

Mizoram Celebrates 39th Statehood Day as CM Lalduhoma Leads Statewide Day of Prayer

Aizawl, Feb 20: Mizoram marked its 39th Statehood Day with solemn prayer gatherings and thanksgiving services across the state, led by Chief Minister Lalduhoma. Unlike previous years, no official ceremonial functions were held; instead, the day was observed as a “State Day of Prayer,” reflecting a collective spirit of renewal and gratitude. The central observance took place at Lammual, formerly the Assam Rifles parade ground in Aizawl, where thousands joined in worship. Similar programmes were organized simultaneously in all district headquarters. The event was coordinated by the State Day of Prayer Committee, comprising government representatives and church leaders from various denominations. Addressing the congregation, Chief Minister Lalduhoma emphasized unity, reconciliation, and the need to rebuild Mizoram with faith and collective effort. The theme of the prayer service, drawn from Nehemiah 2:17 — “Come, Let Us Rebuild” — underscored the state’s aspiration for peace, progress, and



Community strength. Cabinet colleagues, legislators, and senior officials joined the gathering, reinforcing the government’s commitment to inclusive development. Mizoram marked its 39th Statehood Day with solemn prayer gatherings and thanksgiving services across the

State, reflecting a collective spirit of gratitude and renewal. Unlike previous years, no official ceremonial functions were organized. Instead, the observance took the form of a “State Day of Prayer,” led by Chief Minister Lalduhoma and supported by church leaders, government offi-

Cials, and citizens. The main event was held at Lammual, formerly known as the Assam Rifles parade ground in Aizawl. The State Day of Prayer Committee organized a mass prayer and worship service, drawing thousands of participants. Similar gatherings were held si-

multaneously at district headquarters, ensuring that the entire state joined in collective reflection. The theme chosen for this year’s observance was “Come, Let Us Rebuild” — inspired by Nehemiah 2:17 from the Bible, symbolizing resilience, unity, and renewal. Chief Minister Lalduhoma addressed the congregation, emphasizing the importance of spiritual strength and community solidarity in Mizoram’s journey of progress. He was joined by members of his Cabinet, legislators, and senior government officials, underscoring the government’s commitment to inclusive development rooted in cultural and spiritual values. Mizoram attained statehood on February 20, 1987, becoming India’s 23rd state under the historic Mizo Accord signed in Delhi on June 30, 1986. This year’s prayer-focused observance highlighted Mizoram’s unique identity as a state where faith and governance often intersect. The decision to hold statewide prayers instead of official parades or cultural programs.

PM greets people of Arunachal and Mizoram on Statehood Day

Aizawl, Feb 20: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has extended his best wishes to the people of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram on their Statehood Day, recognising their role in national progress. “Warm wishes to the people of Arunachal Pradesh on the occasion of their Statehood Day. Blessed with majestic landscapes and an extraordinary cultural diversity, Arunachal Pradesh stands as a shining example of harmony between tradition and nature. Its spirited and industrious citizens play a vital role in strengthening the nation’s progress. At the same time, the state’s diverse tribal ethos adds immense richness to our nation. May the state continue to scale new heights of development in the times to come,” he said. Hailing the strong community spirit and gracious people of Mizoram who embody values of kindness and compassion, Modi said: “Mizoram is widely known for its striking natural beauty and enduring cultural traditions. Its strong community spirit and gracious people embody values of kindness and compassion.

Ngamba Longjam clinches super bantamweight title in Thailand

Imphal, Feb 20: Bringing laurels to Manipur and the nation, Ngamba Longjam of Keishamthong Longjam Leirak clinched the Super Bantamweight Championship at an international boxing event held in Bangkok, Thailand. The bout was staged in Bangkok, Thailand, under the banner “The Heart of Steel,” organised by Highland Boxing Promotion at the Highland Boxing Gym on February 14. The contest featured a six-round Super Bantamweight bout between India and Myanmar, with Ngamba Longjam representing India against Myanmar’s Saw Thank Zin.

Journalists stage protest against attack on editor

Imphal, Feb 20: Journalists from different media houses staged a sit-in protest at Keishampat Leimajam Leikai, Imphal West on Friday in protest against the attack carried out on editor of Naharolgi Thoudang daily Khoirom Loyalakpa by armed miscreants. The protest demonstration was jointly organised by the All Manipur Working Journalists’ Union (AMWJU) and the Editors’ Guild of Manipur (EGM). AMWJU President Asem Bhakta said that the life

attempt made on senior editor Khoirom Loyalakpa is highly condemnable. He demanded the concerned individuals/groups as clarify to why the attack was carried out on the senior editor. Vice-president Sonia Sorensangbam described the attack on the editor as an assault on press freedom, saying such unfortunate incidents must not be allowed to occur in the future. Placards that read “We oppose attack on media persons”, “Stop intimidating media persons” etc were



held at the protest site. Khoirom Loyalakpa was intercepted by unidentified armed men while he was driving a car near Hatta cemetery in Imphal East district on Wednesday night. The armed men fired two rounds of gun shot into the rear window of the car and physically assaulted the journalist, leaving him badly injured.

Assam Has 2,670 Single-Teacher Schools; Over 13,000 Schools Without Headmasters

Guwahati, Feb 20: The Assam Legislative Assembly was informed on Thursday that the state currently has 2,670 single-teacher primary schools, more than 13,000 schools functioning without permanent headmasters, and thousands of subject teacher posts lying vacant across different levels.

Replying to a question by MLA Akhil Gogoi, Education Minister Ranaj Pegu stated that although no government primary school is functioning without a teacher in 2025–26, as many as 2,670 schools continue to operate with only one teacher.

On teacher deployment, the minister informed that 4,041 five-class schools have five or more teachers

(excluding headmasters), while 1,733 six-class schools have six or more teachers.

The data placed before the House also reflected major infrastructure shortcomings. Only 5,083 five-class schools have five or more classrooms, while many institutions lack adequate classroom space. Among six-class schools, only 1,530 have the required number of classrooms, whereas 21,839 schools do not meet the prescribed norms.

The Assembly was further informed that 13,614 primary schools and 3,402 upper primary schools are functioning without permanent headmasters, highlighting a significant leadership deficit in the school system.



Vacancies of subject teachers remain substantial. Upper primary schools have 4,805 vacant posts, including assistant, Hindi and science teachers. High schools account for 7,396 vacancies in science, mathematics, arts and Hindi subjects. Higher secondary schools have 242 vacant posts in science, mathematics, English and Hindi.

Communication on livelihood support equipment provided to women’s groups from the fringe of Laokhowa-Burhachapori Wildlife Sanctuary

Guwahati, Feb 20: As part of the sustained endeavour to strengthen livelihoods of women folk living around wildlife protection areas, leading biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak, in collaboration with Kaziranga National Park & Tiger Reserve Authority, Laokhowa-Burhachapori Wildlife Sanctuary Authority, Nagaon Wildlife Division and LBSCS and with support from International Rhino Foundation (IRF), provided weaving sets, sewing machines and other equipment to two women’s groups from the fringe of Laokhowa-Burhachapori Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam.

A formal handover programme was held on February 17 at Gorajan Range of Laokhowa Burhachapori Wildlife Sanctuary. The equipment

was handed over by Rajib Hazarika, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Nagaon Wildlife Division and Arif Hussain, Senior Manager, Rhino Research and Conservation Division of Aaranyak.

The programme was attended by Range Officers Pankaj Bora of Dhania Range and Mukut Rabha of Gorajan Range, Dilwar Hussain, President of LBSCS, Swapan Nath, conservationist from Kaziranga, along with other officials.

Aaranyak has been working towards enhancing livelihood opportunities for women residing around the sanctuary through skill development initiatives. The beneficiary groups have already received training in water hyacinth craft and are generating income through the production



of eco-friendly items.

The newly-provided equipment is expected to improve productivity, expand product varieties and strengthen income generation for the groups. The women beneficiaries expressed their gratitude to the Park

Authority and Aaranyak for their continued support and guidance.

The initiative reflects an integrated approach linking conservation efforts with sustainable community development in the Laokhowa landscape.

Priyanka Gandhi slams CM Sarma, honors Zubeen Garg

Guwahati, Feb 20: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra visited the memorial of late Assamese singer Zubeen Garg in Sonapur, Guwahati, stressing that his death should remain apolitical. She described Garg as “above politics” and urged leaders not to turn his cremation site into a political arena.

While paying tribute, Gandhi launched a sharp attack on Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, accusing him of indulging in “politics of polarisation” and personal attacks against Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi and his family. She said such tactics reflect



“negative politics” and argued that Assam’s youth need development and employment, not divisive rhetoric. Gandhi drew a distinction between “positive leaders” who bring love and unity, and those who

thrive on polarisation. She emphasised that families and children should be kept out of political controversies, calling Sarma’s repeated allegations against Gogoi “wrong politics.”

Switching parties common before elections, Priyanka remarks on Bhupen exit

Guwahati, Feb 20: Congress MP and chairperson of the Screening Committee, Priyanka Gandhi on Thursday downplayed the political impact of former Assam PCC president Bhupen Borah quitting the party, saying that switching parties ahead of an election is “common” in Indian politics.

Interacting with mediapersons after holding a series of meetings in Guwahati, Gandhi, while reacting to Borah’s decision to quit Congress, remarked that it is common for some leaders to switch parties in the run-up to elections. She further asserted that the Congress continued to have a strong leadership in Assam. “The party remains united and capable of mounting an effective challenge in the upcoming Assembly elections. We will contest unitedly and strongly. We consider this election a battle. We have many warriors, and we will

win. Over the next two days, we will continue consultations to ensure proper ticket distribution and contest the elections in a strong and organised manner,” she said.

Meanwhile, after a day full of engagements, the Congress MP remained busy with party work at Rajiv Bhavan late into the night. She held separate meetings with the presidents of all 35 district committees.

Subsequently, she also interacted individually with all the Congress MLAs and discussed strategy and future course of action. Earlier in the day, she participated in a meeting of the Political Affairs Department regarding the forthcoming Assembly elections. She also held discussions with members of the Screening Committee, who had been touring various constituencies across Assam and interacting with grassroots workers to gather feedback.

IIT-Guwahati showcases method to detect, correct Wikipedia name errors at India AI impact summit

Guwahati, Feb 20: Researchers of the Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati (IIT-G) have developed a multilingual and scalable method to identify and correct Surface Name Errors (SNEs) in Wikipedia, thus helping improve information reliability for both human users and artificial intelligence systems. The method was showcased at the India AI Impact Summit 2026. Wikipedia is a free, multilingual online encyclopaedia created and maintained by a global community of volunteers through open collaboration. A surface name refers to the text used in Wikipedia articles to mention or link to another entity. A Surface Name Error (SNE) occurs when this text is incorrect. A study conducted by the IIT-Guwahati research team found that about three to six percent of all entity mentions in Wikipedia contain Surface Name Errors. While these

errors may appear minor, they have significant implications. For human users, an incorrect surface name can reduce the perceived credibility and reliability of the information provided. Similarly, many machine learning and deep learning models use Wikipedia as a core dataset. Such errors in surface names can negatively impact AI tasks and model performance. To address this challenge, Prof. Amit Awekar, Associate Professor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, along with this then M. Tech student Mr. Anuj Khare (batch of 2022), built a method that uses mathematical frequency patterns, making it adaptable across languages. The developed method follows a three-step approach to classify SNEs. The first step included scanning Wikipedia and converting every link into a quadruplet containing information on: the page where

the link appears; the page it points to; the surface name used in the link and the surrounding textual context. In the next step, the developed method reviewed the surface name and considered it correct only if: it appeared at least 10 times and accounted for at least 5 percent of all links pointing to a specific page. Surface names that did not meet these criteria were flagged as potential errors. In the final step, it categorised the detected errors into “typing mistakes”, such as “Gawahati” instead of “Guwahati”, or “entity span errors”, where extra or incorrect words are mistakenly included in the link. The researchers tested the developed method on eight languages, including English, Sanskrit, German, Italian, Urdu, Hindi, Marathi, and Gujarati, and found accurate outcomes. Speaking about the real-world application of the developed method, Prof.

Awekar, said, “This work shows us that we should not be trusting the data from the web blindly, both for human use and training AI models. Good data is the beginning of any good AI model and downstream application.” To validate the developed method, the research team compared snapshots of English Wikipedia from 2018 and 2022 and found that about 30 percent of the errors predicted by the method had been corrected on Wikipedia over four years, confirming its accuracy. Wikipedia is maintained by volunteers worldwide, and the developed method can help editors identify hidden typos and linking errors that might otherwise remain unnoticed for years.

To further validate the accuracy of this method, it is notable that the Wikipedia community has accepted more than 99 percent of the manual corrections suggested by the researchers.

What’s value of my humiliation when Rahul Gandhi says he too feels humiliated: Bhupen Borah

Guwahati, Feb 20: Former As-sam Congress president Bhupen Borah, who is set to join the BJP, said on Thursday that when he raised the issue of his humiliation in the party with Rahul Gandhi, he was told by him that he too feels humiliated.

Borah, who resigned on Monday in a setback for the Congress ahead of the assembly polls, said he cannot tolerate such humiliation. “I had told Rahul Gandhi that I am feeling humiliated in the party, and then he said that he was also feeling humiliated. Then what is the value of my humiliation? I cannot tolerate such humiliation as I do not have so much capacity,” Borah told PTI-Video, recalling the conversation he had with the senior leader who had called him after he resigned.Asked about state Congress president Gaurav Gogoi’s allegation that he has taken Rs 50 crore from Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to join the BJP, Borah said that if offered the money, he would take it in front of the press. “My father had a dream of building a stadium, and had reserved 12 bighas of land for the purpose. I, however, could not fulfil his wish even when I was the MLA for two terms. He died in 2019,” he said. “This wish of my father is in my heart, but to build a state-of-the-art stadium, Rs



50 crore will not be enough. But I will accept it and start the work,” he added.On Sarma visiting his house a day after his resignation, Borah said that they had been in the Congress for 22 years and “I continued for another 10 years”. “Sarma is the most influential leader of the Northeast after the late PA Sangma, and when he called me to say that he would come to my house, I welcomed him,” he said.

“The CM said he had talked to his party’s central leaders and then invited me to join the BJP. I am not anywhere now after my resignation, and so agreed to join,” he added. Borah, who is set to join the BJP on

February 22, reiterated that he did not discuss any political issues with the CM during that day’s meeting. He alleged that Gogoi had broken the opposition alliance, which he had stitched together a few years back, as he feared that if the “opposition came to power in the state by chance, then he may not become the chief minister”. “When I was given the responsibility to take the alliance forward once again on February 9, then what was the point of including Dhubri MP Rakibul Hussain in the talks?” he asked “Gogoi perhaps felt that if the alliance takes place, then Bhupen Borah will do everything amicably and put it forth be-

fore Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, threatening his existence,” he claimed. Borah said the alliance will, however, take place with around 12 seats each going to the Rajjor Dal and Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP), one each to CPI(M), CPI and the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC), with the Congress contesting the rest.The 126-member assembly is expected to go to the polls in March-April.Vadra, the chairperson of the Congress screening committee for the upcoming assembly elections, arrived here earlier in the day on a two-day visit, during which she would hold a series of meetings to finalise the party’s list of candidates.Borah alleged that Nagaon MP Pradyut Bordoloi and the Leader of Opposition in the assembly, Debabrata Saikia, were also humiliated in the party, but now Gogoi will “try to heal their wounds”. “Now that Bhupen Borah is out and a pillar of the opposition is gone, Gogoi will try to keep the other pillars intact,” he said.

Borah said that when he took over as the state Congress president in 2021, the situation was very grim, with the party losing two consecutive assembly elections.

“It was then that I took the initiative to build an alliance of 16 opposition parties, both big and small,” he said.

Meghalaya govt to amend MRSSA, 2016 to address illegal immigration

Shillong, Feb 20: Chief Minister Conrad Sangma has assured the Meghalaya Assembly that the government will revisit and amend the Meghalaya Residents Safety and Security Act (MRSSA), 2016 to effectively address concerns over illegal immigration.

During a discussion on a Resolution moved by Leader of Opposition and Trinamool Congress (TMC) legislator Dr. Mukul Manda Sangma, the Chief Minister stated that the amendments would be carefully drafted to withstand judicial scrutiny and align with the Government of India and Parliament’s framework. Following this assurance, Dr. Mukul Sangma withdrew his Resolution, which had urged the government to expedite the establishment of facilitation centres at identified entry-exit points and implement regulatory measures mandated under MRSSA.

Conrad Sangma informed the House that the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had advised the state to re-examine the Act. He said the government is working closely with the Law Department, Advocate General, and Home Department to navigate the complexities of legal provisions. Plans are also underway to validate entry-exit points through the upcoming Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, incorporating restricted area provisions.

The Chief Minister emphasized inclusivity in the amendment process, stating that political parties and stakeholders would be engaged in discussions to strengthen the Act. He highlighted



ed that tackling illegal immigration requires not only regulatory measures but also long-term socio-economic solutions, noting that economic opportunities are a major driver of migration.

Dr. Mukul Sangma appreciated the government’s willingness to work collectively, expressing optimism about the discussion. He said the debate reflected a shared resolve and responsibility to address the issue of illegal immigration.

The Meghalaya government will revisit and

amend MRSSA, 2016, to ensure its legal robustness and effectiveness in curbing illegal immigration. The move follows advice from the MHA and collective discussions in the Assembly. The amendments will involve stakeholder consultation, validation of entry-exit points under new national laws, and consideration of socio-economic factors driving migration. Both the government and opposition expressed a united commitment to strengthening safeguards against illegal immigration.

Mizoram healthcare scheme crosses 11.54 lakh registrations

Aizawl, Feb 20: Over 11.54 lakh beneficiaries, including 2.22 lakh Golden Card holders, have been registered to avail cashless treatment under the Mizoram Universal Health Care Scheme (MUHCS), Health Minister Lalrinpuii informed the state assembly on Thursday.The MUHCS was launched in March last year by the Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM) government, headed by Chief Minister Lalduhoma.The scheme provides up to Rs 5 lakh in annual coverage for cashless treatment at government facilities, as well as empanelled private and church-run hospitals.The scheme, which became operational in April last year, has been converged with the Centre’s Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) scheme.Lalrinpuii said that Rs 154.37 crore has been generated so far in the 2025-26 fiscal through premium and contributions from general beneficiaries, government employees, civil pensioners, and state Grant-in Aid (GIA) and other sources.Additionally, Rs 48 crore is expected to be received for the implementation of the healthcare scheme, she said.

Out of Rs 154.37 crore, Rs 11.99 lakh came from monthly contribu-

tions by government employees, Rs 5.55 crore from civil pensioners and Rs 6.54 crore as enrollment fee from general beneficiaries, she said.“Out of the estimated 13-14 lakh state’s population, over 11.54 lakh individuals have registered as beneficiaries under the MUHCS in the current fiscal,” Lalrinpuii said, indicating the success of the scheme.According to officials, the beneficiaries included general families, pensioners, government employees, and those under the AB PM-JAY scheme(Golden card holders), together totalling 2.88 lakh families. “By effectively implementing the package rates and combining our expected funds to be received from our state budget, our projections for payments through March suggest that the government will save about Rs 100 crore during the current fiscal,” the minister said while responding to questions from ruling and opposition members.Under the scheme, general beneficiaries pay a minimum fee or premium of Rs 2,500 per financial year for cashless treatment in the general ward, Rs 5,000 in semi-private ward or semi-cabin and Rs 10,000 in private ward or cabin.Government employees, including contractual and



muster-roll, pay a monthly contribution ranging from Rs 200 to Rs 1,500, depending on their pay scales to avail unlimited health cover.She said that negotiations are on with the authorities of reputed private hospitals in Aizawl to implement the scheme in their hospitals.Mizoram has recently signed an agreement with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), securing a US Dollar 108 million (approximately Rs 800

cr) loan to strengthen public healthcare and enhance the implementation of MUHCS.Lalrinpuii said that the loan is strictly ring-fenced for the MUHCS corpus fund, ensuring that the interest earned will provide a substantial and sustainable financial cushion once the loan is fully drawn.She assured the Assembly that there is no reason to be alarmed regarding the implementation of MUHCS.

Your tears won’t be in vain Manipur Chief Minister



Imphal, Feb 20: Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Thursday assured the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) across government-run relief camps in the state that their “tears will not go in vain,” pledging to bridge trust deficits between communities. He disbursed Rs. 32.85 crore to nearly 19,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) across government-run relief camps in the state. The financial assistance was distributed through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) at the Alternate Housing Complex, National Games Village (NGV) Relief Camp in Imphal West district.

This marked the first time since the outbreak of ethnic violence in May 2023 that the Chief Minister interacted jointly with IDPs from both Meitei and Kuki communities. The state government organized a joint interaction programme covering relief camps in Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, and Imphal West. Singh met IDPs in person at Langol Alternate Housing Complex, while engaging with displaced persons from Churachandpur and Kangpokpi via video conference, accompanied by Kuki MLAs from those districts.

During the session, IDPs shared emotional testimonies of hardship endured over the past three years. A young Kuki girl from Kangpokpi appealed to the Chief Minister to treat her as his own daughter, citing difficulties in pursuing her post-graduation. A Meitei woman pleaded for permission to return to her home in Moreh border town, while another Kuki woman from Churachandpur highlighted challenges in accessing medical treatment.

Singh acknowledged healthcare difficulties in Kuki areas, noting that most doctors are from the Meitei community and advanced facilities are concentrated in Imphal. He recalled sending Meitei Pangal doctors to Churachandpur to treat MLA Vungzagin Valte, emphasizing the importance of overcoming barriers. He reiterated that Kuki tribals visiting Imphal for medical treatment would be provided fool-proof security, with new ambulances deployed to improve access.

Education challenges were also highlighted, with Singh noting that around 8,000 Kuki students had been affected by the conflict. While 2,000 managed to continue studies outside the state, 6,000 remain without solutions. He promised a special plan to support their education.

Financial relief measures announced included 2,420 per person for essential items, 1 lakh per family whose houses were fully burnt, 25,000 installments already released to 9,314 households, another 434 households awaiting release, and 20,000 additional assistance for 9,748 eligible families. Singh assured that those yet to receive benefits would also be supported.

The Chief Minister stressed that lasting peace in Manipur depends on mutual understanding among its 36 communities. He urged Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from both hills and valleys to work together for unity and normalcy. BJP MLAs will visit all 36 relief camps to directly engage with IDPs.

The outreach programme was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Nemcha Kipgen, MLAs Letzamang Haokip, LM Khaute, and Paolienlal Haokip (virtually), Cabinet Minister Khurajam Loken Singh, Deputy CM Losii Dikho, Chief Secretary Dr. Puneet Kumar Goel, Commissioner N. Ashok Kumar, senior officials, and public representatives. Singh listened patiently to grievances related to resettlement, pensions, education, and healthcare, reinforcing his government’s commitment to reconciliation and rebuilding trust.

The joint interaction between Manipur CM Khemchand Singh and IDPs from Meitei and Kuki communities marked a significant step toward reconciliation. Emotional exchanges underscored the hardships of displacement, while the government announced financial aid, healthcare assurances, and education plans. Singh’s emphasis on unity, dialogue, and mutual respect reflects a broader vision of peace rooted in inclusivity. His pledge to remove trust deficits and support IDPs signals renewed hope for healing and lasting peace in Manipur.

Drawing its final breaths: CRPF DG

Guwahati, Feb 20: Asserting that Naxalism is drawing its last breaths, CRPF Director General GP Singh on Thursday said the menace will be eradicated from the country by March as announced by Home Minister Amit Shah. Addressing the DG’s Parade of the force in Guwahati, he said decisive steps have been taken by the CRPF in joint operations with other security agencies against Naxalites in the last year.“In the operations against Naxals, we have achieved unprecedented success. Decisive steps have been taken in the joint operations with other security agencies,” he said, highlighting the role of the General Duty battalion and CoBRA Commandos of the CRPF in it.“Naxalism is drawing its last breaths. Through our joint operations, Naxalism is mostly over. It is on its way to be eradicated by March 2026, as announced by our Union Home minister,” Singh said. Mentioning the force’s role in Jammu and Kashmir, the DG said it is involved in joint operations against militants and commended the personnel for putting up camps in heavy snowfall areas and ensuring



security of those partsSingh also lauded the personnel deployed in the North East, especially in Manipur, with the force engaged in maintaining law and order in the region.“Our force has been able to win the trust of the people in the region as a neutral agency,” he said.The DG recalled the personnel martyred in the line of duty and affirmed the support of the CRPF for the families of the deceasedHe also dwelt on the measures being pursued by the force for the physical and mental well-being of the personnel and welfare of the families, including addressing healthcare needsSingh presented 61 medals, eight trophies and one citation on the occasion.

The best Forward Operating

Base among those established in Naxal-affected areas over the past year also received a citation from the Director General.The parade was commanded by Deepak Daundiyal, a commandant-level officer. The contingent commanders of the sectors were officers of the rank of assistant commandant.formations, demonstrations on traditional martial arts of the country and a showcase of modern operational equipment and capabilities, reflecting the Force’s preparedness to meet emerging security challenges, were performed during the DG’s Parade.A similar display will be put up during the Anniversary Parade also, theatres with trophies where the CRPF is deployed.

Industrial and Infrastructure Push in Barak Valley: Star Cement Unit Inaugurated, PM Modi’s March 14 Visit Announced

Guwahati, Feb 20: Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday (February 20) inaugurated Star Cement’s new unit at Bihara in Cachar district, describing the project as a major boost to industrial growth and employment generation in the Barak Valley.

The Chief Minister said the greenfield facility marks a significant step toward regional economic development and reflects Assam’s accelerating industrial progress. According to the Chief Minister’s Office, the cement plant has an annual production capacity of 2 million tonnes and is equipped with advanced German technology.

Notably, it is the first private cement plant in the Barak Valley with its own railway siding, a development expected to improve connectivity and streamline the transportation of raw materials and finished products. Officials termed it one of the largest industrial investments in the valley, likely to stimulate economic activity and create job opportunities for local youth.

Highlighting further infrastructure expansion, Sarma announced that Narendra Modi will visit the Barak Valley on March 14 to inaugurate the ₹22,000-crore expressway connecting Guwahati and Silchar. The new highway is expected to reduce travel time from over eight hours to just four-and-a-half hours.

Speaking to reporters in Silchar, Sarma said the



tender process has been completed, wildlife board clearance secured, and land acquisition is progressing smoothly. “The acquisition of land has also progressed well, and construction of roads will begin soon,” he stated.

During the visit, the Prime Minister will also inaugurate the long-awaited Silchar flyover, expected to enhance urban mobility ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections. Sarma further revealed that the proposed greenfield airport in Silchar has received environmental clearance. The project now awaits state cabinet approval, and efforts will

be made to begin the process by March, failing which it will proceed after the elections. He also indicated that BJP candidate announcements are likely after the Prime Minister’s trip.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister highlighted the transformation of Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati, stating that it has evolved into a world-class gateway within a few years. The upgraded terminal, inaugurated by Modi, will open to the public from February 22, marking another milestone in Assam’s infrastructure development.

Priyanka Gandhi visits Zubeen Kshetra in Guwahati



Guwahati, Feb 20: All India Congress Committee (AICC) General Secretary and Chairperson of the Screening Committee, Priyanka Gandhi, visited Zubeen Kshetra at Sonapur on the outskirts of Guwahati this morning. She was accompanied by Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) President Gaurav Gogoi. At Zubeen Kshetra, the senior Congress leader paid tribute to the beloved artiste the late Zubeen Garg.

Zubeen Kshetra is the final resting place of Zubeen Garg, which is being developed as a memorial.

■Priyanka Gandhi, General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee, visited Zubeen Kshetra in Sonapur, Guwahati, to pay tribute to the late artist Zubeen Garg at his memorial site.

Thereafter, she arrived at Rajiv Bhanu and held discussions with the three Working Presidents of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee. Subsequently, she exchanged views with the leaders of various committees and wings of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee.

BJP Invites Priyanka Gandhi to Visit Tea Garden Areas Slams Congress ‘Chargesheet 2026’

Guwahati, Feb 20: The Assam Pradesh BJP has invited Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi to visit tea garden lines across the state and walk along the newly constructed roads to witness development initiatives undertaken by the state government. The party urged her to visit tea garden schools, anganwadi centres, and model hospitals to experience the progress firsthand.

Addressing a press conference at the state BJP headquarters, Atal Bihari Vajpayee Bhanu, party spokesperson Jayanta Kumar Goswami criticised Priyanka Gandhi and strongly condemned the “Chargesheet 2026” released by the Assam Pradesh Congress against the state government.

Goswami said that by levelling 20 “baseless allegations” against the government, the Congress had exposed its “intellectual bankruptcy” and lack of connection with the socio-economic realities of Assam.

He further alleged that the Congress had once again demonstrated its “appeasement

politics” by opposing the eviction drives carried out by the government led by Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma in forest areas, VGR-PGR lands, Tribal Belts and Blocks, and other government lands. He termed the Congress’s claim that indigenous people were being evicted to hand over land to corporates as “completely false and misleading.”The BJP spokesperson also accused the Congress of being against the bright future of Assam’s youth. He claimed that the party does not want industries to grow in the state and is not supportive of young people finding employment within Assam.Referring to land rights for tea garden workers, Goswami said that the Congress, which failed to provide land pattas to tea workers even after 75 years of Independence, has no moral right to comment on their welfare. He asserted that the BJP government under Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma has granted land pattas to tea garden workers, ensuring their rightful ownership—something the Congress “could never achieve.”

Mizoram Assembly Passes Bill to Curb Unauthorized Occupation of Government and Public Lands Statewide

Aizawl, Feb 20: In a significant move to protect the state’s shrinking public spaces, the Mizoram assembly on Thursday passed a fresh bill seeking an overhaul of land administration with a more aggressive, robust legal framework aimed at curbing unauthorized occupation of both government and community-held assets. The Mizoram (Prevention of Public Land Encroachment) Bill, 2026, introduced by Land Revenue and Settlement Minister B. Lalchhanzova, seeks to replace the existing Mizoram Prevention of Government Land Encroachment Act, 2001, which has several flaws in protecting public lands and handling the state’s rapid urbanization. Lalchhanzova said that the existing act remained limited in both scope and en-



forceability, and the major flaw is its narrow definition of “government land,” which often left village council lands, community playgrounds, and grazing areas vulnerable to

private takeover without clear legal protection. The encroachment of such land does not just result in a loss of assets, but also sows seeds of conflict and disturbs

planned development,” he said. The Minister added that the existing act also lacked procedural safeguards, such as timelines for eviction, structured inquiry processes,

or opportunities for appeal. Penalties were not graded or aligned with the scale of encroachment, and there was no provision to deal with repeated encroachers or abatement of offences, he said. Lalchhanzova said that the new bill seeks to provide comprehensive definitions of public land, procedural clarity, graded penalties, and a structured adjudicatory mechanism to protect government and public lands. He explained that the bill seeks to classify community and village lands as “public land,” bringing them under statutory protection. It also seeks to expand the definition of protected land to include grazing areas and lands held by various government-backed bodies. The bill, when enacted, will prohibit unauthorized.

Mock drill at Mizoram’s Lunglei to test earthquake preparedness

Aizawl, Feb 20: A mock exercise on earthquake preparedness was conducted in Lunglei by the Lunglei District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Thursday in collaboration with the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to strengthen disaster preparedness and coordinated response.

The drill simulated earthquake damage in the Venglai area, including the flyover and nearby buildings. The exercise began after a simulated earthquake alert was received at the District Emergency Operation Centre, followed by the sounding of a disaster siren.

Rescue, evacuation, fire control, traffic management and



medical response were demonstrated. The Treasury Office was designated as the Staging Area, while a Relief Camp was set up at the PWD Office Complex. Civil Hospital Lunglei handled treatment of the injured.

Officials from various departments, along with NDRF, SDRF, Police, Fire & Emergency Services, BSF, Assam

Rifles, YMA volunteers and Aapda Mitra participants, took part in the exercise.

DDMA Chief Executive Officer Rochuangkimi Khenglawt expressed appreciation to all departments, response forces, volunteers and the people of Lunglei for their cooperation and collective effort in making the mock exercise a grand success.

LGBI Airport’s new terminal to begin operations from Feb 22: CM

Guwahati, Feb 20: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma today said the new terminal of the Guwahati airport will commence operations from February 22.Prime Minister Narendra Modi had inaugurated the new terminal of the Lokpriya Gopinath Bardoloi International Airport (LGBIA) on December 20.“From an open space to a world-class gateway in just a few years. This transformation reflects a clear vision for a more connected and confident Assam,” Sarma said in a post on X. Domestic and international flights are likely to operate from the new terminal by March, while the old terminal will be converted into a cargo hub, an official said. The Rs 4,000-crore Integrated Terminal-2 Building is designed to handle 13.1 million passengers per year, he said.

Amit Shah launches the Rs 6,839 crore Vibrant Villages Programme–II in Assam

Guwahati, Feb 20: Union Home Minister Amit Shah, today launched Vibrant Villages Programme–II (VVP–II), at a cost of Rs 6,839 crore, in Nathanpur village of Assam’s Cachar district.

On this occasion, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the Union Home Secretary and several other dignitaries were present.

In his address, Shah stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken an initiative and made an effort to provide similar facilities in all villages of the Barak Valley and the border districts of Assam, like other villages across India, through the Vibrant Villages- II programme being launched today.

He said that there was a time when border villages were referred to as the “last village” of the country because they lagged behind in development, employment, electricity connectivity, and education. Shah said that under Vibrant Villages-I, Prime Minister Narendra Modi decided that every village on the border is not the last but the first village of India. The Home Minister said that from today, this village in Assam will also become the first village of the country. He said that this village will not only lead in terms of development but also in areas of employment, education, roads and telecommunications.

Amit Shah said that under Vibrant Villages Programme–II, nearly Rs 6,900 crore is being spent which includes 1,954 villages across 334 blocks in 17 states, including 9 districts, 26 blocks, and 140 villages in Assam. He said that all basic facilities, similar to those available in any other village in India, will be provided to these 140 villages in Assam.

He said that the programme also includes villages in Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Shah said that a programme worth approximately Rs 7,000 crore for the development of about 2,000 villages across 334 blocks adjoining the international border is being launched from today. He said that the programme includes several schemes related to security, saturation of welfare schemes and connectivity.

Amit Shah said that previous governments ruled Assam for years but did nothing for the state’s development. He said that in the past 10 years of our government’s regime, we achieved that earlier governments could not accomplish even in 50 years. He said that over the last five years, an average of 14 kilometers of roads have been constructed per day in Assam, the highest in the country. He said that over 24,000 kilometers of roads have been up-



graded, hundreds to thousands of bridges have been constructed, and four major new bridges have been dedicated to the people of Assam in the past decade by the ‘double-engine’ government.

The Union Home Minister said that when the BJP came to power in Assam, multi-dimensional poverty in the state stood at 37 percent, which has been reduced to 14 percent in 2023. He said that Assam’s per capita income, which was Rs 49,000 in 2013–14, has nearly tripled to Rs 1,54,000 in 2024–25. Shah said that this transformation has been possible due to increased self-confidence among the people, good governance, and peace in the state. He said that the government led by Himanta Biswa Sarma in Assam has also put an end to the bomb blasts and insurgency.

He said that under the leadership of Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam has emerged as the healthcare hub of the entire Northeast. He also said that a semiconductor plant worth Rs 27,000 crore is being established in the state. He added that the Modi government has allocated Rs 30,000 crore for development of roads, Rs 95,000 crore for railways, and Rs 10,000 crore for airports in Assam. He said that a lucrative industrial policy has also been brought to accelerate Assam’s growth.

The Union Home Minister said that in the coming years, Assam will be amongst the developed states of the country, and the Vibrant Villages Programme–II is a crucial component of this vision. He said that the government is committed to ensuring that every border village is developed at par with other villages in the country, there is no migration from border areas, infiltrators are prevented from entering through the borders, and a secure Assam contributes to a secure India. Shah said that the launch of Vibrant Villages Programme–II from the Barak Valley marks the beginning of extending development to border villages across 17 states.

Creative talk series launched at Assam Royal Global University

Guwahati, Feb 20: The Department of Physics at The Assam Royal Global University (RGU) has taken a significant initiative to launch a Creative Talk Series featuring Prof. Amarjyoti Choudhury, Chair, Dr Bhupen Hazarika Centre for Creativity, as the distinguished orator.

The first talk of the series has been delivered on “The Wonders of the Quantum World” at the RGU campus on Friday.

About 130 students from various colleges across Guwahati, including B. Borooah College, Pragjyotish College, Handique Girls’ College, and Arya Vidyapeeth College attended the programme, apart from other participants.

Prof. Choudhury delivered an insightful and engaging exposition on the foundational and theoretical aspects of



Quantum Theory and Quantum Mechanics.

Explaining complex ideas in simple and accessible language, he traced the historical development of quantum mechanics from its emergence

nearly a century ago to its present-day technological implications.

He elaborated on the revolutionary ideas that challenged classical intuition and demonstrated how quantum princi-

ples now underpin modern advancements in electronics, communication, computation, and materials science.

Prof. Aniruddha Chatterjee, Dean, Royal School of Applied and Pure Sciences stated that the central aim of this initiative is to ignite curiosity, promote creative thinking, and cultivate deeper intellectual engagement among students beyond the boundaries of their prescribed curriculum. “The large turnout reflected the growing interest among students in understanding the fascinating and often non-intuitive principles of the quantum world”, he added. The session concluded with an interactive question-and-answer segment, where students actively engaged with the speaker, raising thoughtful questions and seeking clarifications.

Doctors Say High Blood Pressure Can Hasten Cognitive Decline: Here Are 4 Strategies to Fight Both



It’s true that your body has several systems, including the neurological and circulatory systems. However, there isn’t a clear distinction between them. The more we understand about the body, the more we see how intricately linked and cooperative all of our cells are. Stress and anxiety levels are linked to gut health, our diet can affect the color of our hair, COVID-19 may affect our long-term cognitive function, and much more. The mind and the heart are two systems that are very in sync, whether it be for the better or worse. As previously discussed, the risk factors for Alzheimer’s disease are similar to those for heart disease, with the addition of a few additional social and cognitive elements. Therefore, it makes sense that recent study in the journal Hypertension has verified that, even if blood pressure rise only happens early or late in life, it might accelerate memory loss and other types of cognitive decline in middle-aged individuals and seniors. “There is a close relationship between brain and heart health. According to David Amstel, M.D., a cardiologist at Westmed Medical Group in Yonkers, New York, “any condition that impairs cardiovascular health will have negative impacts on the function of our other organs because an

estimated 25% of the blood pumped out of the heart flows through the brain.” According to the American Heart Association, hypertension—defined as blood pressure more than 130/80 mm Hg—is especially harmful to brain function and is linked to strokes and several types of dementia, according to Amstel.Cognitive, cognitive, and memory problems are also associated with high blood pressure. According to recent evidence, this impact is true regardless of the duration of a patient’s hypertension or the age at which it first manifests, he adds. According to Michael Silver, M.D., a cardiologist and internal medicine specialist at Westmed Medical Group in White Plains, New York, our blood pressure range is essential to the proper operation of our entire body. The blood vessel walls are put under higher stress when blood pressure is high. According to Silver, this results in thicker blood vessel walls and encourages cholesterol to enter the walls, which restricts blood flow to these organs. “For the heart and brain to function properly, there must be a sufficient flow of blood to supply them with nourishment and oxygen. Inappropriate function or, in extreme cases, the death of certain heart and brain regions (referred to as a heart attack or stroke, re-

spectively) can result from reduced blood supply. The crazy thing is that some of these strokes that damage our brains might be so mild that we may not even be aware they are occurring. One significant risk factor for “silent strokes,” which might result in cognitive deterioration, is hypertension. Depending on the area of the brain experiencing the stroke, different parts regulate memory, speech, and movement. “Many of these strokes may be sub-clinical, but if they happen frequently, these ‘mini’ or ‘silent’ strokes can be severe,” says Salim S. Virani, M.D., Ph.D., a cardiologist professor at Houston’s Baylor College of Medicine. According to the most recent data from

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 45% to 50% of individuals in the US have been diagnosed with hypertension, making it one of the most prevalent medical diseases. Obesity, a sedentary lifestyle, smoking, bad eating habits, excessive alcohol use, and stress are just a few of the numerous factors. Race, age, and family history are also significant factors, according to Amstel. According to Silver, physicians name “idiopathic,” or “no known cause,” as the reason for hypertension in 95% of patients. Causes including kidney illness, benign adrenal gland tumors, vascular disease, sleep apnea, and thyroid disease may account for the remaining

5%. According to Amstel, “Patients should take active roles in their health care to prevent hypertension.” This is good news if you are one of the two Americans with high blood pressure, had a borderline high reading at your most recent physical, or have a family history of hypertension.According to the experts, there’s no incorrect reason to attempt changing to healthy living habits, regardless of whether you want to take control for your heart health alone or are also concerned about your risk of dementia. “Since elevated blood pressure causes no ‘symptoms’—it is a silent disease and can change over time—regular trips to the doctor for evaluation are important,” Silver says.For a physical and blood pressure check, see your primary care physician at least once a year.

“Once you try these lifestyle changes to potentially lower blood pressure naturally, blood pressure medication will almost always be a plan B,” Virani continues. The World Health Organization and American Heart Association suggest 150 minutes of moderate physical activity or 75 minutes of intense physical activity each week. However, Virani advises against becoming scared if you are unable to accomplish that goal immediately. Being physically active can significantly reduce blood pressure. Any amount of time spent exercising is preferable to none at all. There are still some advantages for those who begin as inactive and increase their level of exercise beyond zero. Reducing alcohol consumption to one drink for women and two for men per day (or fewer) can be a simple solution.



Three Drinks for Blood Pressure Reduction



You are already aware of the standard recommendations for lowering blood pressure: limit salty meals and avoid sugar-sweetened beverages, which might increase your risk of weight gain and hypertension.However, cutting out isn’t the only way to reduce blood pressure. It also depends what you choose to drink. Here are three drinks that have supporting data, along with one to stay away from. When you combine them with a diet high in nutrients and frequent exercise, you’ll be setting yourself up for improved blood pressure. Raise your milk glass. It is enriched with vitamin D, a vitamin that supports healthy blood pressure, and has high levels of calcium, potassium, and phosphorus—three minerals linked to good blood pressure. Consuming more dairy products, whether full-fat or low-fat, did not increase blood pressure, according to a systematic analysis that included 19 randomized studies.1 Low-fat dairy products were associated with slight drops in systolic blood pressure in certain studies. Although the data wasn’t overwhelming, it does support the idea that dairy products may be included in a heart-healthy diet. Higher dairy consumption was linked to considerably lower systolic blood pressure in another research of young women; the difference was around 6 points for each additional serving of dairy per day.2 The study supports the notion that dairy may be a component of a heart-healthy habit, but it is unable to show cause and effect because it was observational. Anthocyanins and other antioxidants found in hibiscus tea have been shown in studies to assist blood arteries withstand damage that may lead them to constrict.

3.One study that included individuals in the early stages of hypertension suggested that drinking hibiscus tea might help decrease blood pressure.4. Compared to the control group, which did not drink the tea, participants in the intervention group who drank two cups of hibiscus tea every morning for a month experienced a significant drop in blood pressure (both groups were advised on blood pressure reduction lifestyle and dietary changes, as well). Higher hibiscus consumption was associated with lower systolic and diastolic blood pressure, according to a review research, and the impact tended to increase with higher dosages or longer use.5. Overall, the data points to hibiscus as a potential addition to a blood pressure-friendly

practice, however the outcomes differed according on the dose, the type (tea vs extract), and the person’s initial blood pressure. It’s time to introduce yourself to this delightful ruby-red fruit if you’re concerned about your blood pressure. Pomegranate juice, which is high in potassium and other heart-healthy minerals, has up to three times the antioxidant activity of green tea, according to lab testing.6. Additionally, a review research discovered that individuals with Type 2 diabetes who drank 6 ounces of pomegranate juice every day for six weeks saw a substantial drop in blood pressure when compared to those who did not.7. Pomegranate juice has been shown in another assessment of clinical studies to have a mildly lowering effect on blood pressure. According to the research, systolic BP decreased by an average of roughly 5 points in those who drank up to 300 mL (10 ounces) each day.

8. Although it isn’t a panacea, it is a good, scientifically supported choice to incorporate into a heart-healthy regimen. Alcohol use and elevated blood pressure are clearly linked, according to research. According to a study, alcohol can raise blood pressure through a number of bodily routes, particularly when consumption exceeds minimal thresholds.9. The study’s authors also pointed out that chronic excessive drinking might exacerbate organ damage associated with hypertension.Similar findings were made by a comprehensive evaluation of 23 cohort studies, which showed that the risk of hypertension rose nearly linearly with increasing alcohol use.10. Higher systolic and diastolic readings have been associated with even mild to moderate drinking. Reducing or abstaining from alcohol can help improve blood pressure management. The goal of lowering blood pressure is to develop long-term behaviors that support your heart and blood vessels, not to look for short-term solutions. Drinks like pomegranate juice, hibiscus tea, and low-fat milk can be beneficial, but they function best when combined with other healthy habits like eating more whole foods, exercising, getting enough sleep, and managing stress.Even though many people’s routines involve alcohol, it is evident from the data that cutting back on alcohol use is one of the easiest methods to improve your numbers. Little decisions made every day add up, and the more often you make them, the better your blood pressure will be.

Thirty Crucial Signs That Could Point to a Heart Attack



Heart disease can be a major burden. Most people think they just appear out of nowhere, without any warning signals from the body. However, it is very important to recognize these signals, not only to protect your own health, but also to save the lives of those around you. If you recognize any of the following symptoms, be sure to visit your doctor for more information. The most important thing is not to simply look away from these signs, as this could save several lives Heart illness may cause a lot of hardship. The majority of individuals believe they merely show up without any prior warning signs from the body. To save the lives of those around you as well as to save your own health, it is crucial to understand these warning signs. Make sure to see your doctor for further information if you identify any of the following symptoms. The most crucial thing is to pay attention to these warning indi-

cators since doing so might save many lives. Physical weakness is the definition of fatigue. It is a condition when the body has a strong desire to sleep but also lacks vitality and strength. It usually occurs after a demanding, long day, but if you feel exhausted for no apparent reason, literally keep your eyes open. Fatigue and unwarranted fatigue might be indicators of cardiac arrest. Therefore, it is likely that your heart’s blood supply has decreased if you are unable to do daily tasks. These are quite typical symptoms that also lead to excessive sleep. You should speak with your doctor to determine what is causing your weariness and what steps should be taken if this issue persists for an extended period of time. Naturally, it’s also possible that this exhaustion is an indication of another severe sickness. Do you faint occasionally? Do you faint a lot? This may very well be a heart disease warning sign.Since heart

disease typically starts with a drop in blood pressure, which leads to a shortage of oxygen in the blood, this might be one of the causes. Most patients who suffer from bradycardia and tachycardia report that they first fainted. Therefore, they highly encourage you to contact a doctor if anyone close to you reports fainting or passing out!Numerous factors, including severe physical exertion, discomfort, and dehydration, can induce unconsciousness. Fainting is caused by a shortage of blood in the brain.Although there are therapies that can help with these symptoms, it’s still crucial to frequently check weight fluctuations and see a physician. A visible, fast weight gain is never healthy and might lead to additional health issues.Perhaps your heart is attempting to communicate with you. The buildup of fluids, which can cause bloating, swelling, and eventually significant weight gain, is one potential

sign of heart disease. Naturally, this is not a cause for concern, as anybody can have these symptoms. However, these symptoms are frequently disregarded since they are thought to be digestive issues. It could possibly indicate pregnancy, but it’s better to see a doctor to be sure.Each of them may also indicate cardiac issues. See a doctor if these symptoms occur out of the blue.For most people, a beating heart is not a serious problem. It might be brought on by excitement or adrenaline.An arrhythmia, which is indicated by an abnormal cardiac rhythm, should be treated to restore healthy heartbeat and blood flow to the body. Additionally, arrhythmias can raise the chance of stroke. However, if the heart skips a few beats on a regular basis, you should see a doctor right once.Have you had a persistent cough that you can’t really explain? This cough can be a sign of heart disease.Therefore, it is crucial to pay attention to the

cough’s color since a pink or white cough may be a sign of potential heart problems. Lying down at night generally makes my cough worse. You should consult a physician right away because this might possibly be an indication of heart problems. A cough may result from the heart’s inability to pump enough blood to the body, which can then infiltrate the lungs. Your heart may be sending you a warning signal if you have cold sweats without exerting yourself or exercising.You should go to the hospital right once if you have these symptoms in addition to others. Furthermore, it’s critical to understand that, among other things, stress, drugs, neurological disorders, infections, and cancer can all contribute to cold sweats. Sweating is how you normally control your body temperature. However, heavy perspiration causes the heart to attempt to pump through constricted arteries, making it difficult to flush the entire body.

Can Nifty hold 25,600 amid



Mumbai: Volatility spiked in Thursday’s trade to a two-week high amid nervousness about ongoing geopolitical developments. The apprehension is high after US President Donald Trump warned Iran that it must reach a deal over its nuclear program or “bad things” will happen.” Experts see 25,600 as the key resistance zone. Siddhartha Khemka, Head of Research of Wealth Management at Motilal Oswal Financial Services, expects markets to remain cautious in the near term, given escalating geopolitical risks and the possibility of oil supply disruptions. Any escalation involving Iran could impact shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, which would be particularly negative for India given its heavy dependence on crude imports from the region.Nifty key levels to watch

The Nifty has slipped to early 2026 lows, and market experts see 25,300 as the next important support zone for the benchmark index. According to them, the Nifty’s resistance is in a range of 25,600-25,700, which coincides with the 50-day moving average (DMA) and continues to act as a key line of defence for the bulls. Shrikant Chouhan, Head Equity Research, Kotak Securities, “A strong reversal formation and a long bearish candle on the daily charts indicate further weakness from the current levels. We are of the view that, as long as the market trades below the 20-day SMA (Simple Moving Average) or 25,500, the weak sentiment is likely to continue. On the downside, the market could retest the level of 25,300. Further downside may also continue, which could drag the index to 25,200.”The bearish engulfing candlestick formed thereof has effectively ended the uptrend that has been on in the last few days. That said, the steepness of the fall may allow a recovery move, ideally towards 25580. Alternate scenario sees Nifty consolidating inside the 25450-180 region, with low likelihood of a further collapse today,” said Anand James, Chief Market Strategist at Geojit InvestmentsOn the flip side, above 25,500, the pullback move could extend to 25,600-25,650. The current market texture is volatile; hence, level-based trading would be the ideal strategy for day traders. The 25,600–25,700 zone has now transitioned into a critical demand pocket. This region also aligns with the 0.618 Fibonacci retracement level and key moving averages, creating a strong confluence zone and an important inflection point for the index. “From a technical perspective, the index appears to be in a continuation phase, though the formation of a doji candlestick reflects limited directional movement. Despite this, the broader price structure points toward a gradual improvement in bullish momentum, with corrective declines being consistently absorbed,” added Dhupesh Dhameja, Derivatives Research Analyst at SAMCO Securities.However, a strong jump above 26,000 could accelerate buying interest, while any corrective dips toward the 25,600–25,700 range are likely to be viewed as opportunities to accumulate.Further, the GIFT Nifty turned green an hour before the start of Friday’s trade.Volatility Index shoots 10% in 1 day

On Thursday, India VIX jumped 10.12% to close at 13.46, highlighting rising uncertainty and nervous sentiment among market participants. Most experts believe that unless the Nifty sees a sustained movement above the immediate resistance zone of 25,600, stabilisation of market sentiment is unlikely. They pointed out that the momentum indicators are mildly bearish, with RSI around 46 and tilting downward, reflecting weakening strength. Overall, the bias remains negative to range-bound, with consolidation possible near the slope support zone.

Goldman India earnings growth

Mumbai: Key areas of opportunity include AI infrastructure, lithium-ion battery manufacturing for EVs, innovative pharmaceuticals, and robotics, where China has become one of the most automated countries in the world. China contributes 30% of global manufacturing output.“Domestically, although challenges from the real estate sector and consumer confidence persist, we believe their impact on overall growth is diminishing,” said the report. case for active managementThe report emphasised that EM markets are often under-researched and have high-return dispersion, which creates significant alpha potential for active managers. Giving the example of India, Goldman Sachs pointed out that the country’s active managers have consistently outperformed benchmarks

across various timeframes by employing flexible, all-cap strategies“We believe a continuation of supportive financial conditions will bolster EM economies over the coming quarters. Support stems from the potential for softer headline inflation across EMs, aided by lower oil prices, which benefits EM net oil importers,” the report saidAI as key technology driver There are a lot of factors contributing to that, like supportive government policies, booming domestic consumption, and narrowed valuation premiums. above the 10% and identify attractive opportunities,” the global broker said.Passive strategies may miss information blind spots, whereas active, on-the-ground expertise allows for better navigation of market inefficiencies and complex landscapes.

NPCI flags rising cyber frauds targeting seniors, urges caution in digital payments

Aizawl: National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has stepped up its digital safety awareness campaign to protect senior citizens as digital payment adoption rises among the elderly. The umbrella body flagged growing instances of cyber frauds such as digital arrest scams, fake investment schemes, phishing and vishing attempts, tech support frauds, and fraudulent refund links.

NPCI said in digital arrest scams, fraudsters pose as law enforcement officials, threaten arrest on fabricated charges and demand money or personal details. In investment frauds, scammers impersonate financial experts and use fake endorsements of reputed organisations to promise extraordinary re-



turns. Phishing and vishing attempts involve fake emails, messages or calls seeking OTPs and login credentials. Tech support scams trick seniors into installing remote access apps, while fraudulent refund links redirect

victims to fake pages that steal payment data.

The corporation advised seniors never to share UPI PINs, OTPs, passwords or bank details, and to avoid clicking unknown links or installing apps from callers. It urged ver-

ification of firms through SEBI and RBI websites, checking HTTPS domains, and resisting urgency around KYC, SIM blocking or pension suspension messages. Suspected frauds should be reported to the cybercrime helpline 1930, the Department of Telecommunications portal, and banks immediately. In Aizawl, where UPI-based transactions are rapidly expanding across retail outlets and neighbourhood stores, bankers and traders say senior citizen awareness is critical. With digital payments driving daily commerce, stronger verification habits and prompt reporting can help safeguard savings while sustaining consumer confidence in the city’s growing cashless ecosystem.

Can Nifty hold 25,600 amid rising tension: Analysts list out

Mumbai: Volatility spiked in Thursday’s trade to a two-week high amid nervousness about ongoing geopolitical developments. The apprehension is high after US President Donald Trump warned Iran that it must reach a deal over its nuclear program or “bad things” will happen.” Experts see 25,600 as the key resistance zone.

Siddhartha Khemka, Head of Research of Wealth Management at Motilal Oswal Financial Services, expects markets to remain cautious in the near term, given escalating geopolitical risks and the possibility of oil supply disruptions. Any escalation involving Iran could impact shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, which would be particularly negative for India given its heavy dependence on crude imports from the region.Nifty key levels to watch

The Nifty has slipped to early 2026 lows, and market experts see 25,300 as the next important support zone for the benchmark

index. According to them, the Nifty’s resistance is in a range of 25,600-25,700, which coincides with the 50-day moving average (DMA) and continues to act as a key line of defence for the bulls. Shrikant Chouhan, Head Equity Research, Kotak Securities, “A strong reversal formation and a long bearish candle on the daily charts indicate further weakness from the current levels. We are of the view that, as long as the market trades below the 20-day SMA (Simple Moving Average) or 25,500, the weak sentiment is likely to continue. On the downside, the market could retest the level of 25,300. Further downside may also continue, which could drag the index to 25,200.”The bearish engulfing candlestick formed thereof has effectively ended the uptrend that has been on in the last few days. That said, the steepness of the fall may allow a recovery move, ideally towards 25580. Alternate scenario sees Nifty consolidating inside the 25450-180 region, with low likelihood

of a further collapse today,” said Anand James, Chief Market Strategist at Geojit Investments.

On the flip side, above 25,500, the pullback move could extend to 25,600-25,650. The current market texture is volatile; hence, level-based trading would be the ideal strategy for day traders. The 25,600–25,700 zone has now transitioned into a critical demand pocket. This region also aligns with the 0.618 Fibonacci retracement level and key moving averages, creating a strong confluence zone and an important inflection point for the index. “From a technical perspective, However, a strong jump above 26,000 could accelerate buying interest, while any corrective dips toward the 25,600–25,700 range are likely to be viewed as opportunities to accumulate.Further, the GIFT Nifty turned green an hour before the start of Friday’s trade.Volatility Index shoots 10% in 1 day

Nissan launches GRAVITE MPV at Rs 5.65 lakh, signals fresh push in India’s mass mobility segment

Kohima: Nissan Motor India has launched the all-new GRAVITE MPV at an introductory price of ₹5.65 lakh (ex-showroom), marking the first product under the company’s renewed product offensive and a key step in its India growth strategy. Manufactured locally at Nissan’s Chennai facility, the seven-seater MPV is positioned as a value-driven family mobil-

ity solution tailored to evolving Indian consumer needs.

The GRAVITE features flexible seating configurations for two to seven occupants, luggage capacity of up to 625 litres, and more than 30 standard safety features including six airbags, Electronic Stability Control, Traction Control, Hill-Start Assist and Brake Assist. Powered by a 1.0-litre petrol engine paired

with manual and AMT transmission options, the vehicle offers fuel efficiency of up to 19.6 km/l. It is available in five colour options along with a limited launch edition featuring premium accessories and technology enhancements. Nissan is also expanding its dealer network across Tier I and Tier II cities to improve accessibility and customer reach.

Nifty near 25,600, Sensex rises 380 points; IT Index, Infosys down over 1%

Mumbai: Markets at 11 AM: The domestic equity indices shrugged off early jitters to trade in the green. The Nifty 50 rose 134 points or 0.52% to trade at 25,588, while the BSE Sensex surged 378 points or 0.46% to trade at 82,876.Markets today at open: Indian equity indices opened Friday’s trade on a lower note amid rising US-Iran tension. The Nifty 50 opened 65 points or 0.25% lower at 25,390, while the BSE Sensex dropped 265 points or

0.32% to open at 82,232.

“Following a brief pause, the Nifty index has resumed its decline toward the gap zone created during the February 3 rally. We expect this downward momentum to continue, with the index likely testing the 25,000 spot level in the near term. We suggest traders maintain a ‘sell on rise’ approach as long as the Nifty remains below the 25,800 spot level on a closing basis,” said Vipin Kumar, Assistant Vice President of

Technical Research at Globe Capital. Markets ahead of opening: The global markets are trading on a lower note due to renewed geopolitical tensions. The GIFT Nifty fell 37 points or 0.15% to trade at 25,367. Here are domestic as well as other key global cues to watch before the market opens that include Gold, Silver, crude oil prices, FII and DII data, business groups that most affect, sectoral performance, etc. The US markets closed Thursday’s trade

on a lower note, as investors sold off financials and monitored rising tensions between the US and Iran. The Asian indices were trading mainly on a lower note on Friday morning following a fall on Wall Street overnight. Japan’s Nikkei 225 was down 1.04%, Kospi bucked the trend to rise 0.66%, but the small-cap Kosdaq fell 0.19%. Mainland China and Hong Kong markets remained closed for the Lunar New Year holiday.

This enormous eyewear firm has a 27% upside potential and is a “buy”

New Delhi: Lenskart is in focus today. The share price of Lenskart is up over 2% after leading domestic brokerage house, Motilal Oswal initiated coverage with a ‘Buy’ rating. Lenskart is India’s largest vertically integrated eyewear platform, addressing a structurally underpenetrated eyewear category in India. Motilal Oswal believes the superior valuation multiples are justifiable, “given Lenskart’s superior growth profile, limited organised competition and long growth runway.”Motilal Oswal has initiated coverage with a ‘Buy’ rating. They have set a target of Rs 600 per share. This implies nearly 27% upside from current levels. As per the estimates by the brokerage house, they see a DCF-implied valuation of 55x FY28 earnings. Though they pointed out this is “at a premium to other leading retailers,” they are betting on the growth potential. All in all, Motilal Oswal sees the size of the eyewear retail market that is still not penetrated as the bigger driver of growth. According to them, this sets up the company on a longer growth runway going forward

Motilal on Lenskart: What’s driving the bullish recommendation

Motilal Oswal lists out several factors that they believe are driving the bullish recommendation. Here is a detailed analysis of their investment rationale – The big value drivers for Lenskart

According to Motilal Oswal, Lenskart’s “central manufacturing-led architecture, superior store economics, technology-led expansion, and house-of-brands strategy create durable moats in an under-penetrated industry.” As per their estimates, Lenskart trades at “18% premium to other large retailers in India, though we believe the multiples are justifiable, given its superior growth profile, limited organised competition in the eyewear category and long growth runway.” The brokerage house projected that Lenskart trades at 0.8x FY28 EV/EBITDA. According to them, this is low-



er than the 1.1-3x valuation for leading fashion and grocery retailers and 1.1x for Nykaa. Lenskart’s “automated centralised just-in-time manufacturing, which replaces the fragmented, store-level lens cutting, allows the company to deliver micron-level precision at scale at lower costs and faster fulfilment timelines,” the Motilal Oswal report highlighted. Gaudium IVF IPO opens today: From GMP, issue size to price band, 5 ‘must know’ details

They believe that the “company’s rising focus on vertical integration into the manufacturing of lenses and frames allows it to launch new designs frequently and at 5-40% lower costs compared to third-party procurement by eliminating huge retail mark-ups.” Additionally, Lenskart’s investment in the upcoming Hyderabad facility to extend its

manufacturing capabilities to future-proof the business is expected to help tackle the “large latent demand and improve turnaround times.”Key risks and concerns

Motilal Oswal, however, did not rule out the key risk factors. They believe that dependence on China for the import of raw materials is a key risk for Lenskart. High concentration of manufacturing operations in North India is another matter of concern, and the overseas subsidiaries that are loss-making are expected to weigh on profitability. Shortage of trained optometrists is another factor to watch out for. Their analysis pointed out that “centralised manufacturing and vertical integration also position the company to drive margin expansion while maintaining complete control on product quality.”Though repeat purchases are not that frequent in the eyewear industry, Motilal Oswal believes that significantly lower organised competition supports their valuation call. This “could enable stronger growth runway, margin expansion and superior FCF generation,” Motilal Oswal added. Large addressable markets offer potential

The other important factor that Motilal Oswal highlighted is the size of the total addressable market. They believe that the total addressable market for Lenskart “in its existing geographies exceeds Rs 2.3 trillion, with its market share at 5% in India and less than 2% in international markets, providing a large growth runway.” India’s overall eyewear market is significantly underpenetrated, with a very low organised retail share in eyewear. The share of organised retail is just 24% and only 35% prescription eyeglasses. penetration is seen as of now. This “massive under-penetration reflects structural gaps such as significant customisation needs to manufacture eyewear for each individual, import dependence, low awareness, limited access to optical stores, shortage of trained optometrists, lack of affordability, and standardised service delivery,” as per Motilal Oswal.

Cecil: Lion Dentist review inside horrific big cat killing that outraged world

Garmany:There are a lot of unanswered – possibly unanswerable – questions in the air at the moment. Questions such as what prompts a husband to drug his wife and, for a decade, invite strange men over to his house to rape her while she lies unconscious in the marital bed? Or: what kind of a person do you have to be to hang around with a convicted child sexual offender and billionaire who is exercising his perversions in plain sight, even if you are not yourself fully involved with said perversions? Or: if a year into a presidency you already have citizens being killed in the street by uniformed thugs barely a notch above a militia, what happens next?

It’s almost a relief to have to turn away and consider for a moment an older, slightly smaller question; namely, what makes someone want to kill an animal for sport? Not for food, not in defence of a home or family or livestock, just for fun. Just to be able to say they did it and take a picture with the corpse to prove it.It becomes even more unfathomable (although yes, of course, the principle remains the same) when the way to killing has to be paved by guides and other hunters – because you don’t even have the skills to find and stalk animals yourself. Added to that is the fact that as a hunter aims higher and higher up the food chain, the more rare and precious the beasts become.So, then, to Cecil: The Lion and the Dentist, which focuses on the killing in 2015 of a lion from Hwange National park in Zimbabwe by an American trophy hunter called Dr Walter Palmer. The documentary uses it as a prism through which to examine the interdependence of native Zimbabweans, the hunting and safari industry catering largely for rich, white tourists, and the national parks which seek to protect African wildlife while being forced to sacrifice some of it to the national economy.Elephants come to drink at the swimming pool of a safari lodge, Hwange national park, Zimbabwe

Africa’s great elephant divide: countries struggle with too many elephants – or too few
Read more
Cecil had become famous for be-



ing – even for a lion – phenomenally majestic and beautiful. He was huge, the head of two prides, and was still a force to be reckoned with at the advanced age of 12. He was one of the animals being tracked by a team from Oxford University that was studying the animals in Hwange in part so that sustainable annual quotas for hunters could be decided. In June 2015, one of the team’s leaders noticed that data from Cecil’s collar was no longer being recorded. A few days later, they found his skinned and headless body. Piecing together the story from local guides, it appeared that Cecil had crossed the park boundary into a hunting area and been shot by Palmer, who had been brought out there by local professional hunter Theo Bronkhurst. Between the killing and the body’s discovery, Palmer had returned to the US.

There was no quota for lion hunting in the area that year. Too many had been killed too young the year

before and the population needed to recover. Palmer claimed he was reliant on local knowledge, and Bronkhurst was arrested, but charges against him and the owner of the land on which Cecil was killed were eventually dismissed. The world’s media got hold of the story, however, and there was widespread outrage about the animal’s death and the perceived guilt of Palmer.The film retells this aspect of the tale clearly. But when it tries to look at the bigger picture, it becomes frustratingly fragmented and superficial. It mentions the original displacement in 1928 of the ancestral tribes, who hunted but lived in balance with the local flora and fauna, to facilitate the establishment of Hwange national park, but doesn’t explain the reasons – and there must have been reasons, good or bad – behind it. It touches on the lack of transparency about how the money raised from hunting is distributed: some is supposed to go to nearby communities

whenever an animal is “taken”, but it rarely does, which makes you wonder why this should be, whose fault it is and where any potential corruption lies.

There is no interrogation of whether there are animal populations that genuinely need to be controlled and thus whether it would be foolish to look a lucrative gift carcass in the mouth. Are westerners too sentimental about animals (and should the unhinged nature of some of the protesters outside Palmer’s office affect our opinion of his actions).

Or are those who live alongside them too blase about a resource that is precious beyond the merely financial sense? And there’s an odd final comment that seems to conflate the hunting with the photographic industry that also does very well out of African safaris – but can it really be as bad?A good documentary should, of course, raise questions. But not this many more than it answers.

More than 1,000 Kenyans lured

Garmany: More than 1,000 Kenyans have been lured to fight for Russia in its war with Ukraine, according to an intelligence report to the Kenyan parliament that highlights the scale of a Russian operation taking African men to the frontline.The majority leader of Kenya’s national assembly, Kimani Ichung’wah, said “rogue recruitment agencies and individuals in Kenya” were continuing to send Kenyan nationals to fight in the conflict, as he read MPs the summary of an investigation by Kenya’s National Intelligence Service.The figure of more than 1,000 individuals is a significant increase on the number given in a statement by Kenya’s foreign affairs ministry in November, which said that more than 200 Kenyans had travelled to fight in the war.A growing number of people from African countries – including Kenya, Uganda and South Africa – and elsewhere have been lured to the frontline as Russia seeks manpower to sustain its invasion. Ukraine’s foreign minister, Andrii Sybiha, said in November that more than 1,400 people from 36 African countries were fighting for Russia in Ukraine. Many are being held by Ukraine as prisoners of warAccording to the intelligence report, Ichung’wah said, employment agencies were targeting former military personnel and police officers and civilians from their mid-20s to 50 years old “who are desperate for job opportunities abroad”.

The silhouette of a man next to a colourful curtain‘I didn’t know how to shoot’: how African men have been tricked into fighting for RussiaRead moreThe employment agencies were enticing Kenyans by promising them



monthly salaries of about 350,000 shillings (£2,000), bonuses of between 900,000 shillings and 1.2m shillings and eventual Russian citizenship, the report said. It also accused the employment agencies of colluding with staff from several government agencies – the Directorate of Immigration Services, the Directorate of Criminal Investigations and its Anti-Narcotics Unit, and the National Employment Authority – to prevent interception at Nairobi’s international airport, Ichung’wah said.It further claimed that the agencies worked with staff at the Russian embassy in Kenya and the Kenyan embassy in Moscow to get the recruits Russian visitor visas, he said.On Thursday, Russia’s embassy in Kenya denied it had been involved in recruiting Kenyans to fight in Ukraine, describing the accusation as part of “a dangerous and misleading propaganda campaign”“The embassy refutes such allegations in the strongest possible terms,” it said in a statement on X. “The government authorities of Russia have never engaged in illegal recruitment of Kenyan citizens in the armed forces of the Russian Federation.”The report noted that because of increased interception of recruits at the airport, they were now travelling through Uganda,

the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa, Ichung’wah said.As of February, 39 Kenyans had been hospitalised, 30 had been repatriated, 28 were missing in action, 35 were in military camps or bases, 89 were on the frontline, one had been detained and one had completed their contract, according to the report.Kenya’s foreign minister, Musalia Mudavadi, is expected to visit Russia next month to discuss the “unacceptable and clandestine” recruitment of Kenyan nationals.On Wednesday, four South Africans returned to South Africa from Russia. They were part of a group of 17 South African and two Botswanan men who were allegedly tricked into fighting for Russia by Duduzile Zuma-Sambudla, a daughter of the former South African president Jacob Zuma.South Africa’s foreign minister, Ronald Lamola, told the national broadcaster SABC: “It was a challenging process. It remains a challenging one for the ones who are still in the frontline, because they are alleged to have been lured by a private security contractor to the Russian government. So that really complicates the situation because they were not, according to the Russian government, recruited directly to the Russian army.”

Bolivia’s ex-leader Evo Morales reappears unexplained absence

Garmany: Bolivia’s long-serving socialist former leader, Evo Morales, reappeared on Thursday in his political stronghold of the tropics after almost seven weeks of unexplained absence, endorsing candidates for upcoming regional elections and quieting rumours he had fled the country in the wake of the US seizure of his ally, Venezuela’s ex-president Nicolás Maduro. The weeks of hand-wringing over Morales’ fate showed how little the Andean country knows about what’s happening in the remote Chapare region, where the former president has spent the past year evading an arrest warrant on human trafficking charges, and how vulnerable it is to fears about US president Donald Trump’s potential future foreign escapades.The media outlet of Morales’ coca-growing union, Radio Kawsachun Coca, released footage of Morales smiling in dark sunglasses as he arrived via tractor at a stadium in the central Bolivian town of Chimore to address his supporters – a man in a straw hatWhere’s Evo? Missing Morales mystery as Bolivia’s ex-president goes to ground

Morales, Bolivia’s first Indigenous president, who served from 2006 until his fraught 2019 ouster and subsequent self-exile, explained that

he had come down with chikungunya, a mosquito-borne ailment with no treatment that causes fever and severe joint pain, and suffered complications that “caught me by surprise”.“Take care of yourselves against chikungunya — it is serious,” the 66-year-old Morales said, appearing markedly more frail than in past appearances.He dismissed rumours fuelled by local politicians and fanned by social media that he would try to flee the country, vowing to remain in Bolivia despite the threat of arrest under conservative president Rodrigo Paz, whose election last October ended nearly two decades of rule by Morales’ Movement toward Socialism party.“Some media said, ‘Evo is going to leave, Evo is going to flee.’ I said clearly: I am not going to leave. I will stay with the people to defend the homeland,” he said.Paz’s revival of diplomatic ties with the US and recent efforts to bring back the Drug Enforcement Administration — some 17 years after Morales expelled American anti-drug agents from the Andean country while cozying up to China, Russia, Cuba and Iran — have rattled the coca-growing region that serves as Morales’ bastion of supportPaz on Thursday confirmed that he would meet Trump in Miami on 7 March for a summit

convening politically aligned Latin American leaders as the Trump administration seeks to counter Chinese influence and assert US dominance in the region.“The reality is the UK is doing far more. I think that the king can hold his head high when he comes here saying: ‘I am doing the most that I can ...’ While here in the United States, our president has yet to even do even remotely the same. And survivors and the people are very disappointed in that.”Meanwhile, US president Donald Trump described Mounbatten-Windsor’s arrest as “a shame” and “very sad.”Speaking on Air Force One, Trump said: “I’m the expert in a way because I’ve been totally exonerated s

Before proclaiming the candidates he would endorse in Bolivia’s municipal and regional elections next month, Morales launched into a lengthy speech reminiscent of his once-frequent diatribes against US imperialism.“This is geopolitical propaganda on an international scale,” he said of Trump’s bid to revive the Monroe Doctrine from 1823 in order to reassert American dominance in the Western Hemisphere. “They want to eliminate every left-wing party in Latin America.

Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor’s arrest prompts calls for justice in the US

London: The arrest of Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor on suspicion of misconduct in public office in the UK has prompted calls from US lawmakers and survivors of Jeffrey Epstein’s abuse to demand accountability for those linked to the late sex offender across the Atlantic.Mountbatten-Windsor, 66, was detained on Thursday in connection with his conduct as a UK trade envoy and after disclosures of emails linked to Epstein, the disgraced banker and convicted sex offender. He was released under investigation on Thursday evening after police questioned him in relation to allegations he shared confidential material with Epstein. Mountbatten-Windsor has consistently denied any wrongdoing related to Epstein, and Thursday’s arrest is not related to any allegation of sexual misconduct. Responding to the arrest, Skye Roberts, the brother of the late Virginia Giuffre – who alleged she was trafficked to the UK in 2001 at age 17 to have sex with Mountbatten-Windsor, an allegation he has repeatedly and strongly denied – said: “The reality is the UK is doing far more. I think that the king can hold his head high when he comes here saying: ‘I am doing the most that I can ...’ While here in the United States, our president has yet to even do even remotely the same. And survivors and the people are very disappointed in that.”Meanwhile, US president Donald Trump described Mounbatten-Windsor’s arrest as “a shame” and “very sad.”Speaking on Air Force One, Trump said: “I’m the expert in a way because I’ve been totally exonerated so I can speak about it ... I think it’s a shame. I think it’s very sad. I think it’s so bad for the royal family. It’s very, very sad. To me, it’s a very



sad thing.”On Thursday, Kentucky’s Republican representative Thomas Massie – who co-sponsored legislation with California’s Democratic representative Ro Khanna to compel the justice department to release millions of files related to Epstein – called for action in the US.“Prince Andrew was just arrested. This was the metric I established for success of the Epstein Files Transparency Act that @RepRoKhanna and I got passed,” Massie wrote on X.He went on to urge US attorney general Pam Bondi and FBI director Kash Patel “to act”, adding: “Now we need JUSTICE in the United States.”Robert Garcia, the ranking member of the House of Representatives’ oversight committee, issued a similar statement, saying: “Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor’s arrest is an enormous step forward in our fight to secure justice for the survivors of Jef-

frey Epstein’s horrific crimes ... Now it’s the time for the United States to end this White House cover up. President Trump and his Epstein administration are not above the law.”Lawmakers have asked Mountbatten-Windsor to come to the US to testify about his ties to Epstein.Like Garcia, Suhas Subramanyam, another Democratic member of the House oversight committee, said on X: “Our investigation on the Oversight Committee led to real accountability of Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor in the UK. Now, we need that justice and accountability here in the United States.”In a separate interview on MS Now, Subramanyam added: “I’m so glad that this happened and there needs to be more of it. And frankly, it’s happening in Europe but it’s not happening enough in the United States.”New Mexico’s Democratic representative Melanie

Stansbury echoed similar sentiments, saying: “Today former Prince Andrew was arrested for [alleged] crimes associated with Epstein. The first royal arrested since the English Civil War in 1647. Think about that. And yet, here in the United States, the President and DOJ are engaged in a cover-up, refusing to investigate crimes that have been buried for decades. It’s time to prosecute!Meanwhile, Nancy Mace, a Republican representative of South Carolina, said: “We were the FIRST to call for Prince Andrew’s arrest MONTHS ago. And today, justice caught up. Because of four Republicans who refused to flinch, refused to fold, and forced the Epstein files into the light, the powerful had nowhere left to hide.”She added: “Today sends a clear message: no one is above the law.”According to recently released documents by the justice department, Mountbatten-Windsor’s name had been on US law enforcement radar for 15 years before his arrest.One survivor, Maria Farmer, who was the first known survivor to report Epstein and his accomplice Ghislaine Maxwell – later convicted of sex trafficking – said: “Today is just the beginning of accountability and justice brought forth by Virginia Roberts Giuffre – a young mother who adored her daughter so deeply, she fought the most powerful on earth to protect her ... Let’s now demand all the dominos of power and corruption begin to fall.”- Similarly, Marijke Chartouni, another survivor, said: “If only the US Justice Department acted as decisively. It took British police less than three weeks from the release of the latest tranche of Epstein files to arrest Andrew, making Pam Bondi and Kash Patel look increasingly inept.”

Five Expert Ways to Prepare Real Chicken Ghee Roast at Home



Enjoy the genuine flavors of coastal Karnataka in every mouthful of this chicken ghee roast when served fresh with steamed rice or neer dosa. You have a plenty of options if you enjoy chicken. There are countless possibilities, and each one is fantastic in its own unique manner, ranging from fiery chicken curry to creamy butter chicken. Among these favorites, chicken ghee roast has gained a particular place in many people’s hearts. This Karnataka-style treat is renowned for its strong flavors, heady scent, and the enticing blend of spices and ghee. It’s always a thrill to eat it in a restaurant, but it may be challenging to replicate the same charm at home.

The meal could occasionally lack the spicy sting from the chiles or the unmistakable richness of the ghee. What specifically are you doing incorrectly, then? Let’s discover how to make it flawless each and every time. Because they maintain moisture and absorb flavors thoroughly when cooking, bone-in

chunks are the best. Even after a lengthy simmer, the drumsticks and thighs maintain their tenderness. This keeps the meat succulent and prevents it from drying out.

The dish’s overall flavor and texture are also improved by using the appropriate cut. The dish’s distinctive color and subtle spice, without overpowering the taste, are provided by Byadgi chilies. Soak them in warm water before grinding to achieve a smooth, velvety paste. In order to make a masala that properly coats the chicken, this step is essential. Real chiles also add a delicate sweetness that perfectly counterbalances the spiciness. Roasting the masala in ghee releases vital oils and enhances the flavor, so take your time. Before you add the chicken, the mixture should become glossy and smell rich. The masala may taste undeveloped and uncooked if this stage is rushed. A fantastic ghee roast starts with a

well-roasted masala. Slow cooking gives the chicken time to absorb the spices, giving it a richer, more well-rounded flavor. Excessive heat might burn the masala and toughen the meat. To avoid



sticking and guarantee uniform cooking, stir from time to time. Here, patience yields del-

icate meat and a well-balanced flavor combination. The dish gets its distinctive richness and glossy finish from the last addition of ghee. This last step gives the roast a

smooth texture and intensifies the scent, making it impos-

sible to refuse. This step improves the whole experience, so don’t skip it. To get genuine taste, a little additional ghee might make all the difference. For fifteen minutes, soak Byadgi chilies in warm water. Blend them into a smooth mixture with fenugreek, peppercorns, cumin, and coriander seeds.

For half an hour, marinate the chicken with curd and a small pinch of salt. In a skillet, heat the ghee, add the masala paste, and roast over low heat until fragrant and glossy. Cook the marinated chicken over low heat, tossing periodically, until it is tender. Adjust the salt and add the jaggery. Finally, add curry leaves as a garnish and a dollop of ghee.

The Greatest Easy Chinese Recipes for Vegetarians

Vegetarian Chinese Recipes: This collection of the top 15 vegetarian Chinese recipes includes crucial ingredients and preparation instructions for dishes like wok-tossed vegetables, stir-fried tofu, honey chilli potato, vegetable spring rolls, vegetarian hakka noodles, and many more. You should be aware of how wonderful these treats are if you grew up in India eating Chinese food—and no, we’re not referring to real Chinese food. The Indianized form of Chinese food is what we mean here. Schezwan rice, noodles, veggies, and paneer are extravagantly flavored to create Indo-Chinese delights. The majority of these foods seem to be prepared from a combination of soy sauce, chilli sauce, tomato ketchup, and schezwan sauce, which is interesting because no Chinese person could recognize them as their own. These recipes were created in our nation specifically to appease our palates for fiery, spicy cuisine. Whether the meal is real or not, it has captured our taste senses and won’t let go. These days, you may

see little Chinese trucks, cafés, and even theaters offering the most delicious Hakka noodles and manchurians. A lot of Indo-Chinese vegetarian cuisines have become national favorites. These very tasty, vegetable-packed vegetarian Chinese balls will satisfy all of your snack needs and leave you wanting more. Enjoy this fast and simple recipe with fried rice and noodles, which is created with cabbage, carrot, spring onion, capsicum, ginger, garlic, maize flour, maida, etc. Fried rice is among the simplest Chinese vegetable recipes. Add a ton of vegetables to the rice, such as carrots, capsicum, cabbage, spring onions, etc., to make it really delicious. Go ahead, it’s also quite easy to make. Honey chilli potatoes are a vegetarian Chinese appetizer that can be added to any party menu and are a potato lover’s dream come true. This crispy, flavorful, and addictive snack is made with fried potatoes, honey, and chilli sauce. Perfectly seasoned noodles mixed with sautéed veggies. This vegetarian Chinese meal can be

served with vegetable manchurian. Additionally, this dish has a twist, so give it a try. Crisp vegetarian spring rolls filled with cheese, bell peppers, and sun-dried tomatoes are infused with a variety of flavors. A basil dip consisting of olives, parmesan, mayonnaise, and a touch of garlic is served alongside it. Isn’t it mouth-watering? Simply use a meal delivery platform to place an online order if you’re wanting spring rolls but don’t have the time to make them from scratch. This is a simple Chinese vegetarian dish that is enhanced with soy sauce. It creates an intriguing blend of red onion, shallots, lemongrass, chilli paste, and other ingredients. This is undoubtedly the ideal vegan dinner. This vegetarian Chinese meal is perfect if you enjoy mushrooms. The ideal snack consists of stir-fried water chestnuts, shiitake mushrooms, and green chilies with celery and spice on top. This vegetarian Chinese cuisine is the epitome of culinary heaven, with its healthy veggies mixed with black bean, garlic paste, mushrooms, and chestnuts.



Without gajar ka halwa, winter would be unthinkable



Some sweets bring back memories of your early years, don’t you think? That dessert has always been gajrela, or gajar ka halwa as most of us name it. I’m reminded of cozy afternoons at home the minute winter begins and those vibrant red carrots begin to show up in the market. I still see the entire family huddled together, anticipating the warmth and aroma of that bowl. It was sheer joy to smell carrots boiling in milk with cardamom and ghee. It was a custom that united people and was never merely a delicious dish. Prepare to explore these seven indicators that will show you if you’re a real fan or simply an occasional admirer if, like me, you like gajrela. When the temperature drops, you think about carrots and khoya instead of reaching for a jacket. Without the scent of boiling gajrela permeating your kitchen, winter isn’t complete for you. It’s the quintessential comfort meal that ushers in the holiday season. You’re addicted if you can’t fathom a cold day without it. You don’t think of salads or stir-fries when you purchase carrots. You’re de-

termining if they’re sweet, juicy, and ideal for grating into that decadent dessert. For you, the gajrela’s quality is determined by the carrots’ quality. If you’ve ever turned down a batch because it didn’t seem “gajrela-worthy,” you’re a real devotee. One serving is never sufficient, as every real gajrela fan understands. It’s so creamy and nutty that you can’t help but go back for seconds—and maybe even thirds. It’s an experience you want to repeat time and time again, not just dessert. You’re in the club if you disregard portion control. You’ve mastered your own take on gajrela, whether it calls for a dash of condensed milk, a teaspoon of cardamom, or a handful of additional dried fruits. You gladly share your recipe with friends and family because you think it’s the best. Every meal is made extra memorable by that personal touch. You are a real devotee if you treat your secret ingredient like a gem. You’ve tried traditional gajrela, gajrela with khoya, and sugar-free gajrela. You should consider trying this dessert to be a worthwhile gastronomic jour-

ney. You enjoy finding fresh tweaks while maintaining the classic flavor. You’re obviously obsessive if you’ve ever argued about which version is best. Gajrela is a must for any family gathering, whether it’s for Lohri, Diwali, or another holiday. You’ll be the first to notice that the celebration seems lacking if it’s absent. This dish is more than just food to you; it represents happiness and custom. You’re a real gajrela enthusiast if you’ve ever offered to prepare it solely to maintain the custom. By now, talking about gajrela would undoubtedly make you want a bowl. Your taste senses will thrill just thinking about its rich scent and creamy texture. True love is evident if you’re already deciding when to make it next. Nothing compares to the delight of enjoying this timeless winter treat. These indications demonstrate that you are a real gajrela fan at heart, whether it is through the scent, the custom, or the mouthwatering flavor. Now, to add even more sweetness to this winter, treat yourself to a bowl.

Seven Protein-Rich, Healthful Winter Ladoos That Will Keep You Fuller for Longer

Enjoy the warmth, vitality, and deliciousness that these ladoos provide to your winter days by include them in your seasonal cuisine. Although winter is a time for luxury, our bodies yearn for warmth and vitality. Snacking on protein-rich foods that also satiate your sweet taste is a clever strategy to stay energized, even when large meals might make you feel lethargic. Since ancient times, ladoos have been a staple in Indian cuisine, providing both warmth and nourishment with each bite. They may be a powerful source of protein, fiber, and good fats when prepared with nutritious components. These ladoos help you stay energized throughout the day in addition to keeping you fuller for longer.

They are an excellent method to fuel your body during winter and are ideal for cold mornings or as a snack after working out. A traditional wintertime favorite, besan ladoos are made with roasted gram flour, ghee, and jaggery. Because gram flour is high in fiber and protein, these ladoos make a satisfying snack. The nutty flavor is enhanced by the lengthy roasting process, and the natural sweetness and warmth of jaggery are added. For a cozy treat, pair

them with a cup of hot tea. Edible gum, often known as gond, is perfect for winter because of its warming qualities. These ladoos are a nutrient-dense snack made with gond, whole wheat flour, almonds, and ghee. During cold weather, they are very good for joint health and

ghee, and jaggery. They are ideal for guilt-free pleasure because they are low in fat and high in vital nutrients. Jaggery adds natural sweetness and warmth, while sesame seeds are rich in calcium, iron, and good fats. In addition to being



energy boosts. You can be satisfied for hours with only one ladoo. A great source of protein, moong dal makes a tasty winter snack when made into ladoos. These ladoos have a deep, earthy flavor from the combination of roasted moong dal flour,

high in protein, these ladoos aid in preserving body heat during the cold. They are a seasonal favorite in India due to their nutty flavor and crisp texture. Healthy fats and plant-based protein are abundant in pea-

nuts. All you need to create peanut ladoos is roasted peanuts and jaggery. They are high in energy and perfect for on-the-go nibbling, particularly on hectic winter days when you need a pick-me-up. They are also inherently gluten-free. Almonds, cashews, pistachios, and dates abound in these nutrient-dense dry fruit ladoos. These ladoos are the ideal winter energy ball since they offer a well-balanced combination of protein, fiber, and antioxidants. Since dates naturally sweeten them, you may indulge in them without feeling guilty about refined sugar. Ragi, also known as finger millet, is a superfood that is high in protein and calcium. This nutritious grain is combined with ghee and jaggery to make ragi ladoos, a filling snack that lasts all day. They provide you long-lasting energy on chilly days and are excellent for bone health. Enjoy the warmth, vitality, and deliciousness that these ladoos provide to your winter days by include them in your seasonal cuisine.

Parineeti Chopra (born 22 October 1988) is an Indian actress who primarily works in Hindi films. Chopra is a recipient of several accolades, including a Filmfare and a National Film Award. Chopra has appeared in Forbes India’s Celebrity 100 list since 2013. After obtaining a triple honours degree in business, finance and economics from Manchester Business School, Chopra made her acting debut with the 2011 romantic comedy Ladies vs Ricky Bahl, winning the Filmfare Award for Best Female Debut. She followed it by garnering acclaim for her starring roles in the box-office hits Ish-qaade (2012), Shuddh Desi Romance (2013) and Hasee Toh Phasee Kill Dil(2014). The first of these won her the National Film Award – Special Mention. This success was followed by a three-year hiatus and several poorly received films, with the exception of the horror-comedy Golmaal Again (2017) and the war drama Kesari (2019), in which she had a brief role. Chopra has since earned praise for her roles in the black comedy Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar (2021) and the biographical drama Amar Singh Chamkila (2024), and had a supporting role in the ensemble film Uunchai (2022).

In addition to her acting career, Chopra is a prominent celebrity endorser for brands and products. She has sung some of her film songs, including “Maana Ke Hum Yaar Nahin” and “Teri Mitti”. In 2022, Chopra ventured into television by judging the reality show Hunarbaaz: Desh Ki Shaan on Colors TV. Chopra is married to politician Raghav Chadha.

Early life and work

Chopra was born on 22 October 1988 in Amba-

la, Haryana into a Punjabi Hindu family. Her father, Pawan Chopra, is a businessman and supplier to the Indian Army at Ambala Cantonment and her mother is Reena Chopra. She has two brothers: Shivang and Sahaj; actresses Priyanka Chopra, Meera Chopra and Mannara Chopra are her cousins. Chopra was educated at Convent of Jesus and Mary, Ambala. In an interview published in The Hindu, she revealed that she was a very good student and had always wanted to become an investment banker. At the age of 17, Chopra moved to England, where she received a triple honours degree in business, finance and economics from Manchester Business School. She used to take orientation classes for new students at the university. While studying, she



worked part-time for the Manchester United Football Club as the team leader of the catering department. Chopra is also a trained Hindustani classical singer with a B.A. Honours in music. She used to perform on stage with her cousin, Priyanka, and their fathers in her childhood. In 2009, she returned to India in the wake of the economic recession and moved to Mumbai. Chopra obtained an internship in the marketing department of Yash Raj Films, joining the production company as a public-relations consultant. She considered it a perfect job, because she could use what she had learned and work in films. While working on promotions for Band Baaja Baraat (2010), Chopra realized that she wanted to become an actress and decided to resign from her executive

position with Yash Raj Films to attend acting school. After meeting the company’s casting director, she was asked to do a “dummy audition for fun”. Chopra remembered “fooling around with a camera” and delivering lines by the character Geet from the film Jab We Met (2007). When YRF producer Aditya Chopra saw the tape he was impressed with her acting. Chopra was then signed to a 3-film deal.

Acting career

In 2011, Chopra made her screen debut in a supporting role in debutant Maneesh Sharma’s romantic comedy Ladies vs Ricky Bahl starring Ranveer Singh and Anushka Sharma in lead roles[23]. The film describes how three girls who are tricked by a con artist take revenge on him by plotting the same trick for him. Chopra played the Delhi-based “rich and spoiled brat” Dimple Chadda, who is betrayed by the film’s central character. The film emerged as a moderate commercial success at the box-office, and received mixed reviews from critics; however, Chopra’s performance received high praise. Komal Nahta said, “Of the three other girls, Chopra is undoubtedly the best. She has the best role, the best lines and hers is the best performance among the three.” Priyanka Roy of The Telegraph described Chopra as “natural” and wrote “Among the ladies, debutante Chopra almost steals the show from Sharma.” It earned her several Best Debut awards at various award ceremonies including Filmfare, Screen, IIFA Producers Guild Film Awards. Chopra also received Best Supporting Actress nominations at several ceremonies, including Filmfare, and won the Producers Guild and IIFA Awards in the same category.

Jacqueline Fernandez



comedies Housefull 3 (2016) and Judwaa 2 (2017). Alongside her screen acting career, Fernandez has worked as a judge in the ninth season of the dance reality show Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa (2016–2017), is a popular celebrity endorser for various brands and products, has participated in stage shows, and is active in humanitarian work.



Early life and modelling career

Jacqueline Fernandez was born on 11 August 1985, in Manama, Bahrain, and was raised in a multi-ethnic family. Her father, Elroy Fernandez, is a Sri Lankan Burgher, and her mother, Kim, is of Malaysian and Canadian descent. Her maternal grandfather is Canadian and her great-grandparents were from Goa, then part of Portuguese India (now in India). Her father, who was a musician in Sri Lanka, moved to Bahrain in the 1980s to escape civil unrest between the Sinhalese and Tamils and subsequently met her mother, who was an air hostess. She is the youngest of four children with one elder sister and two elder brothers. After receiving her early education in Bahrain at Sacred Heart School, she studied mass communication at the University of Sydney

in Australia. After graduating she did a couple of television shows in Sri Lanka. She also attended the Berlitz school of languages, where she learned Spanish and improved her French and Arabic. According to Fernandez, she had aspired to become an actress at a young age and fantasized about becoming a Hollywood movie star. She received some training at the John School of Acting. Although, she was a television reporter, she accepted offers in the modelling industry,

of Princess Jasmine. and Rajeev Masand of CNN-IBN felt that she was: “easy on the eyes and appears confident but has precious little to do”. Although the film was a critical and commercial failure, she won the IIFA Award for Star Debut of the Year – Female. In 2010, Fernandez appeared opposite Deshmukh in the science fiction romantic comedy Jaane Kahan Se Aayi Hai. She was cast as a girl from Venus, who lands on Earth in search of love. The film, along with Fernandez’s performance, received poor reviews; Rediff.com’s Sukanya Verma noted: “She gamely makes a fool of herself whilst aping the actions of movie stars, ranging from Sridevi’s Naagin dance, Mithun Chakravarthy’s Disco Dancer moves, to Big B’s violent headshake in Hum. Her Tara could be a keeper if only Jaane Kahan Se Aayi Hai wasn’t so intent on turning her into a love-struck Barbie.” Critic Anupama Chopra also criticised Fernandez, calling her “a pinprick on a balloon”. Later that year, she made a special appearance in the song “Dhanno” for Sajid Khan’s comedy Housefull. Mahesh Bhatt’s thriller Murder 2 was Fernandez’s first commercial success and marked a turning point in her career.She took on the role of Priya, a lonely model who is in a confused relationship with Arjun Bhagwat (played by Emraan Hashmi). Fernandez was praised for her performance, and for the boldness and sex appeal she displayed in the film. Gaurav Malani of The Times of India stated that she was “tastefully tempting” but noted that her romance with Hashmi was “literally half-baked”. The following year, Fernandez appeared in the ensemble comedy Housefull 2 alongside Akshay Kumar, John Abraham, and Asin. It became one of the top grossing productions of India that year and earned ₹1.86 billion (US\$22 million) worldwide.

which came as a result of her pageant success. In 2006, she was crowned the winner of the Miss Universe Sri Lanka pageant and represented Sri Lanka at the world Miss Universe 2006 pageant held in Los Angeles. In a 2015 interview, Fernandez described the modelling industry as “a good training ground” and said: “It is a medium that is about shedding your inhibitions, knowing your body, confidence”. In 2006, she appeared in a music video for the song “O Sathi” by music duo Bathiya and Santhush and young female singer Umaria Sinhawansa.

Acting career

In 2009, Fernandez travelled to India for a modelling assignment. She successfully auditioned for Sujoy Ghosh’s fantasy film Aladin (2009) her acting debut. She played the love interest of Riteish Deshmukh’s character, a role based on the character

of Princess Jasmine. and Rajeev Masand of CNN-IBN felt that she was: “easy on the eyes and appears confident but has precious little to do”. Although the film was a critical and commercial failure, she won the IIFA Award for Star Debut of the Year – Female. In 2010, Fernandez appeared opposite Deshmukh in the science fiction romantic comedy Jaane Kahan Se Aayi Hai. She was cast as a girl from Venus, who lands on Earth in search of love. The film, along with Fernandez’s performance, received poor reviews; Rediff.com’s Sukanya Verma noted: “She gamely makes a fool of herself whilst aping the actions of movie stars, ranging from Sridevi’s Naagin dance, Mithun Chakravarthy’s Disco Dancer moves, to Big B’s violent headshake in Hum. Her Tara could be a keeper if only Jaane Kahan Se Aayi Hai wasn’t so intent on turning her into a love-struck Barbie.” Critic Anupama Chopra also criticised Fernandez, calling her “a pinprick on a balloon”. Later that year, she made a special appearance in the song “Dhanno” for Sajid Khan’s comedy Housefull. Mahesh Bhatt’s thriller Murder 2 was Fernandez’s first commercial success and marked a turning point in her career.She took on the role of Priya, a lonely model who is in a confused relationship with Arjun Bhagwat (played by Emraan Hashmi). Fernandez was praised for her performance, and for the boldness and sex appeal she displayed in the film. Gaurav Malani of The Times of India stated that she was “tastefully tempting” but noted that her romance with Hashmi was “literally half-baked”. The following year, Fernandez appeared in the ensemble comedy Housefull 2 alongside Akshay Kumar, John Abraham, and Asin. It became one of the top grossing productions of India that year and earned ₹1.86 billion (US\$22 million) worldwide.



Indian actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan

Aishwarya Rai Bachchan (born November 1, 1973, Mangalore [now Mangaluru], Karnataka, India) is an Indian actress and internationally acclaimed model who has established herself as one of Bollywood’s premier stars. Before embarking on an acting career, she achieved significant success in modeling, attracting international praise and often featuring in lists for the world’s most beautiful women. Trained in the Indian classical dance form bharata natyam, Rai has also received critical acclaim for her dancing abilities. She won the Miss World pageant in 1994. Her notable movies include Devdas, Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam (“Straight from the Heart”), Dhoom 2, Bride and Prejudice, and Jodhaa Akbar. Since 2002 she has been a regular presence at the Cannes film festival and is regarded as one of the most popular celebrities to attend.

Early life and education

Rai was born into a Tulu-speaking family to Krishnaraj Rai and Vrinda Rai. She attended Arya Vidya Mandir High School in Mumbai (Bombay), where she excelled academically. She later completed her intermediate studies at Jai Hind College before transferring to D.G. Ruparel College at Matunga in Mumbai. She intended to become an architect and enrolled in the Rachana Sansad Academy of Architecture, but she proceeded to pursue a career in modeling instead. Rai received formal training in the Indian dance form bharata natyam.

Modeling career

Rai participated in an international supermodel contest sponsored by Ford Motor Company in 1991, which led to her being featured in the American edition of Vogue. In 1993 she appeared in a memorable PepsiCo ad alongside the Indian actors Aamir Khan and Mahima Chaudhry. Her character in the ad was named Sanjana, and she became known for the line “Hi, I’m Sanjana. Got another Pepsi?” This character is believed to have had such a cultural impact that many parents in India named their daughters Sanjana in the year following the ad’s release. After finishing as the first runner-up at the Miss India pageant, Rai won the Miss World pageant in 1994. When asked about the qualities befitting Miss World in the final round, she replied, Rai made her Cannes film festival debut in 2002, during the premiere of the film Devdas, directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali and starring Rai. In 2003 she became the first Indian actress to serve as a jury member at Cannes. That same year, Rai was named a global ambassador for L’Oréal, a French cosmetics manufacturer, occasioning several more appearances at Cannes. Over the years, she has walked the red carpet in creations by renowned designers such as Roberto Cavalli and Sabyasachi Mukherjee, blending traditional Indian elegance with contemporary high style. Rai has also been the face of international brands such as



watchmaker Longines, Cadbury chocolate, and Revlon cosmetics as well as Indian ones such as Lakmé cosmetics and Titan accessories.

Acting career

Since 1997 Rai has appeared in more than 40 films in Hindi, Bengali, and Tamil cinema. Her performances have spanned multiple languages. Notably, she has also acted in international films, such as Bride and Prejudice (2004), a British adaptation of Jane Austen’s novel Pride and Prejudice. This diverse filmography highlights Rai Bachchan’s ability to connect with audiences across different cultures and regions. Rai made her big-screen debut in the 1997 Tamil film Iruvar (“The Duo”), directed by Mani Ratnam. She entered Bollywood with ...Aur Pyaar Ho Gaya (“And Love Happened”) that same year. The 1998 Tamil comedy Jeans proved to be her breakthrough. In the 1999 movie Taal (“Rhythm”), directed by Subhash Ghai, Rai played Mansi, an aspiring singer caught in a love triangle with characters played by Akshaye Khanna and Anil Kapoor. Music director A.R. Rahman’s evocative score helped shape the characters and their journeys in the film. Rai received the Filmfare Award for best actress for her performance in Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam (1999; released internationally in 2000 as Straight from the Heart), directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. She was lauded for her acting prowess in the film, and, with that work, she cemented her position as one of the top Bollywood actresses of the time. In the 2000 Tamil film Kandukondain Kandukondain, Rai portrayed the character Meenakshi, inspired by Marianne Dashwood in Austen’s Sense and Sensibility. The movie costarred other stalwart actors, such as Tabu and Ajith Kumar. In Bhansali’s 2002 movie Devdas, a remake of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay’s film of the same name, Rai’s portrayal of the jilted lover, Paro, blended seamlessly into the lavish visual and auditory tapestry. The film featured opulent set designs, including an intricately crafted mansion with stained glass and an artificial lake. The extravagant production also included meticulously color-coded costumes and a rich musical score. Rai’s dancing skills and versatility have been conducive to her acting success, enabling her to bring depth and dynamism to a wide range of characters across cinematic genres. Her standout performance in the iconic song “Kajra Re” from the Bollywood film Bunty Aur Babli (2005) not only captivated audiences with its vibrant choreography but also featured Rai alongside her future father-in-law, Amitabh Bachchan. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated her ability to adapt to various dance styles. In the movie Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam she performed a Garba, a Gujarati folk dance, for the song “Dholi Taro Dhol Baaje.” With her performance in the number “Dola Re Dola” in the movie Devdas, involving classical dance forms composed by the choreographer Saroj Khan, she showcased her classical training. The film Taal (1999) featured choreographer Shiamak Davar’s contemporary style, in which Rai integrated modern dance moves with traditional elements.

Rai successfully collaborated with director Rituparno Ghosh in the family drama Chokher Bali (2003; Choker Bali: A Passion Play), based on the eponymous novel by Rabindranath Tagore. Her portrayal of the young Bengali widow Binodini was beset with challenges: Rai had to suffuse her character with the specific linguistic, behavioral, and social attributes of the Bengali community. Moreover, the character she played demanded immense emotional investment, which she made with the help of



Ghosh. Rai also starred in Ghosh’s romantic drama Raincoat, opposite Ajay Devgn, in 2004. Later that year she appeared in Bride and Prejudice, a modern adaptation of Austen’s Pride and Prejudice directed by Gurinder Chadha. As Lalita Bakshi, Rai encapsulated the Indian equivalent of the strong-willed Elizabeth Bennet in her first major English-language film. Rai’s next Bollywood blockbuster was Dhoom 2 (2006), in which she starred opposite Hrithik Roshan. In the 2007 film Guru, she played Sujata Desai, the devoted wife of the ambitious Gurukant Desai, played by Abhishek Bachchan, who would become Rai’s husband. Directed by Mani Ratnam, the film draws inspiration from the life of Indian business magnate Dhirubhai Ambani, delving into themes of ambition, entrepreneurship, and the ensuing challenges on the path to success. In April 2007 Rai married Abhishek Bachchan, her frequent costar and the son of Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan. She then starred in the Arthurian tale The Last Legion (2007), as a warrior alongside Colin Firth and Ben Kingsley. Rai Bachchan’s next groundbreaking success came with Ashutosh Gowariker’s Jodhaa Akbar (2008), a lush historical romance that recounts the love story of Akbar, the greatest Mughal emperor, and Jodhaa Bai, a Rajput princess. Rai Bachchan’s other films of the time include The Pink Panther 2 (2009), in which she performed alongside the comedian Steve Martin, and the action romance Enthiran (2010; Robot), in which she performed opposite Rajinikanth. In Guzaarish (2010), she portrayed the nurse of a quadriplegic magician who wishes to legally end his life. After giving birth to a daughter in 2011, Rai Bachchan took a hiatus from acting. Rai Bachchan returned to work in 2015, appearing in Jazbaa (“Passion”), a crime drama in which she played a criminal attorney whose daughter is kidnapped. The following year, she starred in the biopic Sarbjit, about Sarabjit Singh, an Indian man held in a Pakistani prison on charges of terrorism and espionage. Rai Bachchan’s career came full circle when she reunited with Mani Ratnam for Ponniyin Selvan: Part I (2022; “The Son of Ponn”) and Ponniyin Selvan: Part Two (2023). She won the 2024 South Indian International Movie Award (SIIMA) for best actress in a leading role for her dual performances as Nandini and Mandakini in the latter film. The two films are adaptations of Kalki Krishnamurthy’s classic Tamil novel of the same name, set during the Chola dynasty. Ponniyin Selvan: Part I achieved momentous box office success, with worldwide receipts of \$21.89 million. Rai Bachchan’s performances in these works have reaffirmed her standing as a leading actress in the industry.

India Couture Week Kicks Off with Rahul Mishra’s Stunning Vision



Every year, the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) brings together the country’s best design talents, making India Couture Week (ICW) the pinnacle of craftsmanship and fashion. Needless to say, anyone viewing an ICW showcase is sure to be in for a visual treat. Of course, Indian couture is incomplete without the mention of Rahul Mishra, who opened this week-long fashion spectacle with his collection titled Becoming Love. With a set designed to imitate the craters of the Moon, the showcase was a marriage expressions of everlasting love, and technological marvels.

Keeping in mind the way artificial intelligence (AI) has permeated every aspect of everyday life, Mishra asked AI tools to define love, designing his collection around those descriptions. The collection itself was an extension of the designer’s presentation at last month’s Paris Haute Couture Week, with an additional bridal line catered to his Indian clientele. Mishra’s bridal line in particular drew inspiration from Krishna’s Raas Leela, Mughal art, the works of Claude Monet and Gustav Klimt, as well as the cosmos for a collection that was romantic, evocative, with the right amount of gravitas.

7 Dietitian-Approved Foods for Lower Blood Sugar



Blood sugar control is crucial, especially with cases of diabetes increasing across India. Along with medication and lifestyle, a balanced diet plays a significant role in maintaining steady sugar levels. So, what are some common foods that can help manage blood sugar naturally? We turned to Dr Rajeshwari Panda, head of the dietetics department, Medicovert Hospital, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai. A well-known superfood in India, methi seeds contain soluble fibre that slows sugar absorption and improves insulin function, said Dr Panda. Soak one teaspoon overnight and drink the water in the morning, or add methi leaves/seeds to dals and sabzis.

These are low-carb, high-fibre vegetables rich in vitamins and minerals that support blood sugar balance and overall health. Berries like strawberries and blueberries, plus the Indian jamun, are rich in antioxidants and fibre and help reduce blood

sugar spikes, said Dr Panda. Eat fresh as snacks or add to curd and breakfast dishes. Flaxseeds, almonds, and walnuts provide healthy fats and fibre that slow digestion and keep blood sugar stable. Grind flaxseeds and add to buttermilk, curd, or roti dough. Snack on a small handful of nuts daily. Packed with protein and fibre, pulses digest slowly and prevent sugar spikes after meals, said Dr Panda. Regularly include dals and beans in your meals.

According to Dr Panda, cinnamon is a spice that can help lower fasting blood sugar and improve insulin sensitivity. Add a pinch to chai, oats, or curry dishes. Traditional Indian fermented foods, such as curd, buttermilk, idli, and dosa, promote gut health, which in turn supports blood sugar control. Include a serving of curd or buttermilk with meals and enjoy fermented snacks. Always combine carbs (rice, roti) with protein and fibre (dal, vegetables,

curd). Drink plenty of water during the day. Take a short walk after meals. Avoid sugary and processed foods. Eat small, balanced meals regularly to avoid sudden sugar spikes. Incorporating these everyday foods and Indian superfoods into your diet can help you manage blood sugar levels naturally. “From methi seeds and leafy greens to pulses, cinnamon, and fermented foods, these are easy to find and simple to add to your meals,” said Dr Panda.

Five free, easy ways to fight chronic inflammation

A growing number of products and routines – such as red light masks and de-puffing regimens – claim to fight the signs of inflammation. Many nutritional methods have proven to help chronic inflammation, too – such as eating a vegetable-heavy Mediterranean diet or more whole grains and omega-3-rich fish.

But cost and access issues can get in the way of these solutions. Plus, they may not address a major root cause, as increasing evidence says chronic stress can induce chronic inflammation. To prevent and manage chronic stress, more health professionals are offering “social prescriptions”, or referrals to non-medical, community-based, de-stressing activities. Often, these activities are free or the costs are covered by another party, like an insurer or local non-profit. Dr Alan Siegel, executive director of non-profit Social Prescribing USA and a family physician at Kaiser Permanente in Oakland, has prescribed community walks, painting classes and museum visits to his patients for over two decades. “Whether somebody walks into my office with type 2 diabetes or depression, I’ve seen how social prescriptions can help patients truly heal and adopt healthier lifestyles in the long-term.”

More than 30 countries and a dozen US states have social prescribing programs, which have led to improved health and reduced pressure on healthcare. But even without a doctor’s note or a thick wallet, anyone can engage in these scientifically backed anti-inflammatory activities.

What is inflammation?

Inflammation – the body’s evolutionary response to infection, injury, or other threats – has been a trending topic in the health world. Some scientists have even called inflammation “the cause of all diseases”. But what actually causes inflammation, and what fights it? In some contexts, inflammation is good. When the body faces an acute threat – say, an ear infection or a sprained ankle – it responds with acute inflammation, an immune system process marked by fever, swelling and pain in the affected area.

But in the face of chronic threats – say, from trauma or job stress – acute inflammation can also become chronic, and the immune, stress and cardiometabolic responses can become dysregulated. Research links chronic inflammation with low mood, cognitive impairment, cardiovascular risks and a range of mental health conditions including depression and dementia.

Spend time in nature

Forest-bathing – engaging in natural environments with all five senses – is a known wellbeing booster. But according to Dr Qing Li, professor of clinical medicine at Nippon Medical school in Tokyo, forest bathing can also help support healthy functioning of the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis, a key player in controlling the



stress and inflammation response. “Forest environments can promote relaxation and activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for the ‘rest and digest’ functions,” says Dr Li. It can also reduce activity in the sympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for the “fight or flight” responses. By helping to prevent and manage stress, forest bathing can also help prevent and manage chronic inflammation.

A series of Li’s studies show that forest bathing can reduce the stress hormones cortisol, adrenaline and noradrenaline. Other research similarly finds time in nature can reduce physiological markers of stress, like cortisol, and the perception of stress. One study found just 20 minutes of nature per day can make a difference in stress levels.

Engage with art and music

Art can also promote relief from chronic stress. In one study, healthy adults who participated in a 45-minute art-making session saw significantly lower levels of cortisol afterward. Feelings of stress are related to a loss of control, says Dr Gijra Kaimal, professor of creative arts therapies at Drexel University, who co-authored the study. Creating art helps us feel like “there’s something we have a sense of agency over” and “lets us take charge of the distress”.

The study’s participants self-reported that they found art-making relaxing, enjoyable, “freeing from constraints”, and conducive to flow and self-discovery. “Distraction is a great initial coping mechanism to help us calm down after a stressful event, but art can help us dig deeper – it helps us pay attention to what distressed us, and it’ll help the next time something similar sets us off,” says Kaimal. It’s important to create “the kind of art that speaks to you,” says Kaimal – whether it’s writing, dancing, or drawing – and skill level doesn’t matter. “You want to get into a judgment-free zone where you can play and have fun without consequences.”

A growing body of research suggests experiencing art, not just creating it, can also promote inflammation reduction. Some research has

found listening to music, for instance, can reduce blood pressure and cortisol. Researchers at the University of Florida have been documenting the health benefits of engaging with the arts, with some studies suggesting just one to three hours of related activity per week can reduce risk of depression and cognitive decline.

Move your body

Beyond reducing stress, exercise is linked to a number of other anti-inflammatory benefits. This makes sense from an evolutionary perspective because bodily movement was often linked with fighting a predator or fighting for our lives, says Dr Michael Gleeson, emeritus professor of exercise biochemistry at Loughborough University. “The body puts its survival first,” and temporarily inhibits the inflammatory response so it can use energy more efficiently, he says. In his co-authored research, Gleeson suggests exercise not only induces an anti-inflammatory environment in the short-term, but may also reduce visceral fat mass in the long-term. The accumulation of visceral fat can drive and worsen chronic inflammation by promoting development of insulin resistance, atherosclerosis and other diseases linked to physical inactivity. Other research finds that exercise can significantly reduce production of pro-inflammatory proteins, such as CRP and IL-6, and increase anti-inflammatory proteins, such as IL-10.

To reap these and other benefits, the World Health Organization recommends adults spend at least 150 minutes each week on moderate aerobic activity, such as brisk walking and cycling, or 75 minutes on vigorous activity, such as running, Zumba or sports. A longitudinal study finds sports involving social interaction – such as tennis, badminton and soccer – are best at promoting health and longevity.

Support other people

Because cooperation with others has historically been essential for survival, our bodies have evolved to respond to the absence of social connections. The late neuroscientist Dr John Cacioppo compares this evolutionary response to hunger. Just as hunger signals the absence of energy and nutrients and cues the body to find food, loneliness signals the absence of social connections, and cues us to seek out or repair relationships. That’s why multiple studies link feelings of loneliness and social isolation to a range of stress responses, including increased pro-inflammatory proteins and dysregulated cortisol function. Conversely, studies link high levels of social support to lower cortisol, and link social activities like volunteering and giving social support to lower pro-inflammatory proteins.

Summer style updates and hacks

There is a very specific panic around summer dressing – all that flesh on show, for starters. So it always seems strange just how little thought we give to it. Obviously you care what you look like, but think how much time and energy you put into finding the perfect winter coat, or boots to see you through the post-Christmas doldrums. Some of you probably save up, or at least try on a few different styles to see what you like. Compare that to choosing a swimsuit or shorts. How often do you buy something the day before you go on holiday, or even at the airport? You’ll probably spend more time in your coat and boots but still, it’s a bit daft panic-buying some sandals before finding out, mid-hike, that the back strap rubs your heel and they slip off the moment your feet get sweaty. The truth is that aside from the fact that people equate wearing fewer clothes with being cooler – not true! – it’s very hard to know what to wear when the sun comes out. So we are here to help. How about a tank that needs no bra, a swimsuit that doubles as a top, and a quick-dry, no-towel towel? Or a T-shirt for the guys that’s cocktail-approved – and a hat the kids will actually wear?

The perfect summer look is a mythical unicorn, but there are things you can invest in now that will see you through until late September and, ideally, multiple summers to come. Counterintuitive though it is, the summer dress I wear most has long sleeves and is almost ankle length. A full-coverage but super-light dress is so much more useful than any number of itchy-bitsy sundresses. It keeps the rays off if it’s hot, the air conditioning off when you’re inside, and doesn’t leave you goosebumpy in the evening. Great for holiday days, office days, travelling days. Look for one you can wear with a bra – this one has a cut-out at the back, but above bra-strap height – and ensure it’s a generous fit.

A friend asked me the other day if she could borrow “that lovely Stella McCartney camisole”. Turns out she meant this, which is actually a silk camisole from M&S. So chic for a night out with jeans, blazer and kitten heels. Instead of striped trousers and a plain T-shirt, try clashing your prints. Think stripes and florals. Leopard and polka dots. Camo and gingham. The more unexpected, the better. If you have huge boobs, this isn’t going to work, so apologies, but for many women, a top with a built-in bra is ideal when you want that sleek, no-bra-strap vest-top look but also a bit of support. I love these Uniqlo ones because the support layer is totally invisible, and the tank isn’t too tight. Two years ago, I bought a black neoprene scallop-edged bikini from M&S. I love it so much that this year I added the one-piece version. I have it in emerald, which is now sold out, but the tomato red is possibly even nicer, and the white is very Talented Mr Ripley coded. It’s not so much that I’m too old to wear baggy knee-length shorts – no one is too old to wear anything – it’s more that I’m old enough to know I don’t have to wear anything that makes me feel ridiculous just because it’s fashionable. Same goes for tiny Daisy Dukes. A short that hits the mid-point of the thigh is the answer. This length can look a bit dowdy in linen, so I’d go with denim. And possibly a belt for added smarts.

Because sometimes you just really want something whimsical and holiday-fabulous. An embroidered boxy shirt is a good choice, because the laid-back silhouette offsets the cuteness. This one is just joyful. Maryrina? Ballet-Jane? The name needs work, but the style – a cross between a sturdy ballet flat and a Mary Jane – is a new staple. It looks great with baggy trousers, as it adds just enough femininity without sacrificing cool. My buy of the season is a secondhand leather belt with YSL hardware on the buckle, which I found for £30 on Depop. Charity shops are an excellent hunting ground too: you can get a leather belt for the price of something plastic on the high street that will age badly and end up in landfill. Alternatively, this Boden belt is a classic in a divine colour. Instead of trying to transport a sunhat in your suitcase, use a silk scarf to protect your scalp from the sun. You can also follow Alexa Chung’s lead and use it to add pizzazz to wardrobe basics such as jeans and a white T-shirt by knotting it around your waist. You will find the best versions on vintage sites. For bold, punchy prints, look for versions from the 1960s and 70s. I have tried on a lot of open-knit beach cover-ups over the past few summers, and these are my condensed thoughts: short and sweet is, surprisingly, easier and more flattering than full coverage. The string-vest ones make you look like a large fish caught in a net – an embroidered pattern, as here, is better. Black, brown or navy are most useful. I like this one.



India vs Pakistan viewership on JioHotstar surpasses ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2024 final audience records



Mumbai: JioStar, the official digital and broadcast partner of the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2026 on Friday announced that the India vs Pakistan match on JioHotstar set historic milestones on reach and consumption. The match recorded an unprecedented digital reach of 163 million, making it the highest match reach for any ICC event in the T20 format, even surpassing the viewership for the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2024 final between India and South Africa, according to a release. The scintillating performance by India also ensured a 56% growth in reach over India vs Pakistan in the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2024 on digital. On mobile, the game

Clocked the highest match reach in the league stage of any ICC T20 event and 1.2x more than the last India-Pakistan clash at the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2024. Recognised as the Greatest Rivalry in cricket, the India-Pakistan contest demonstrated its unmatched appeal as fans converged on JioHotstar. On CTV, the match reach was 2.4x higher than the India-Pakistan contest of the 2024 edition. The match generated a staggering 20 billion minutes of total watch time across all screens, underscoring the massive depth of fan engagement. This led to a 42% increase in consumption compared to the previous edition’s fixture, driven by the Indian national crick-

et team’s dominant performance as they extended their head-to-head record over Pakistan at the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup to 8-1.

On linear TV, the highly anticipated match delivered an equally stellar performance, clocking a TVR growth of 71% to become the highest-rated India-Pakistan T20 contest since 2021. The record-breaking engagement on linear TV highlighted the sustained power of traditional broadcast in delivering a massive, collective viewing experience. With associate nations competing hard and putting up a show in this edition, the cumulative reach of the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2026 at the end of the group stage is set to better that of the entire last edition on digital already. The build-up to the India vs Pakistan game at the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2026 and the Match itself had all the ingredients of a spectacle. The record-breaking reach and consumption reflect the scale at which fans all over engage with this tournament across platforms,” said Anup Govindan, Head - Sales, Sports, JioStar. This tournament has already delivered thrilling moments for fans worldwide, and the response to the India-Pakistan clash sets the tone for an exciting ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2026 with the best yet to come,” he added. The unprecedented viewership and engagement numbers for India vs Pakistan is further proof of the nation’s obsession with the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup,” said Siddharth Sharma, Head of Content, Sports - JioStar.

Manu Gandas fires brilliant 64 in round three, joining Shaurya Bhattacharya atop tournament leaderboard

Kolkata : Manu Gandas made a move with a six-under 64 in round three to join Shaurya Bhattacharya, who shot a 73, at the top of the leaderboard at the Rs 1.5 crore DP World Players Championship 2026 being played at the Tollygunge Club in Kolkata. Former PGTI Order of Merit champion Manu Gandas (66-69-64), who was overnight tied seventh and nine shots off the lead, put together an eagle, five birdies and a bogey on Thursday that moved his total to 11-under 199, according to a release. Shaurya Bhattacharya (64-62-73), the halfway leader by four shots, was not at his best on day three as his two birdies and five bogeys saw him slip into the joint lead at 11-under 199.

Om Prakash Chouhan (64), Akshay Sharma (64) and Sanjeev Kumar (67) were all tied third at 10-under 200.



Manu Gandas, who is well-versed with the Tollygunge Club course having won at the venue in the past, was slow off the blocks with his first birdie coming on the

Par-3 eighth courtesy a terrific tee shot. Gandas was then on a roll as he followed that up with another birdie on the ninth and a 17-foot eagle conversion on the 10th. Ma-

nu’s bogey on the 12th didn’t trouble him much as he rallied with three birdies thereafter which included a chip-in on the 14th and an 18-foot conversion on the 15th.

Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh Kabaddi Associations officially sanction the launch of JBC Kabaddi League

New Delhi: The Kabaddi Association of Jharkhand, Bihar State Kabaddi Association and Chhattisgarh Kabaddi Association, all affiliated members of the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI), have sanctioned a state-level kabaddi tournament titled JBC Kabaddi League. The league, short for the Jharkhand, Bihar and Chhattisgarh Kabaddi League, is scheduled to be held in the first half of 2026. The inaugural season will feature a total of five teams representing the three states, according to an official release. JBC Kabaddi League will offer emerging talent high visibility through a structured league format backed by organised scouting, player auction and professional exposure.

The league will drive fan engagement, community pride and pave a way for the development of local infrastructure required for the Kabaddi ecosystem in India. The JBC Kabaddi League is jointly promoted by Rannvijay Singh, an Indian-based sports entrepreneur. He also serves as the director of the Bhojpuri Industry Pre-



Mier League (BIPL) and is the franchise owner of the Awadh Ramdoots team in the Uttar Pradesh Kabaddi League (UPKL). Speaking on the launch of JBC Kabaddi League’s promoter Rannvijay Singh said, “State and local leagues are key growth pathways. Jharkhand, Bihar, and Chhattisgarh share a deep connection with kabaddi, played widely in schools and community spaces. The JBC Kabaddi League builds on this legacy by creating a structured platform that connects grassroots talent to the professional ecosystem. With the strong support of the state Kabaddi Associations, we are confident in

Our vision to make kabaddi mainstream and a viable career choice.” To further strengthen grassroots participation, the league has partnered with Randhir Singh Sehrawat as its Brand Ambassador. Popularly known as “Coach Saab,” Randhir Singh Sehrawat has devoted over four decades to Indian kabaddi as a player and national-level coach. A recipient of the Arjuna Award (1997) and the National Citizen Award (1991), becoming the first kabaddi player to receive the latter, he has won 93 medals across major tournaments, including Senior Nationals, Federation Cups and All India Rail-

way Championships. The women’s team of Andhra Pradesh Secretariat stunned Chandigarh Secretariat with a one-sided 39-6 verdict during the second day of the All-India Civil Services Kabaddi Tournament (Men & Women). It is being organised by the Department of Sports, Chandigarh Administration under the aegis of the Central Civil Services Cultural & Sports Board (CCSCSB) at the Sector 42 sports complex.

Andhra Pradesh Secretariat posted a 31-12 win over Central Secretariat Delhi, while Rajasthan Secretariat defeated Odisha Secretariat 21-12. In the men’s event, hosts Chandigarh Secretariat went down 19-40 against Government of Kerala and RSB Mumbai defeated RSB Bengaluru 35-29. Karnataka Secretariat posted a marginal 27-21 win over Andhra Pradesh Secretariat, and Bihar Secretariat defeated Madhya Pradesh Secretariat 39-15. Karnataka Secretariat won their second match by defeating RSB Chandigarh 38-19. third position, while Regional Sports Board Mumbai League.

T20 World Cup: New Zealand batters aim to tame Pakistan spinners clash

Colombo: The New Zealand middle-order’s ability to mount a strong response when faced with the guile and variety in Pakistan’s spin unit will be the deciding factor when the two sides face each other in the opening Super Eight Group 2 match of the T20 World Cup here on Saturday. The Kiwi batters are yet to hit the top gear in the ICC showpiece, except for openers Tim Seifert and Finn Allen, who have three fifties between them. But their middle-order colleagues have not been able to back them up sufficiently, as the likes of Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mark Chapman and Daryl Mitchell have struggled for consistency. COLOMBO: The New Zealand middle-order’s ability to mount a strong response when faced with the guile and variety in Pakistan’s spin unit will be the deciding factor when the two sides face each other in the opening Super Eight Group 2 match of the



T20 World Cup here on Saturday. The Kiwi batters are yet to hit the top gear in the ICC showpiece, except for openers Tim Seifert and Finn Allen, who have three fifties between them. But their middle-order colleagues have not been able to back them up sufficiently, as the likes of Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mark Chapman and Daryl Mitchell have struggled for consistency. Phillips and Ravindra have a fifty each but they don’t have anything much to show Around overall. From four

Matches, Ravindra has made 72 runs, but 59 of them came in a single match against Canada. That they will be playing in Colombo for the first time in this tournament complicates matters further. In contrast, Pakistan have been stationed in this port city since the beginning of the World Cup, and have already played two matches at the Premadasa. Their bowlers, spinners to be particular, know the pace and length required to be effective on this sluggish pitch where shot-making needs more prudence than bravado.

Radha Yadav’s heroics propel India A Women into Rising Stars Asia Cup final against Bangladesh

Radha Yadav’s all-round brilliance powers India A

New Delhi: India A Women stormed into the final of the Women’s Asia Cup Rising Stars with a commanding five-wicket victory over Sri Lanka A Women at the Terdthai Cricket Ground on Thursday. An all-round masterclass from Radha Yadav proved decisive as India chased down 119 with 39 balls to spare to set up a summit clash against Bangladesh on Sunday, February 22. India will now meet Bangladesh in the final after the latter produced a dominant display in the second semi-final. Bangladesh crushed Pakistan by 54 runs, bowling them out for just 56 in 16.4 overs while defending a modest 110. Opting to bat, Sri Lanka A Women were restricted to 118 in 19.4 overs after a disciplined bowling display from India. Sanjana Kavindi top-scored with 31 off 35 balls, while Shashini Gimhani added a brisk 22. However, Sri Lanka struggled to build lasting partnerships as wickets fell at regular intervals. Radha Yadav was the chief destroyer with the ball, returning impressive figures of 4 for 19 in 3.4 overs. Her left-arm



spin dismantled the middle And lower order, ensuring Sri Lanka could never accelerate in the death overs. She found strong support from Prema Rawat, who claimed 2 for 9 in a miserly four-over spell, and Tanuja Kanwar, who chipped in with two wickets of her own. In reply, India A made a confident start despite losing Nandini Kashyap early. Dinesh Vrinda counterattacked brilliantly, smashing 42 off just 20 deliveries, laced with eight boundaries, to seize the momentum. Anushka Sharma contributed a fluent 27 as India surged ahead in the chase.

Though Sri Lanka’s Shashini Gimhani struck twice to briefly stall the progress, Radha once again stepped up — this time with the bat.

Leading the side, she remained unbeaten on 31 off 18 balls, striking seven fours to finish the job in style as India reached 119 for 5 in just 13.3 overs. With momentum on their side and Radha Yadav in inspired form, India A will head into Sunday’s final brimming with confidence. India A Women reached the final of the Rising Stars Asia Cup by defeating Sri Lanka A Womenby five wickets in the semi-final held on February 20, 2026. The team will face Bangladeshin the summit clash on February 22 after the latter defeated Pakistan in the other semi-final. Captain Radha Yadavled the victory with an all-round performance, taking 4 for 19 with the ball to restrict Sri Lanka to 118 before scoring an unbeaten 31 off 18 balls.

Dinesh Vrindaalso played a pivotal role in the chase, smashing 42 runs off just 20 deliveries to help India reach the target with 39 balls to spare.

The team’s path to the knockouts included a dominant eight-wicket win over Pakistan A Women, where Vrinda scored an unbeaten 55. This victory allowed India to bounce back from an early tournament setback after losing their opening Group A match to the United Arab Emirates. Indian opener Smriti Mandhanawon the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award for 2026 following her standout performances in2025. She earned the honor after playing a starring role in India’s victory at the 2025 ICC Women’s World Cupand leading Royal Challengers Bengaluruto their second consecutive Women’s Premier League (WPL) title. The award was determined by a grand jury featuring sporting icons such as Leander Paesand Anju Bobby George. Mandhana, who scored 434 runs during the World Cup campaign, was over other Lifetime Achievement.

Hardik Singh named India captain

New Delhi: Midfielder Hardik Singh has been named captain of the Indian men’s hockey team for the upcoming FIH Pro League matches in Hobart from February 20 to 25, after regular skipper Harmanpreet Singh opted out due to “personal reasons”. The upcoming leg of the tournament will feature India alongside Spain and hosts Australia at the Tasmania Hockey Centre in Hobart. India come into the Hobart leg after a disappointing outing in the Rourkela phase, where they lost all four matches, including a 0-8 defeat against Argentina. After a disappointing four matches in Rourkela, where the results didn’t go our way, we’ve learned some good lessons and made some notable improvements,” head coach Craig Fulton said. Hardik, a two-time Olympic bronze medallist, will lead a squad that includes several youngsters such as Amandeep Lakra and Manmeet leg. Seamer Yudhvir Singh Charak, who picked up three wickets in the match, said, “I can’t tell you, because we’ve been waiting for this for 4-5 years. And today, we’ve finally achieved this. I mean, I can’t tell you how emotional I am about this.

India look to bounce back in Hobart leg of FIH Men’s Pro League 2025-26



New Delhi: The Indian men’s hockey team is geared up for a fresh start as they shift focus to the Hobart leg of the FIH Men’s Pro League 2025-26, scheduled from February 20 to 25 at the Tasmania Hockey Centre in Australia. Eager to bounce back and deliver improved performances, India will take on Spain and hosts Australia in what promises to be a highly competitive block of matches. The recent home leg at Rourkela was highly disappointing, with Team India losing all their matches, 1-3 against Belgium, 0-8 against Argentina. While the recent Rourkela leg proved to be a steep learning curve, the team has regrouped with a positive mindset. They view the upcoming fixtures as a vi-

tal opportunity to test combinations, refine their structure, and build momentum ahead of the upcoming Men’s FIH Hockey World Cup and Asian Games in Japan this year, a release said. The 24-member squad features a dynamic mix of seasoned campaigners and exciting young talent ready to make their mark on the international stage. India will commence their Hobart campaign against Spain on February 21, followed by a high-octane clash against Australia on February 22. They will face Spain again on February 24, before concluding the Hobart leg with a final match against the formidable Australian side on February 25.

Recent history suggests a thrilling set of matches awaits.