering to an emphatic 18-8 victory to draw Delhi level at 4-4 and confirm qualification. The final bout was decided by forfeit in the 125kg men's category, handing Ronak the win and sealing a 5-4 triumph for Delhi Dangal Warriors. With this result, Delhi secures their semi-final berth and second-place finish with six points and 24 bout wins, while Punjab Royals also advance, having already confirmed qualification earlier with six points. They finished fourth in the league stage with 23 bout wins. Turan Bayramov produced a stellar performance to guide Delhi Dangal Warriors into the semi-finals of the Pro Wrestling League (PWL) with a thrilling 5-4 victory. In a tense encounter, Bayramov's challenge.