

NIC observes Safer Internet Day in Bishnupur

Imphal, Feb 10:The National Informatics Centre (NIC), Bishnupur, under the overall supervision of the District Administration, Bishnupur, today organised a one-day Safer Internet Day, 2026 at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV), Bishnupur. Speaking at the occasion, District Informatics Officer (DIO), Bishnupur, R.K. Romita, highlighted the various roles undertaken by NIC in the field of e-Governance and stressed the importance of observing Safer Internet Day. She stated that Safer Internet Day is observed on the second Tuesday of February every year, as per the guidelines of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India. She further informed that the theme for this year is “Smart Tech, Safe Choices: Exploring the Safe and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)”. Addressing the gathering, Assistant Commissioner to the Deputy Commissioner, Bishnupur, Sh. Gunamani, stated that the objective of organising Safer Internet Day is to sensitise people about safer internet practices, digital awareness, and responsible use of online platforms. The AC further mentioned that the observance of Safer Internet Day is highly relevant in the present digital era, where internet usage has become an integral part of daily life, especially among students and young users.

Fresh Houses Burnt in Ukhrul as Kuki–Naga Tensions Persist

Imphal, Feb 10: Violence continued in the Litan area of Manipur’s Naga-majority Ukhrul district, with several more houses set on fire on Tuesday morning amid ongoing tensions between Naga and Kuki-Zo communities. Reports of gunfire also emerged from the area, adding to the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty.

The unrest, which began on Sunday evening following an alleged assault, has shown no signs of easing despite prohibitory orders imposed under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, the deployment of Army and paramilitary forces, and appeals for calm from Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh.

Civil society organisations representing both communities held a meeting on Monday at Litan Sareikhong in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Losii Dikho and two local MLAs, urging restraint and peace. However, the situation on the ground remains tense.

Official sources said that between 27 and 28 houses belonging to members of both communities were burnt between Sunday and Monday. The number of houses torched on Tuesday morning has not yet been officially confirmed, though local residents claimed that more than ten additional homes were destroyed.

The immediate trigger for the violence was reportedly the assault of a Tangkhul Naga man by a group of Kuki-Zo individuals on Saturday night. Tensions escalated the following afternoon when Naga villagers approached the chief of a nearby Kuki-Zo village, demanding that those responsible be handed over.

Later that evening, stone pelting left several people, including a police officer, injured. This was followed by arson attacks during the night, with reports that shots were also fired during the clashes.

The violence has disrupted road connectivity between Ukhrul and the Imphal valley. To ease travel difficulties for civilians, the state government has arranged a special helicopter sortie on the Imphal–Ukhrul–Imphal route for Tuesday and is planning two additional sorties on Wednesday. These services are being operated in addition to the regular helicopter schedule, according to an official statement.



In a separate development, Manipur security forces arrested three militants allegedly linked to a banned insurgent group in connection with a recent bomb blast in Imphal West district. Police said the arrests followed an investigation into an explosion that occurred at Lilong Chajing three days earlier.

According to a police statement, the three arrested individuals are active members of the proscribed Kangleipak Communist Party (Apunba). They were picked up from different locations in Imphal West and Imphal East districts over the past two days, and a pistol along with ammunition was recovered from them.

Security forces have stepped up search and combing operations across Manipur since ethnic violence broke out in May 2023 between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities. Officials said that more than 260 people have lost their lives and thousands have been displaced in the prolonged conflict so far.

Extortion letter allegedly linked to NSCN-K (YA) demanding ‘Service and Income Tax’ from PWD surfaces in Longding

Itanagar, Feb 10: A letter allegedly issued by the NSCN-K (YA), a Naga insurgent group, demanding payment of “service and income tax” from the Public Works Department (PWD) in Arunachal Pradesh’s Longding district has surfaced on social media, creating concern among officials and residents in the area. Authorities have confirmed that they are examining the matter, though no official confirmation has yet been made regarding the authenticity of the letter. According to reports, the letter asks the PWD authorities in Longding to deposit 20 percent of their “service and income tax” for the year 2026 without delay.

The message also carries a warning stating that failure to comply would make the concerned officials “responsible” for any consequences. The document has been widely circulated online over the past few days, drawing attention to the issue of extortion demands allegedly made by underground groups operating in the region. The NSCN-K (YA), a faction of the Naga insurgent movement, is believed to operate mainly from bases across the international border in Myanmar but is said to have influence in parts of Tirap, Changlang, and Longding districts of Arunachal Pradesh. Security agencies have been monitoring the activities of



different insurgent factions in these areas for several years, as such groups have often been accused of issuing similar demands to government offices, contractors, and businesses. Sources familiar with the mat-

ter said that it is not yet clear whether the letter was issued by the main leadership of the organisation or by local operatives claiming to represent the group. Investigating agencies are attempting to verify the origin

of the document and determine whether any official communication of this kind was actually sent to the department. Officials have so far avoided making detailed comments, stating that inquiries are still in the early stages.

Training programme on cybersecurity begins at NFSU Guwahati

Guwahati, Feb 10: The five-day Faculty Development Programme (FDP) on “Cybersecurity and Digital Forensics” commenced at the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU), Guwahati Campus.

The programme, being held from February 9 to 13, is sponsored by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) under the Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA) Phase III project.

The FDP aims to strengthen capacity building and enhance professional expertise in the rapidly evolving domains of cybersecurity and digital forensics. Eminent speakers and subject

experts from premier institutions including IIT Guwahati, IIIT Guwahati, NFSU Gandhinagar and Guwahati, Tezpur University, and the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL), Guwahati are participating in the programme, sharing their specialised knowledge and practical insights with participants.

The training programme will cover a wide spectrum of contemporary topics such as Artificial Intelligence in Cybersecurity, Operating System Security, Malware Analysis, and other specialised areas relevant to emerging cyber threats and digital investigations. Designed to provide

both theoretical understanding and hands-on exposure, the FDP seeks to equip participants with advanced skills required to address modern cybersecurity challenges.

The programme is expected to benefit faculty members, professionals, police personnel, and forensic scientists by enhancing their technical competencies and strengthening institutional capabilities in digital security and forensic investigation. Through this initiative, NFSU Guwahati aims to contribute to capacity building and awareness in cybersecurity, an area of growing national importance in today’s digital era.

Middle Subansiri Project Gets Green Signal as Lower Subansiri Units Begin Power Generation

Itanagar, Feb 10: With two units of the Lower Subansiri Hydro Power Project already generating commercial electricity and a third unit set to come online shortly, NHPC has received all necessary clearances from the Central Government to begin construction of the Middle Subansiri Hydroelectric Project. At the same time, preliminary studies are underway for the proposed Upper Subansiri project.

Official sources confirmed that the Government of India has granted investment clearance for the Middle Subansiri project, which is expected to generate more than 1,600 MW of power. Environmental clearance has also been secured, and the tendering process for construction has already begun.

Regarding the Lower Subansiri project, two units are currently in commercial operation, producing a combined 500 MW of electricity. The third unit is likely to start commercial generation within the next few days. If work progresses as scheduled, all eight units of the project are expected to become operational by March 2027.

However, officials acknowledged that reduced river flow during the dry season will make it difficult to operate all eight units continuously. During the monsoon, when water levels rise, full-capacity generation is expected to be possible. At



present, the Subansiri river is already experiencing low water flow.

Sources explained that during the dry months, only one or two units are run during the daytime to conserve water, allowing all units to operate during peak demand periods. At least one unit must remain operational at all times to ensure the river does not dry up.

Responding to concerns about downstream flooding, officials stated that the Lower Subansiri project includes flood moderation measures, with flood cushioning and storage capacity of up to 15 meters. After assessing historical peak flood levels of the Subansiri river, authorities believe there should be no major flood-related issues during the rainy season.

Himanta files Rs 500 cr defamation case against Gaurav Gogoi, others

Guwahati, Feb 10: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday filed a Rs 500 crore defamation case against Congress leaders Gaurav Gogoi, Jitendra Singh and Bhupesh Baghel, accusing them of making false and defamatory allegations against him.

In a post on X, Sarma said, “Today, I have filed a defamation case seeking ₹500 crore in damages against Congress leaders Jitendra

Singh, Bhupesh Baghel and Gaurav Gogoi for making false, malicious and defamatory allegations against me through a press conference.”

Sarma did not mention about the allegations, but this comes days after Gogoi alleged that Sarma and his family owned around 12,000 bighas (approximately 4,000 acres) of land. He said that rules were manipulated to convert agricultural land into industrial land. Gogoi said if

voted to power, the Congress would probe these acquisitions and redistribute land to the poor and landless if wrongdoing is found.

Baghel and Jitendra Singh echoed similar allegations, claiming that Sarma’s family owned large tracts of land and multiple companies. They alleged irregularities date back to before Sarma joined the BJP in 2015. Sarma, however, rejected the charges as “false and malicious”.

Parties move SC over Assam CM’s ‘shooting video’

Guwahati, Feb 10: A public interest litigation (PIL) has been filed in the Supreme Court alleging that a series of statements and actions by senior political leaders, including Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, amount to the incitement of hatred and a breach of constitutional responsibility by holders of high public office. The petition refers to several remarks attributed to Sarma, including references to “Miya Muslims,” the term “flood jihad,” and statements suggesting the removal of members of a particular religious community from electoral rolls. According to the petitioners, these comments target the Muslim community and undermine constitutional principles such as equality, secularism, and fraternity. The plea argues that similar divisive rhetoric has been used by ministers and officials in other states as well, describing it as part of a broader and concerning pattern of public discourse from individuals in positions of authority. Filed by a group of 12 social activists, the petition seeks judicial intervention to address what it describes as repeated and irresponsible public statements by constitutional functionaries. Among the petitioners are academic Roop Rekha Verma, former Delhi Lieutenant Governor Najeeb Jung, journalist and activist John Dayal, and others. The PIL cites remarks by political leaders from multiple states, including Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, referring to the latter’s “kathmulla” comment made in the state Assembly. It also mentions statements attributed to Maharashtra minister Nitesh Rane that were allegedly derogatory toward Muslims, and to National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, who was reported to have urged youth to “avenge history.”

The petition further draws attention to a now-deleted video that had been shared on the Assam BJP’s official social media account. According to the plea, the video depicted Chief Minister Sarma firing at images of men shown wearing skull caps and beards, alongside text such as “foreigner free Assam” and “no mercy.” The petitioners contend that the visuals and language carried clear communal overtones. In parts of the video, Sarma was portrayed in a stylised, cinematic manner, with accompanying Assamese text reportedly stating phrases such as “Why did you not go to Pakistan?” and “There is no forgiveness for Bangladeshis.” The petition notes that the video appeared during a period of heightened political and social tensions related to rhetoric directed at Bengali-origin Muslims in Assam. The petition asserts that such conduct by individuals holding high constitutional office erodes public trust in governance and has urged the Supreme Court to frame clear guidelines to prevent hate speech and divisive rhetoric by constitutional authorities. In a related development, leaders of the CPI(M) and CPI have also approached the Supreme Court seeking action against the Assam Chief Minister. Advocate Nizam Pasha mentioned the matter before the Chief Justice of India, requesting urgent intervention over what he described as disturbing speeches, including a recent video allegedly showing the Chief Minister firing at members of a particular community. He stated that complaints had been filed but no FIRs were registered. Responding briefly, the Chief Justice observed that during election periods, many political disputes are brought before the Supreme Court, and said the matter would be examined and listed for a hearing at a later date.

2 Cong MLAs file FIR against controversial video circulated by Assam BJP

Guwahati, Feb 10: Two Congress MLAs on Tuesday filed an FIR at Dispur police station in Guwahati against the ruling BJP for circulating a controversial video of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on social media. The FIR was lodged by legislators Sibamoni Bora and Diganta Barman.

The Assam BJP had posted the now-deleted video on its official social media handle on Saturday, which showed Sarma purportedly taking aim with a rifle and firing a shot at two people, one wearing a skull cap and the other with a beard, with “point-blank shot” as



the caption. The video was deleted after a massive political backlash. “The content (of the video) targeting a particular community

is highly provocative and communal which will definitely create social disharmony amongst the people. Therefore, you are request-

ed to register a case under the appropriate sections of penal law and take necessary action in this regard,” the FIR stated.

Paiwang Konyak Meets Nadda

New Delhi , Feb 10: Nagaland Minister for Health & Family Welfare, P. Paiwang Konyak, called on Union Health Minister J. P. Nadda in New Delhi on Monday. During the meeting, Konyak expressed his appreciation for Nadda’s support towards the development of Nagaland’s eastern region, particularly for the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement for the Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority. The Nagaland Minister briefed the Union Minister on ongoing infrastructure development initiatives under the State Programme Implementation.

Election Commission reviews Assam’s poll preparedness ahead of Assembly elections

Guwahati, Feb 10: The Election Commission (EC) has reviewed Assam’s preparedness for the upcoming Assembly elections, focusing on district-level readiness and coordination among administrative and enforcement agencies, an official statement said on February 9.

The review was conducted over two days beginning Sunday in the presence of senior EC officials. Assembly elections in the state are expected to be held in March–April.

On the first day, discussions assessed district-level preparedness, with participation from the state’s Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), senior police officials including IGs and DIGs, district election officers, and superintendents of police. Key areas reviewed included election management, administrative coordination, vulnerability assessment, and security arrangements.

The second day focused on coordination with enforcement agencies. The meeting was attended by the CEO, the state police nodal officer, and officials involved in state force coordination. Deliberations centered on enforcement preparedness, inter-agency coordination, effective implementation of the Model Code of Conduct, and strict compliance with electoral laws.



The two-day review enabled a comprehensive assessment of poll preparedness at both administrative and enforcement levels. Emphasis was laid on seamless coordination among stakehold-

ers, effective deployment of resources, and adherence to statutory and procedural frameworks to ensure the smooth and fair conduct of elections, the statement added.

Activists approach court after Assam CM’s deleted shooting video

Guwahati, Feb 10: A public interest litigation has been filed in the Supreme Court alleging incitement of hatred and irresponsible statements by high constitutional functionaries, citing anti-Muslim remarks by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and other senior ministers and governors as examples of violations of constitutional responsibility by persons holding high office. Apart from Sarma’s remarks on “Miya Muslims,” the petition also refers to comments such as “flood jihad.” It further cites his statement suggesting that members of a particular religious community should be removed from the voters’ list. The petitioners have said that similar divisive remarks have also been made by ministers and officials in other states. The petition flags what it describes as repeated statements targeting the Muslim community and argues that such remarks undermine constitutional values and the duties attached to high public offices. The plea has been filed by 12 social activists, including Roop Rekha Verma, former Lieutenant Governor Najeeb Jung, John Dayal and others, seeking the court’s intervention in the matter. The petitioners cited examples of what they described as “several concerning statements by public officials” while



filing the PIL against persons holding high positions. The instances listed include remarks by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath’s “kathmulla” comments made in the Assembly.

The plea also refers to statements by Maharashtra minister Nitesh Rane, who reportedly termed Muslims as

“Pakistani pimps”, and remarks attributed to National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, in which he allegedly exhorted the youth to “avenge history.”

The now-deleted video shared by the Assam BJP’s social media account showed Sarma firing point-blank at images of men wearing skull caps and beards. Text flashed across the screen reading “foreigner free Assam” and “No mercy”, alongside other phrases

that critics described as overtly communal.

In some frames, Sarma was portrayed as a hero from a Western-style film, while Assamese text in the video reportedly read, “Why did you not go to Pakistan?” and “There is no forgiveness to Bangladeshis.” The timing of the post coincided with heightened tensions over rhetoric targeting Bengali-origin Muslims in Assam.

Vows strict action against areca nut smugglers

Aizawl, Feb 10: Mizoram Home Minister K. Sapdanga on Monday warned that the state government will take strict action against those involved in cross-border areca nut smuggling, including government officials and police personnel.

Addressing a gathering at the ruling Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM) office here, Sapdanga alleged that the illegal trade has historically involved both politicians and police officers.

He noted that the administration is already purging these elements from the system. “The ZPM is committed to fighting areca nut smuggling, and it is regrettable that opposition parties are attacking us on this campaign. Politicians involved in this illegal trade have been rejected by the voters, and implicated police personnel are being retired,” Sapdanga said.

“Any person involved in areca nut smuggling, whether they are in active service or civilians, will not be spared and they must be strongly dealt with,” he added. The minister highlighted that restriction on foreign imports has provided a significant economic boost to local growers, particularly in the Hachhek area of Mamit district, who have seen increased

demand for their produce following the crackdown. Sapdanga also announced an intensification of ‘Operation Jericho,’ a joint initiative launched on September 1 last year jointly by the home and excise departments and the state’s largest civil society organisation Young Mizo Association (YMA) to curb the escalating drug trafficking and addiction crisis in the state.

Pointing out the alarming statistics of drug addiction, he said there are more than 10,000 drug addicts in Aizawl alone, making the state capital unsafe to go out at



DC, SP of East Jaintia Hills HC in illegal mine blast case

Guwahati, Feb 10: The deputy commissioner and the SP of East Jaintia Hills district on Monday appeared before the Meghalaya High Court in connection with the February 5 blast at an illegal coal mine in the district that claimed 27 lives. The HC had on Friday taken cognisance of a media report on the incident and directed the two senior district officials to appear in person and apprise it of the action taken. SP Vikash Kumar said an FIR has now been registered in connection with the illegal mining blast. “The HC had sought

compliance, and we were called for personal appearance in that connection,” he told PTI after the hearing. “As the matter is sub judice, we cannot say much at this stage. We will do whatever is required as per law,” he said. According to the district police chief, search, rescue and investigation were continuing simultaneously and no more fresh recovery of bodies was made on Sunday and Monday. The SP said arrests have already been made in the case. “The investigation is moving in the right direction and I am sure it will be taken to its

logical conclusion,” he said. Teams from the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force and specialised rescue units are deployed at the site, he said. Further decisions on the continuation of the operation will be taken after assessing the terrain and prevailing conditions, the SP added. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma had announced that a judicial inquiry will be commissioned to investigate the blast. Police have arrested the two owners of the mine while a third one is on the run.

Fresh violence in Mnp’s Ukhrul as houses burnt

Imphal, Feb 10: Fresh violence broke out in Manipur’s Ukhrul district on Monday afternoon after armed miscreants allegedly set fire to more houses in Litan Sareikhong village, officials said. Armed groups also fired several rounds in the air in the vicinity of the hill village, forcing residents to flee with essential belongings to safer areas in neighbouring Kangpokpi district. Several Tangkhul villagers were also reported to have left the area. Violence first started in the area on Saturday night after a Tangkhul Naga community member was allegedly assaulted by seven to eight persons at Litan village. The matter was settled by the victim’s side and the chief of Litan Sareikhong, and both parties mutually agreed to resolve the issue through customary means, with a meeting scheduled for Sunday, the officials said.

However, the meeting did not take place. Instead, a group of villagers from nearby Sikibung allegedly launched an attack on the residence of the chief of Litan Sareikhong, they said. The villagers also reportedly fired several rounds while passing through the vicinity of Litan police station. On Sunday night, two tribal groups engaged in intense stone pelting at the village, prompting the administration to clamp prohibitory orders. Around midnight on Monday, several houses of Tangkhul Naga community members were set on fire at Litan Sareikhong, allegedly by Kuki militants. A few houses of those belonging to the Kuki community were also torched in a nearby area, officials said. Tangkhul is the largest Naga tribe in Manipur. Reacting to the developments, state minister Govindas Konhoujam said the situation on the ground remained tense. “The ground situation is very tense. Deputy Chief Minister L. Dikho is at the spot interacting with villagers. A meeting was held and shortly after that, there were reports of more houses being burnt. Till 5 am today, 17 houses were burnt. Now, altogether 21

houses have been gutted,” Konhoujam told reporters. “As there are reports of continued violence, additional security forces have been sent,” Konhoujam added. Earlier, a team led by deputy chief minister L. Dikho, Tangkhul Naga civil bodies and Kuki MLA held a meeting at Litan. “The meeting was attended by the representatives of the Tangkhul Naga Long, Tangkhul Shanao Long along with Assam Rifles officers, Ukhrul MLA, state government officials and representatives from Kuki community” an official said. Dikho also inspected areas affected by the clash between the Tangkhul and Kuki communities and held meetings with Naga and Kuki village heads. Dikho, emphasising the shared desire for peace, said both communities were positive and agreed that the violence must stop. He told reporters, “The meeting has been very fruitful and positive. Everyone wants peace. It is difficult to reach a conclusion immediately, but there is consensus that the violence should not continue.” Dikho also said the incident was triggered by the actions of a few individuals and should not be allowed to escalate into broader communal tension. “Security forces are quite active and sufficiently deployed. We are doing our best to ensure that peace is restored,” Dikho added.

Security forces are trying to control the situation with foot patrolling, deployment at critical points as well. Earlier in the day, Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh, in a social media post, appealed to all communities to exercise restraint and maintain peace. “Visited RIMS Hospital this morning to meet those injured in the unfortunate Litan incident in Ukhrul District & assured all necessary medical support for their speedy recovery,” he said.

“The incident, arising out of a misunderstanding, is now under control. I appeal to all communities to exercise restraint, uphold the rule of law, and maintain peace and harmony,” the CM added.

Tripura steps up anti-drug drive, illegal cannabis worth over Rs 125 crore



Agartala, Feb 10: A series of intelligence-led operations across Tripura has led to the destruction of illegal cannabis plantations valued at more than Rs 125 crore, underlining a renewed push by security forces to choke narcotics cultivation at the source. In the latest action, the Assam Rifles, working jointly with the Forest Department, carried out an operation in the Boxanagar area, around 41 km south of Agartala. About 1.75 lakh ganja saplings spread across nearly 50 acres were uprooted and destroyed. Officials put the estimated market value of the crop at Rs 25.72 crore. Security officials said the operation was based on specific inputs and reflected close coordination between the As-

sam Rifles and civil authorities. “The focus is on disrupting cultivation before it enters the trafficking chain,” an official said, adding that efforts would continue to target vulnerable forest and border areas. The Boxanagar operation follows one of the largest crackdowns on illegal cannabis cultivation in the state earlier this month. On February 1, joint teams conducted a day-long operation in the Dulunga forest area under Sonamura subdivision of Sepahijala district. Acting on confidential information, forces destroyed over five lakh ganja plants across 92 separate plots covering around 170 acres. The estimated market value of the destroyed crop was pegged at about Rs 75 crore. Days earli-

er, on January 29, security forces carried out another coordinated operation in forest areas spanning Kamalanagar, Krishnadola, Dulunga and Bijoy Nagar in Sonamura subdivision. Over nine hours, teams identified and razed 41 cultivation plots across nearly 65 acres, destroying approximately 1.80 lakh mature plants worth an estimated Rs 27 crore. Officials said the repeated operations point to a sustained strategy aimed at dismantling organised cannabis cultivation networks and preventing the spread of narcotics. The Assam Rifles reiterated that it remains “resolute in its commitment to eliminate the drug menace” and protect communities, particularly the youth, from the impact of illegal drugs.

Endangered Hoolock Gibbon Electrocuted on Railway Line Inside Assam Sanctuary

Guwahati, Feb 10: In a tragic incident that has alarmed conservationists, an endangered hoolock gibbon was electrocuted on a railway line passing through one of Assam’s most biologically rich forests, once again highlighting the serious risks the track poses to wildlife.

Although the railway line has long been considered a threat to animals in the area — particularly tree-dwelling species like hoolock gibbons — recent electrification of the track without adequate mitigation measures has significantly increased the danger.

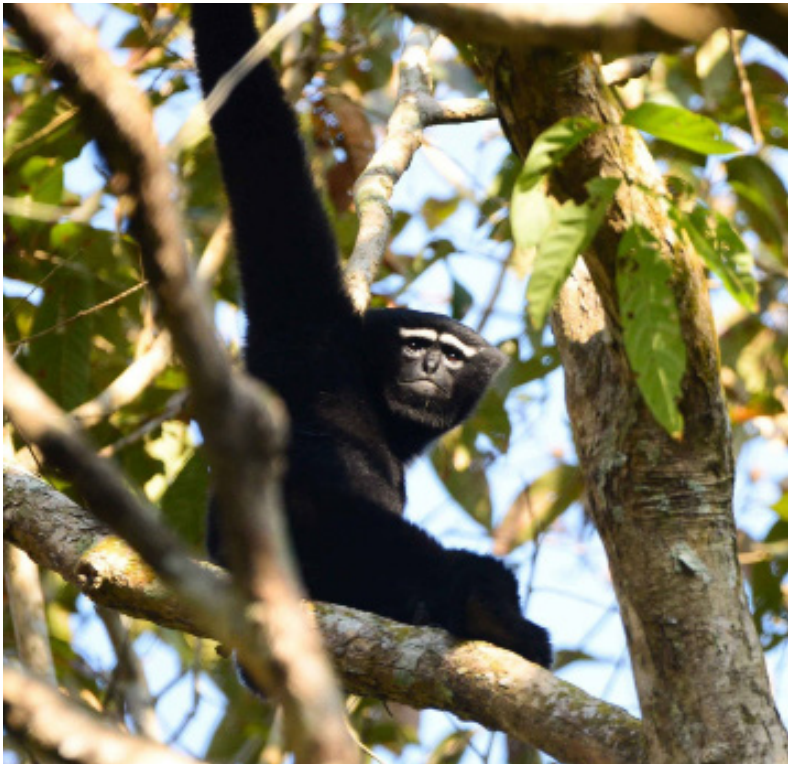
Forest officials confirmed that the victim was an adult male gibbon found dead due to electrocution inside the Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary near Mariani in Jorhat district.

Arboreal animals such as gibbons rarely descend to the ground, as they avoid open spaces where they become vulnerable to predators and vehicle movement. However, the railway line has fragmented the forest canopy, forcing animals to take risky routes. Gibbon families living on either side of the track — especially the four to five groups in the smaller Compartment I — are now effectively cut off from each other.

The hoolock gibbon, India’s only ape species, enjoys the highest level of legal protection under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Despite repeated appeals from experts to reroute the 1.65-km railway stretch outside the sanctuary, authorities proceeded with electrification, raising concerns over the species’ long-term survival.

Conservation organisations, including the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), have recommended installing artificial canopy bridges at key points to allow arboreal animals to cross safely. However, many experts argue that relocating the short railway stretch outside the sanctuary would be the most effective permanent solution. Primatologist Dr. Dilip Chetry noted that the railway line has turned the sanctuary into a “forest island,” cutting it off from surrounding habitats. He warned that gibbons, which depend entirely on continuous forest canopy, are among the worst affected. The fragmentation has also reduced genetic exchange between groups, further threatening their survival.

Earlier attempts to install artificial canopy bridges were unsuccessful, as the designs did not match the specialised brachiation movement of



gibbons. WII had suggested building seven properly designed canopy bridges, but experts caution that any future doubling of the railway line could make such mitigation measures ineffective.

Spread over just 20.98 square kilometres, Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary is home to seven species of primates — the highest diversity in Assam — including around 125 hoolock gibbons living in 26 groups.

Fire Prevention Week 2026 launched in Lawngtlai

Aizawl, Feb 10: Fire Prevention Week 2026 was formally launched in Mizoram’s Lawngtlai, under the initiative of the Lawngtlai District Level Committee on Fire Prevention.

The programme was inaugurated by Dr Lorrain Lalpekliana Chinzah, Adviser to the Chief Minister and MLA of Lawngtlai East, who attended as the chief guest. The programme was chaired by Lawngtlai Deputy Commissioner Donny Lalruatsanga.

In his inaugural address, Dr Lorrain Lalpekliana Chinzah emphasised the importance of observing Fire Prevention Week to ensure the safety of Lawngtlai district from forest fires. He stated that the Government is making continuous efforts to control forest fires in Mizoram, which cause widespread damage every year, and has even instituted incentives to encourage villages to actively participate in forest fire prevention.

He noted that forest fires are more frequent during the dry season and stressed the need for extra caution, especially by farmers and jhum cultivators, urging them to strictly follow safe fire practices.

The MLA highlighted that forest fires cause severe damage to valuable natural resources such as trees, bamboo, wildlife, and water sources, and said it is now a crucial time for people to act responsibly to prevent further environmental degradation. The chief guest urged Village Level Fire Prevention Committees to work with full dedication, particularly in enforcing guidelines and creating awareness among the public. He also called upon Government departments, NGOs, Village Councils, media persons, and churches to actively contribute to forest fire prevention efforts.

The Adviser to Chief Minister further stated that preventing forest fires cannot be left to others alone and that every individual has a responsibility.

While Lawngtlai district has received awards in the past for forest fire prevention, he observed that there is still significant scope for improvement and encouraged all stakeholders to work collectively to secure the top position this year. Emphasising that unity is strength, he appealed to the people of Lawngtlai District to work together to prevent forest fires and protect forests for a greener and healthier environment. Deputy Commissioner Donny Lalruatsanga, in his address, welcomed the participants and reminded everyone that preventing forest fires is a shared responsibility. He appealed to the people of Lawngtlai district to remain vigilant and cautious to avoid forest fires.

Mizoram Govt warns of strict action against areca nut smuggling

AIZAWL, Feb 10: The Mizoram government has warned of strict action against cross-border areca nut smuggling, alerting that no one, including government officials and police personnel, will be spared if found involved in the illegal trade. “The Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM) government is committed to eliminating areca nut smuggling,” State Home Minister K. Sapdanga said, while addressing a gathering at the ZPM office in Aizawl.

Sapdanga said the administration has already begun purging such elements from the system. “The Opposition has been attacking the government’s anti-smuggling drive. But politicians linked to the illegal trade have been rejected by voters, while police personnel found complicit are being retired. Anyone involved in areca nut smuggling, whether in active service or civilians, will face strict action,” the minister warned. “Restrictions on foreign imports have significantly benefitted local areca nut growers, particularly in the Hachhek area of Mamit district, where demand for locally produced areca nut has increased following the crackdown,” he said. He further announced the intensification of ‘Operation Jericho’, a joint initiative launched in September last year by the home and excise departments in coordination with civil society organisations, including the Young Mizo Association (YMA). The operation aims to curb the rising drug trafficking and addiction crisis in the state. Underscoring the gravity of the situation, Sapdanga said Aizawl alone has more than 10,000 drug addicts, making the state capital increasingly unsafe after dark, not just for women but for men as well.

Khandu Inaugurates Tsari Gonpa

SUBANSIRI, Feb 10: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Tuesday inaugurated the Tsari Taksing Gajang Shedup Dargeyling Gonpa in Taksing, Upper Subansiri, a site of rich spiritual and cultural significance. During the ceremony, the CM offered Mandala and ceremonial khadas to the sacred portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, praying for compassion, wisdom, and universal

brotherhood. He said the Gonpa would continue to inspire faith and values among devotees. Pema Khandu also participated in the enthronement of Aka Tulku Tsering Chajjee Rinpoche La as Abbot (Khenpo) of the Gonpa. He offered Mandala and ceremonial khadas and sought blessings for peace, harmony, and the well-being of all. The CM extended his best Tulku Tsering Chajjee Rinpoche nlightenment.

Outreach near Manas NP sensitises 1000 students on importance of rhino conservation

Guwahati, Feb 10: A series of ‘Rhino Goes to School’ awareness programme was conducted during a span of four days across four schools located in the fringe areas of Manas National Park & Tiger Reserve (MNP&TR) in Assam, covering the Bhuyanpara, Kokilabari and Panbari forest ranges.

The programme was conducted at Barmajra M.E. School, Khamardwisa High School, Panbari M.E. Girls School and Labdangguri M.E. School, reaching nearly 1,000 students and aiming to strengthen wildlife conservation awareness with a special focus on the iconic Greate one-horned rhinoceros.

The programme was guided by Dr. C. Ramesh, IFS, Chief Conservator of Forests and Field Director, Manas National Park & Tiger Reserve and Dr. Deba Kumar Dutta, Deputy Director, Rhino Research and Conservation Division (RRCDD) at Aaranyak. The initiative was implemented in close collaboration with Manas National Park & Tiger

Reserve Authority and supported by KACF.

The awareness programme begins with an introductory session on fundamentals of wildlife and conservation, highlighting the importance of biodiversity, protected areas and sustainable coexistence between communities and wildlife.

This is followed by a session on importance of Manas Tiger Reserve its rich bio-diversity and involvement of community and students for a better future of the National Park.

This session was led by Jsimuddin Ahmed, AFS (Retd.), along with Pranjit Rajbongshi and his team. The core sessions focused on rhinoceros’ ecology, habitat requirements, threats, conservation efforts, cultural and environmental significance and basic wildlife behaviour. Students were also sensitised on human-wildlife conflict mitigation and the important role of local communities and young citizens in conservation.

To encourage active participation, interactive quiz and



drawing competitions were conducted in each school. Based on performance, ten students from each school were selected and the authority of Manas National Park & Tiger Reserve will facilitate an exposure visit to the park for these students, providing them firsthand experience of wildlife and habitat conservation.

The programme was led and coordinated by Ujjal Bayan and Swapan Das, Researchers with Aaranyak and was further strengthened by the active involvement of Jinti Das, PhD Scholar from Cotton University; Dhritiman Sonowal, volunteer and MSW student and Raj Daimary. Their coordination and field support ensured

smooth implementation across all locations.

The Rhino Goes to School initiative marks a significant step toward nurturing conservation awareness among young minds and empowering local communities to actively participate in safeguarding the rich wildlife heritage of Manas National Park.

Army conducts medical camp in Churachandpur

Imphal, Feb 10: On the occasion of the International Day of the Dentist, the Indian Army organised a medical and dental camp at Zalenphai village in Churachandpur district, as part of its continued commitment towards community welfare and humanitarian outreach. The initiative aimed at strengthening grassroots healthcare delivery while promoting preventive health awareness, thereby reinforcing civil-military relations in the region. The camp was conducted through a synergised civil-military fusion effort, with active participation from Indian Army medical and dental specialists along with civil healthcare professionals. The medical team included Dr T Thanglenlal DS, Medical Officer, Primary Health Centre, Sialkot and an Army Dental Officer, who collectively provided comprehensive healthcare services to the local population. Oral screening and dental check-ups were undertaken, followed by free medical consultations, routine diagnostics, distribution of essential medicines and health counselling for villagers of all age groups. Subsequently, an awareness lecture focusing on dental health and preventive care was conducted to sensitise the community on early detection of dental ailments and the importance of timely medical intervention. Army medical and dental officers interacted closely with



the residents in a friendly and reassuring environment, offering personalised guidance on healthier living practices and lifestyle-related health risk factors. The camp witnessed enthusiastic participation from approximately 216 villagers, including students from The Living Water School, who expressed deep appreciation for the collaborative efforts of the Indian Army and civil medical authorities in enhancing access to quality healthcare in remote and underserved areas.

CM Khemchand flags off SpiceJet Airlines services

Imphal, Feb 10: In a significant step towards improving air connectivity in the State, Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh, today, flagged off the commencement of direct flights of SpiceJet Airlines services from Imphal to Guwahati, Kolkata and Mumbai at Bir Tikendrajit International Airport, Imphal. Speaking at the occasion, the Chief Minister lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of Viksit Bharat, underscoring its pivotal role in achieving Viksit Manipur. He noted that during these difficult times, air travel has become the preferred mode of transport for travelling outside the State. He di-



rected the airline company to review the airfares ensuring affordability. As part of the launching event, the Chief Minister handed over the boarding pass to the first traveller of the SpiceJet service to Guwahati.

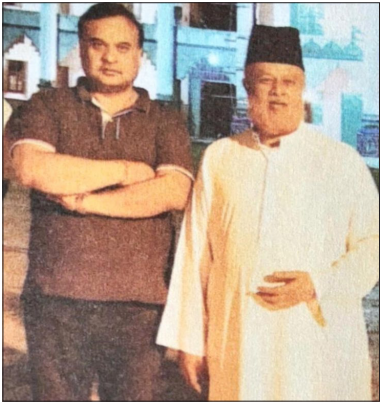
The programme was also attended by Lok Sabha MP Dr. Bimol Akoijam, MLA Thanga AC Tongbram Robindro Singh, MLA Chingai AC Khashim Vashum, Additional Chief Secretary Anurag Bajpai, Director, Transport Khumanthem Diana, Super-

intendent of Police, Imphal West Ksh. Shivakanta Singh, officials of Airport Authority of India among others. Sidelines of the programme included the Chief Minister leading the others in candle lighting, ribbon cutting and cake cutting.

Himanta Biswa Sarma joined the BJP on the advice of a Bangladeshi cleric: Pawan Khera

New Delhi, Feb 10: All India Congress Committee (AICC) Chairman of the Media and Communications Department, Pawan Khera, has launched a sharp attack on Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. Khera alleged that Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma is a follower of renowned Bangladeshi cleric Dewan Mohammad Saidur Rahman Chishti Saidabadi of Bangladesh. According to Khera, after resigning from the Congress party and while facing uncertainty over joining the BJP, Himanta Biswa Sarma met Dewan Sahab in 2015, shared his personal and political problems, and sought ‘dua’ (prayers). Khera stated in his ‘X’ post that after listening to Himanta’s troubled account, Dewan

Khera took to social media platform ‘X’ and described the matter as highly mysterious. In his post, Khera claimed that Himanta Biswa Sarma is a devout follower of Dewan Mohammad Saidur Rahman Chishti Saidabadi of Bangladesh. According to Khera, after resigning from the Congress party and while facing uncertainty over joining the BJP, Himanta Biswa Sarma met Dewan Sahab in 2015, shared his personal and political problems, and sought ‘dua’ (prayers). Khera stated in his ‘X’ post that after listening to Himanta’s troubled account, Dewan



Sahab advised him to join the BJP. Accepting the advice of this Bangladeshi Muslim Pir with faith, Himanta Biswa Sarma went on to join the BJP in August 2015, and what followed thereafter is well known to everyone, Khera remarked. He further asserted that Himanta Biswa Sarma’s entry into the BJP took place solely on the advice of this Bangladeshi Muslim Pir. Highlighting several key points, Pawan Khera said it has become clear that when Himanta Biswa Sarma needed guidance, he chose to approach a Muslim Pir instead of a Hindu sadhu or

astrologer, which, according to Khera, speaks volumes. He further commented that although the Chief Minister publicly uses hateful rhetoric against Bangladeshi Muslims, in reality he does not harbour such hatred. That, Khera claimed, is why Himanta Biswa Sarma travelled to Bangladesh and posed for photographs with a cleric. Pawan Khera also raised a series of serious questions in this context. He asked why Himanta Biswa Sarma met Dewan Mohammad Saidur Rahman Chishti in Bangladesh and why he never clarified the role this interaction played in his po-

litical decisions and rise to power. Khera further demanded that the Chief Minister clarify whether he is still receiving advice or directions from across the border and inform the public accordingly. Raising even graver concerns, Khera questioned whether Himanta Biswa Sarma—who, he alleged, acts on the advice of a Bangladeshi cleric—can categorically deny that Bangladeshi or Pakistani agencies have not used him for their own interests. He also questioned whether a person susceptible to foreign influence does not pose a threat to India’s national security.

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Sowing the Seeds of Prosperity

Agriculture remains the backbone of our economy, yet farmers continue to struggle with rising input costs that threaten their livelihoods and our food security. Subsidizing fertilizers and seeds isn’t merely welfare—it’s strategic economic policy. The arithmetic is simple: when input costs consume 40-50% of a farmer’s investment, profit margins evaporate. Small and marginal farmers, who constitute over 85% of our farming community, cannot absorb price shocks in global fertilizer markets. Without subsidies, many abandon farming altogether, accelerating rural-to-urban migration and jeopardizing national food self-sufficiency. Critics argue subsidies distort markets and burden taxpayers. However, the alternative—importing food at inflated prices during crises—costs far more. Subsidized inputs ensure farmers can afford quality seeds and adequate fertilization, directly boosting yields and stabilizing food prices for consumers. Countries achieving food security have consistently supported their agricultural sectors during critical growth phases. Subsidies should be smartly designed—targeting genuine farmers, promoting organic alternatives, and encouraging efficient use—but they remain indispensable. Investing in farmer prosperity through subsidized inputs isn’t charity; it’s insurance against hunger, rural poverty, and economic instability. A thriving agricultural sector benefits everyone, from farm to fork. (DB)

Increasing the production of pulses in Assam

The agroclimatic condition of Assam is suitable for growing pulses. Yet, the state grappling with a huge demand-supply gap in pulses is a paradox as persistent as the shortfall itself. The state’s own production is barely sufficient to meet 20% of its total requirement of pulses. The shortfall is not just about huge money outflow against procurement of the remaining 80% from outside the region; the nutritional gap resulting from the shortfall is much deeper. Pulses required for making daily protein intake in the form of dal are not affordable to a large number of low-income households due to high prices at the retail market driven by inflated transportation and handling costs. The state prioritising efforts to expand the area under pulses and boost productivity remains crucial for boosting its own production. The marginal increase in area and production reflects persistent gaps in interventions and highlights the need to move away from routine practices and celebrate incremental changes. The opportunities for the pulse-deficient state for transformative changes lie in leveraging the ‘Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses’ launched by the central government in October last year for boosting domestic production and the country achieving self-sufficiency in pulses over a six-year period, from 2025-26 to 2030-31. The stated objective of the mission is to enhance pulse production with a special focus on tur, urad, and masoor; promote the production and availability of climate-resilient seeds for farmers; increase the area under pulse cultivation; and promote post-harvest storage and management technology. Other interventions made by the central government for boosting pulse production include Cluster Frontline Demonstrations of pulses being implemented through Krishi Vigyan Kendras of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, distribution of mini kits of pulse



seed varieties not older than 10 years free of cost to the farmers, and establishment of seed hubs to augment availability of quality seeds to farmers. The state undertaking a comprehensive review of the implementation of various central government schemes and its own schemes and programmes is critical for identifying the gaps and formulating timely intervention for course correction. As the state is dependent on procurement from major pulse-growing states, price volatility due to price fluctuation at sources adds to inflated transportation and handling costs. Even when the pulses procured by the central government under the Price Stabilisation Fund for the regulated release of buffer stock maintained are supplied to the states for moderating the market price for

retail customers, the harsh reality remains for Assam and other northeastern states that they cannot escape the higher price level compared to other regions due to the expenditure involved in procurement from a source far away. The production target set by the central government under the pulses mission is 350 lakh tonnes from an area of 310 lakh hectares, which will require average productivity of 1130 kg/ha. The state to be able to achieve this national productivity target will require it to increase its own productivity by at least 400 kg/ha. Assam’s requirement for pulses in 2030-31 is projected to be around 5.5 lakh MT, while its current production is around 1.27 lakh MT. The figures speak volumes about the efforts which the state is required to put in over the next five years

to break the demand-supply imbalance. The Development Agenda and Action Plan for Sustainable Development Goals, 2030, prepared by the Directorate of Agriculture, Assam, identified the problem of the non-availability of locally produced seeds as one of the major constraints in boosting production. Two key strategies spelt out in the Action Plan are area expansion under pulse crops in areas of rice fallow and the introduction of new high-yielding varieties of pulses. Effective implementation of these strategies requires assured irrigation and availability of certified seeds at affordable prices. As the state’s rice fallow area is estimated to be more than 10 lakh hectares, there is huge scope for area expansion and meeting the target set under the Action Plan for increasing the area under pulses to 3 lakh hectares by 2030-31. However, without assured irrigation remaining a far cry, productivity increase will continue to be incremental and nowhere near the target, and the expansion of area under pulses will remain confined to policy documents and strategy papers. Small landholding among the majority of farm households in the state poses another major hurdle in achieving the targets of area expansion across crops. Cooperative farming is the pragmatic option to reduce the risk of crop loss, increase marketing opportunities by facilitating traders to aggregate produce from a single geographic area and shift production from subsistence levels to commercial scale. Traditional farmers need to be informed and exposed to markets beyond their farm gate so that they get clear signals of assured and dynamic demand. Only then will they feel motivated to accept suggestions given to them by the agriculture department for increasing area expansion. Boosting pulse production is crucial for strengthening Assam’s agriculture and meeting nutritional goals.

Partnership in semiconductors between India and Malaysia: Technology, trust, and changing regional supply chains

The decision by India and Malaysia to deepen cooperation in the semiconductor sector during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent visit signals a turning point in how medium and emerging powers are positioning themselves within the global technology order. What may appear at first glance as a sector-specific agreement is, in reality, a strategic alignment around one of the most critical foundations of the modern economy. Semiconductors sit silently inside nearly every system that defines contemporary life — communication networks, defence platforms, medical devices, transport control, financial infrastructure, artificial intelligence engines, and agricultural technology. A partnership in this domain is therefore not merely commercial. It reflects shared long-term thinking about resilience, sovereignty, and innovation. The global semiconductor landscape has undergone a dramatic shift over the past decade. Once treated primarily as a specialised manufacturing industry driven by private corporations, it has now moved to the centre of national policy. Governments across the world are investing heavily in chip ecosystems because supply disruptions have shown how vulnerable digital economies can become when component flows are interrupted. Pandemic shutdowns, geopolitical tensions, export controls, and logistics breakdowns exposed the fragility of over-concentrated supply chains. Production delays in one region triggered cascading slowdowns across automobiles, consumer electronics, energy systems, and defence procurement. These shocks altered policy thinking. Efficiency alone no longer defines success; resilience and diversification now carry equal weight. India’s semiconductor push emerges directly from this changed reality. For years, India was recognised as a global hub of chip design talent but not of chip manufacturing. Indian engineers played major roles in design teams across multinational corporations, contributing to processor architecture, embedded systems, and verification processes. Yet fabrication plants, advanced pack-

aging units, and testing facilities were largely absent within the country.

This created an imbalance between intellectual contribution and industrial capacity. Recent policy initiatives, incentive programmes, and financial support mechanisms seek to correct that imbalance by building a domestic semiconductor ecosystem that includes fabrication, assembly, testing, design, and equipment support. Malaysia brings to the table a different but highly valuable strength. It is already one of the world’s leading centres for semiconductor assembly, testing, and packaging. A significant share of global chips pass through Malaysian facilities at some stage of processing. The sector contributes a substantial portion of the country’s gross domestic product and export earnings. Over decades, Malaysia has built skilled manpower, industrial clusters, supplier networks, and regulatory familiarity around semiconductor processing. Its experience is operational, not experimental. This creates a natural complementarity with India’s ambitions. ‘Complementarity’ is the key word in understanding the deeper value of this partnership. India seeks to expand fabrication, design ownership, and electronics manufacturing scale. Malaysia has maturity in downstream chip processing and export-orientated semiconductor services. When design capability, fabrication ambition, and packaging expertise are linked through policy and investment channels, the result can be greater than the sum of its parts. Such integration reduces duplication of effort while accelerating learning curves. It also distributes risk across geographies that maintain friendly diplomatic and economic relations. The importance of this cooperation grows further when placed within the wider Indian Ocean and South-east Asian context. This region is emerging as a central corridor for trade, digital infrastructure, and advanced manufacturing. Sea lanes, data cables, and industrial clusters increasingly intersect across this arc. India’s engagement with South-east Asia has been expanding



through trade, connectivity, and digital partnerships. Semiconductor collaboration with Malaysia strengthens that engagement in a high-value sector. It also anchors technology cooperation within a broader framework of maritime stability and regional economic integration. Prime Minister Modi’s emphasis on advancing partnership not only in semiconductors but also in artificial intelligence, digital technologies, health, and food security suggests an integrated vision. These sectors are not isolated from each other. AI development depends on specialised chips. Modern healthcare relies on semiconductor-powered diagnostics and monitoring systems. Food security increasingly depends on sensor networks, satellite data processing, automated irrigation, and supply chain analytics. Semiconductor capability strengthens the technological backbone across all these domains. Hardware capacity enables software intelligence and social-sector innovation. Economic impact pathways from semiconductor cooperation are wide and layered. Semiconductor ecosystems generate

high-value employment, from materials science and precision engineering to software control and quality analytics. They stimulate upstream industries such as speciality chemicals, advanced materials, cleanroom equipment, and precision tools. They also support downstream industries, including electronic manufacturing, telecommunications equipment, automotive systems, and defence electronics. When India and Malaysia collaborate, cross-border value chains can emerge in which different stages of production and processing occur where each side is strongest. Such distributed value chains are more shock-resistant than single-location concentration. Supply chain restructuring is already underway across the world. Firms are adopting “friend-shoring” and “multi-location sourcing” strategies to reduce exposure to geopolitical and logistical risk. Partnerships between trusted countries become more attractive under this model. India–Malaysia semiconductor cooperation fits naturally into this restructuring trend. It provides an additional trusted corridor within Asia

for chip-related processing and manufacturing. Investors tend to favour such corridors when policy clarity and diplomatic stability support them. Policy coordination will play a decisive role in determining success. Semiconductor industries are highly sensitive to regulatory friction. Customs clearance delays, intellectual property uncertainty, technology transfer restrictions, and inconsistent taxation can quickly erode competitiveness. Bilateral mechanisms that align standards, simplify procedures, and protect intellectual assets will be necessary. Technical working groups, regulatory dialogues, and industry consultation platforms can help maintain alignment as technologies evolve. Research collaboration offers another powerful dimension. Semiconductor progress depends on continuous innovation in materials, architecture, energy efficiency, and packaging density. Joint research centres and co-funded university programmes between India and Malaysia could generate shared intellectual property and deepen scientific links. Research partnerships also encourage

talent circulation, allowing scientists and engineers to work across facilities and knowledge systems. Over time, such collaboration reduces dependence on external technology sources. Skill development remains central to every semiconductor strategy. Fabrication and processing demand specialised training in contamination control, nanoscale measurement, equipment calibration, and process discipline. Training systems must be closely linked with industry requirements. Malaysia’s technician training experience and India’s large engineering education base can reinforce one another through exchange programmes, dual certifications, and joint curricula. A shared talent pipeline increases investor confidence and operational quality. Infrastructure readiness cannot be overlooked. Semiconductor facilities require uninterrupted power, ultra-pure water, controlled environments, secure data connectivity, and specialised waste treatment systems. Industrial park design, utility reliability, and logistics efficiency influence plant location decisions. Cooperation

in infrastructure planning and best-practice sharing can accelerate readiness on both sides. Financial structure is equally important. Semiconductor projects involve high capital expenditure and long gestation. Blended finance — combining public incentives, private capital, development finance, and strategic investors — often determines feasibility. Cross-border investment frameworks and co-investment platforms between India and Malaysia could support early-stage ventures and joint facilities. Financial predictability encourages sustained commitment in a sector where returns accumulate gradually. There is also a broader diplomatic message embedded in such cooperation. When countries outside the traditional technology power centres build credible partnerships in advanced sectors, they contribute to a more distributed and balanced global innovation map. This reduces systemic risk and opens new pathways for collaborative growth. It demonstrates that technological advancement can be shared and networked rather than monopolised. Challenges will remain — rapid technology cycles, environmental compliance pressures, global competition, and policy execution risks. Semiconductor manufacturing uses sensitive materials and demands strict environmental safeguards. Regulatory stability and scientific oversight must guide expansion. Industry–government dialogue must remain continuous so that incentives and standards adapt without confusion. The India–Malaysia semiconductor partnership reflects a forward-looking recognition that technology capability now defines economic strength and strategic flexibility. It is an investment in shared resilience, shared innovation, and shared relevance in a technology-driven century. Tiny chips may power the world’s machines, but partnerships around them shape the direction in which nations move. If nurtured with policy discipline, industrial cooperation, and human capital development, this partnership can grow into a durable technology bridge across the Indian Ocean region.

Get to know the “next Waaree”: two obscure solar small-caps to keep an eye on

Mumbai: In Budget 2026, the government poured over Rs 30,000 cr into the solar sector. This isn’t just a green move but a Make in India or Aatmanirbhar Bharat policy change by the government. By doubling the budget for solar pumps and slashing taxes on raw materials, the state has cleared the way for a huge manufacturing boom. While most investors only see the giants as this change take effect, 2 smaller subsidiaries from the Waaree Universe are working overtime. One builds the massive solar parks while the other makes the high-tech cells that power them.While the masses throng the overcrowded parent, these two smaller-scale subsidiaries slowly and silently consolidated their market position in India’s solar space. Add to this a solid capital efficiency of over 75% and strong compounded profit growth of over 50%, and we have a combination of profits, capital efficiency and gains.What makes them worth a dive now is the budget push and the fact that they are both trading at a discount of over 30%, raising questions if this creates an entry point for the upcoming solar rally. With a market cap of Rs 1,807 cr, the company first went public with its Initial Public Offering (IPO) in September 2010. However, following years of financial distress and insolvency proceedings, trading was suspended in June 2022.Things changed after Waaree Energies acquired the company through the NCLT process, and the company underwent a massive capital restructuring. Post that, it officially relisted and resumed trading on the NSE and BSE in June 2025.The company has a current ROCE of 77% while the current industry median is 28%. Simply put, for every Rs 100 the company uses as



capital, it generates Rs 77 on it, while its peers in the same industry average just about Rs 28.With a Debt-to-Equity ratio of 0.02, the company has reduced its debt considerably post the restructuring and is virtually debt-free, eliminating high interest payments.Before we investigate the financials of the company, we must understand that post-acquisition metrics provide the only relevant baseline for Indosolar’s current trajectory.Financial turnaround: The ‘Waaree push’ in hard numbers
The company’s sales have grown from zero in FY20 to Rs 324 cr in FY25, and for the 3 quarters

of FY26, sales of almost Rs 600 cr have been recorded already. While growth on such a small base is volatile, what must be considered is that it is now backed by the Waaree push.Regarding EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) the company was recording losses till FY24 which changes post the acquisition and for FY25, it logged an EBITDA of Rs 95 cr. For the 3 quarters of FY26, EBITDA of Rs 206 cr has been logged already.The net profits of the company have logged a pattern which hints towards a turnaround after Waaree’s entry.

HDFC Bank’s 10-month stagnation: Is the sleeping giant of Indian banking finally

Mumbai: India’s private banking stocks have always been important, not just in terms of index numbers but also in terms of how investors feel about the market.Ev-eryone on the street pays attention when these stocks trend bullish or bearish. Currently, HDFC BANK, ICICI BANK, and AXIS BANK all have good technical setups, but they are all at different points in their journeys.Let us analyse the chart of these banking giants and decide the best stocks in which to invest.HDFC Bank has been trending in a broader range for almost 10 months. A lot of investors were disappointed because the stock wasn’t going up like some of its peers. But consolidation isn’t always a sign of weakness. Sometimes, it’s getting ready.Recently, the price has shown signs of reversal from the



lower end of this range. That lower band is acting like a demand zone, which is a place where buyers are quietly entering. The gap area from

the previous rally has been filled and when a gap is filled and the price still goes up, it usually means that selling pressure has been ab-

sorbed. This structure looks like a re-accumulation phase from the point of view of Wyckoff theory.o put it simply, re-accumulation happens when a stock that is already going up stops for a while. Strong hands use this sideways phase to add to their positions, while weak hands leave because they are impatient. The range usually has sharp drops, quick recoveries, and support that is tested over and over again.As the price is showing signs of bullish momentum, the smart investors should start accumulating the stockThe chart for ICICI Bank looks cleaner and stronger. The stock broke through its previous 52-week high, retested the break-out level and resumed the bullish trend. Strong trending stocks often have this pattern of breakout, re-test, and then resumption.

Predicts 6.4% GDP growth in FY27

New Delhi: India’s real GDP growth is projected at 6.4% in 2026–27, making it the fastest-growing major economy in the G-20, Moody’s Ratings said on Monday, adding that the economic momentum underpins a stable outlook for its banking system. Moody’s growth estimate for FY27 is lower than the 6.8-7.2% projected in the latest Economic Survey by the finance ministry economists. Moody’s said growth will continue to be driven by resilient domestic consumption, supportive fiscal measures, and macroeconomic stability. This backdrop provides a favorable operating environment for banks, reinforcing balance-sheet strength, credit expansion, and profitability. The rationalization of the goods and services tax (GST) in September 2025 and an earlier increase in personal income tax thresholds will help improve affordability for consumers and support consumption-led growth,” Moody’s said. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) lowered its policy rate by a total of 125 basis points to 5.25% in 2025, but with inflation under control and growth momentum remaining strong, “we anticipate it will further ease monetary policy in fiscal 2026-27 only if there are signs of a slowdown in economic activity,” it said.Banks’ asset quality will remain broadly stable. “We expect the system-wide nonperforming loan (NPL) ratio to stay low at

2%–2.5%, although the slip-page ratio may rise modestly as loan vintages season,” it said. Retail asset quality will remain steady, particularly among prime borrowers, though performance will diverge across lenders depending on underwriting standards and borrower mix.Stress will be concentrated among micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), especially in export-oriented sectors such as textiles and gems and jewellery, which together account for less than 5% of systemwide loans. Higher US tariffs announced in August 2025 initially weighed on these segments, but following the India–U.S. trade deal in February 2026, operating conditions should gradually normalize, it said.While an India-EU trade agreement could open new markets over time, its near-term impact will be limited. Banks have built adequate loan-loss buffers to absorb potential stress. Corporate asset quality will remain healthy, supported by strong balance sheets and improved profitability, although recoveries will taper as legacy large corporate stress has largely been resolved.The transition to final Basel III norms in 2027 should be broadly capital-neutral, as lower risk weights for MSME and residential mortgage loans are likely to offset higher requirements for unsecured lending and capital market exposures, it said.

Can FII selling pause after India-US trade deal 3 game-changing a trend shift

Mumbai: Is the FII (Foreign Institutional Investors) trend changing? For the first time since last June, FIIs are net buyers in Indian equities so far in February. Though they are net buyers of equities worth just Rs 2,645 crore, the changing world dynamics is what is making many market observers excited. The key factor to consider is whether this is the beginning of something bigger or just a blip?Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments pointed out that, “There has been a discernible change in FII flows in February, so far. Of the last four trading sessions, FIIs were net buyers in three sessions. An important factor that changed the market sentiment was the appreciation in rupee from a record low of 91.72 to 90.30 to the dollar.”The last week ending February 6 has been a rather eventful one for Indian stock markets. The Budget, the much-awaited India-US trade deal soon after the India-EU trade deal was inked had a major impact on investor sentiment. On the contrary, JM Financial, in its India Strategy report dated February 8, 2025, says: “BJP’s victory in the recent state elections in Haryana and Maharashtra had allayed fears which had set in after the lower-than-expected mandate in General Elections 2024. Purohit, too, concurs the same, vouching that FIIs are poised to make major investments in the Indian market, seeking long-term returns. He says, “The foreign investor fraternity are all set to take a plunge and invest in the Indian market to get sound, effective net returns from a long-term perspective. The government, too, has echoed these sentiments by simplifying the tax regime, clarifying anomalies on taxation, and extending several tax holidays in IFSC Gift City by another five years to keep the door open for them.” The decisive mandate in favour of the BJP in the Delhi assembly election would be sentimentally positive for the markets and could act as a trigger to attract FII flows.”Aditya Gupta, chief investment officer, Wealthy Nivesh, says, “After the correction seen in the last four months, market valuations particularly in large-caps appear to be attractive. Indian markets still present one of the best risk-reward ratio, so FIIs are not expected to remain short on India for long. The current market presents a good opportunity for the investors to keep buying at dips and get good entry points.” The market reacted negatively to the hike in STT on F&O but recovered smartly on news of the US-India trade deal. In fact, the benchmark closed the week, up 3% each. More often than not, one of the big factors why FIIs have been net sellers in India for the past 2 years has been ascribed to the rupee. In fact, the rupee was one of the worst-performing currencies in 2025. The good news is that the Indian currency is finally seeing some green. The rupee has recovered significantly from its early 2026 lows, close to 92/\$. However, Manoj Purohit, partner and leader, FS tax, tax and regulatory services, BDO India, says, “Despite the macro factors, such as fear of potential tariff and trade curbs, rising inflation risk, currency depreciation, and trade wars looming around, India is well poised and self-insulated by strong measures and timely rate cut measures taken by the RBI to boost domestic investments and consumption, keeping the market buoyancy live.” However, Manoj Purohit, partner and leader, FS tax, tax and regulatory services, BDO India, says, “Despite the macro factors, such as fear of potential tariff and trade curbs, rising inflation risk, currency depreciation, and trade wars looming around, India is well poised and self-insulated by strong measures and timely rate cut measures taken by the RBI to boost domestic investments and consumption, keeping the market buoyancy live.”“Even though rupee further weakened to around 90.70 by the close on February 6th, INR is expected to stabilise and gradually appreciate to below 90 to the dollar by end March 2026. This has the potential to trigger more FII inflows into India,” said Dr. VK Vijayakumar. What’s really buoyed sentiment is the movement of the Dollar Index along with this. After flirting around the 99 levels for the better part of January, the Dollar Index has started February

Adani Enterprises in talks with US agency over bribery allegations

New Delhi: India’s Adani Enterprises said on Tuesday it is talks with the US Office of Foreign Assets over allegations from a Wall Street Journal report published in June last year that said billionaire Gautam Adani was trying to get the US President Donald Trump administration to drop bribery charges against him.Adani Enterprises said that it received a Request for Information from the Office of Foreign Assets on February 4. “The communication does not contain any findings of aberrations or non-compliances,” it said.Shares of the

company fell as much as 3.5% after the disclosure. Adani Enterprises said it received a Request for Information from the US Office of Foreign Assets on February 4, adding the communication does not cite any findings of irregularities or non-compliance India’s Adani Enterprises said on Tuesday it is talks with the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets over allegations from a Wall Street Journal report published in June last year that said billionaire Gautam Adani was trying to get the U.S. President Donald Trump administration to drop bribery charges against him

The level that broke out act as a demand zone



New Delhi: This is how the market works. Before, sellers were busy around that resistance level. Once the price clearly breaks above it, those sellers are no longer there. When the price goes back to that area, new buyers come in, and even investors who sold before may buy again. This change in behaviour turns resistance into support.ICICI Bank’s ability to stay above its previous high shows that it is strong. The trend is still healthy as long as it keeps making higher highs and higher lows.Axis Bank is outperforming the most other private banks right now. The stock recently hit a new all-time high of Rs.1,418. We call it “price discovery” when a stock reaches an all-time high. There is no overhead resistance, which is something that often helps momentum.The levels of resistance that were there in the previous rally will become the demand zones. From a structural point of view, the Rs.1,180–Rs.1,300 range may probably be the accumulation zone for 2026. A healthy pullback into this area, if it has enough volume and the market as a whole is stable, could draw interest from

traders and investors.The primary uptrend will stay in place as long as Axis Bank stays above its previous swing lows on the weekly chart.The trend in all three of these stocks will be very important for keeping the banking sector’s overall momentum going. Their combined strength backs up the market’s feelings about the banking sector. From a portfolio point of view, a balanced distribution across all three may help reduce risk while also taking part in sectoral growth. Perhaps, you can get started by adding these stocks to your watch-list.Note: The purpose of this article is only to share interesting charts, data points and thought-provoking opinions. It is NOT a recommendation. If you wish to consider an investment, you are strongly advised to consult your advisor. This article is strictly for educative purposes only.Brijesh Bhatia is an Independent Research Analyst and is engaged in offering research and recommendation services with SEBI RA Number – INH000022075. He has two decades of experience in India’s financial markets as a trader and technical analyst.



on a rather muted note, hovering around the 97 mark. The Dollar Index has declined over 1% in the last 1 month. What needs to be seen is if this is a sufficient enough decline to woo the FIIs back. However, most analysts believe that the dollar alone cannot be a gamechanger. India has long been at the centre of many global comparisons for the lack of adequate AI presence, and most market observers highlighted that “a lot will depend on how the AI trade pans out.”In an earlier interview to FinancialExpress.com, Sanjeev Prasad, MD, Kotak Institutional Equities, while listing out the drivers for 2026 had pointed out that one of the key reasons for India’s big underperformance was that it has no real AI play. “Unlike a lot of other GEM markets, particularly China, South Korea, and Taiwan, which have a lot of AI play, some of those markets have done a lot better this year. And of course, the US itself has done very well,” he had pointed out. Given the recent rout in tech stocks after the new AI plugins by Anthropic driven by fears that GenAI progress will be detrimental to the future/relevance of IT services and software firms, Kotak Institutional Equities believes that there is plenty of panic about little flutter. According to them, “While there could be a reassessment of risks over time, said events alone are not influential enough to spark a sudden shift in our stance. AI progress so far has been in line with our expectations.”However, they pointed out that the “upside and downside risks exist. Downside risks are from faster future progress in frontier AI models and elevated focus on enhancing GenAI capabilities in IT services, particularly in software engineering.”#3 Growth momentum turning?Earnings is the other big catalyst going forward. While most analysts see earnings growth to average in the mid-teens, Morgan Stanley sees a case for re-rating for India. In their report dated February 5, Ridham Desai stated that, “We see a sharp turn in earnings growth over the coming months. India’s growth cycle is set to accelerate, backed by the reflation efforts of the RBI and the government via rate cuts, bank deregulation and liquidity infusion, continuing capex, tax cuts and a relatively stimulating budget.”This, coupled with the India-US trade deal and thawing relations with China, is expected to have a decisive impact on investor sentiment towards India. Will that translate into more meaningful flows? Well, keep watching the space for the latest update on FII action in Indian markets.

INTERNATIONAL

Chris Minns defends police in ‘impossible situation’ after video emerges

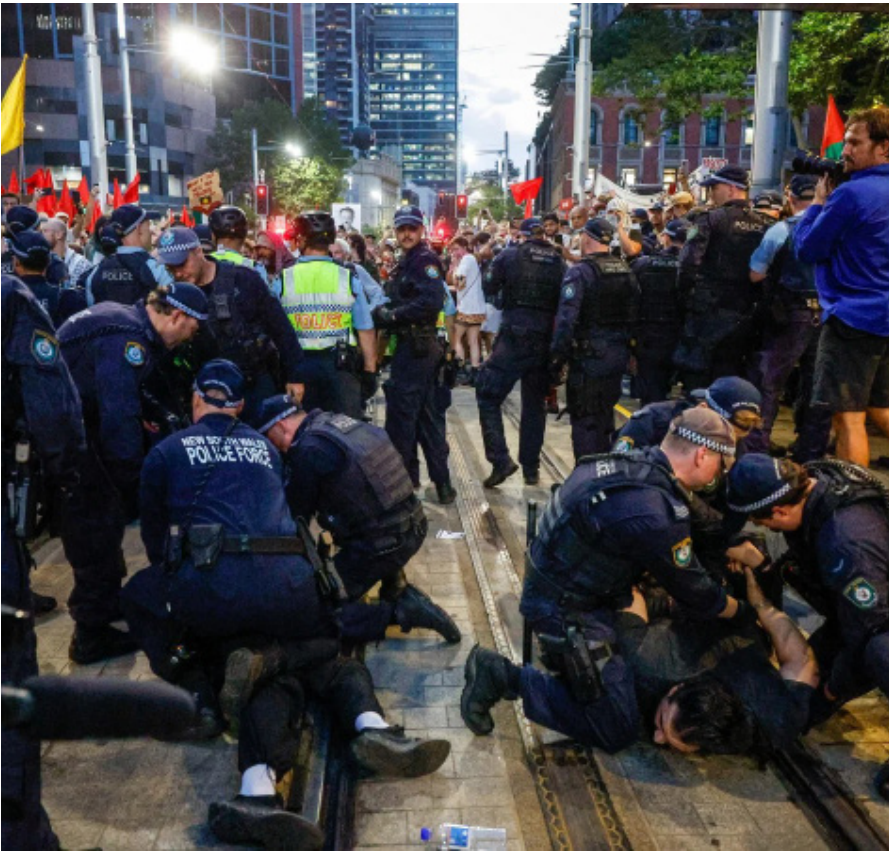
London: The New South Wales premier, Chris Minns, has defended the actions of police at a rally against Isaac Herzog’s visit, after video footage emerged showing officers repeatedly punching a number of protesters. The premier on Tuesday rejected suggestions his own anti-protest restrictions had created what he deemed to be an “impossible situation” for police dealing with thousands of protesters outside Sydney’s Town Hall

Rally organisers, Labor backbenchers and Green MPs accused Minns and police of creating an “unsafe situation” for attendees. NSW police pepper sprayed protesters opposing the four-day Australian visit of the Israeli president. They arrested 27 people and said 10 officers were assaulted, though none of those assaults were serious. On Tuesday afternoon, police announced nine people had been charged with a range of offences, including allegedly assaulting officers. Police suggested a further six people would be charged with refusing to comply with police directions. The force was “continuing to investigate the actions of protesters” by reviewing body camera and social media footage. Minns defended the police response as well as the controversial protest restrictions that a member of his government said had created a “pressure cooker” situation

He told reporters that police were “put in an impossible situation last night” after protesters defied a protest restriction preventing them from marching to NSW parliament. The effective ban was introduced after the Bondi terror attack at a Hanukah festival on 14 December that killed 15 people

The prime minister, Anthony Albanese, defended Herzog’s visit and called on people to “turn the temperature down”. He told parliament that violent footage of Monday’s protest was “devastating”. “Many people who saw the footage, particularly of the people who were praying and then action was taken, will want to know all of the circumstances around that. I will allow the police to do their job.” Monday evening’s protest went ahead despite a NSW supreme court ruling against the Palestine Action Group, which had wanted to overturn additional “major event” powers handed to police for the duration of Herzog’s visit. “I’d throw myself down on a reasonable person’s interpretation of the circumstances in Sydney streets last night, it was an impossible situation,” Minns said on Tuesday. “We had to keep the public safe, and as distressing as those scenes were, it would have been far worse if it was ... choosing your own adventure, [if] the protesters breached police lines and we had conflict in Sydney streets. That would have been terrible.” The NSW Greens MLC Sue Higginson, who has said she will refer police actions to the independent Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, said the police had “full power and discretion” to allow a peaceful march to go ahead. “They cannot hide behind that [public assembly restriction] declaration. In fact, it is very much [a] design, layer upon layer upon layer, that Chris Minns has deliberately provided to create this entire situation that took place last night,” Higginson said on Tuesday. “It was inevitable.”

Fellow upper house Greens member Abigail Boyd, who confronted the NSW police commissioner, Mal Lanyon, in the corridors of parliament about her alleged assault by police during the protest, told reporters the force had “made sure we had nowhere to go and then just pushed [protesters] into unsafe situations”. “I got lifted off the ground. Another police officer [allegedly] punched me in the head, and then I had another one who [allegedly] punched me in the shoulder. I don’t understand how that’s a proportionate response.” Josh Lees, an organiser for the Palestine Action Group, said Monday night’s events were the worst he had seen after attending many pro-Palestine events in recent years. “We said, of course, in the lead up to this, that the streets of Sydney should belong to the residents of Sydney,” Lees told reporters. “There is no justification for the police’s actions last night.” The Palestine Action Group planned to hold another event on Tuesday evening at the NSW police station in Surry Hills to demand all charges against protesters be dropped. Lanyon, speaking alongside Minns on Tuesday, said protesters could expect “a significant police presence”. “There is no difference in the approach to police. Where protesters go, and act lawfully, act peacefully, there will be no problem.” Lanyon and Minns said police would internally investigate violent incidents from the protest shared on social media. The premier urged the public “to not look at a 10-second clip without the full context”. The police commissioner claimed rally speakers had “incited the crowd” and police had initially shown “remarkable restraint during the first part of the speeches” – until protesters



attempted to march to parliament on George Street. “The police did what they needed to do, which was to hold the line and then fall and move the protesters back with a view to dispersing them. That was designed to keep the community safe.” One incident captured in footage from the scene appeared to show a number of men kneeling to pray before some were dragged away by police. Asked about the video on Tuesday, Minns rejected the idea that it showed police were disproportionately focused on the Muslim community. The context is incredibly important, and the context here was in the middle of what was a riotous behaviour,” the premier told the ABC. “Now I’m not suggesting that those who are engaging in prayer were conducting that behaviour but police are left with a difficult situation when they’ve asked people to clear the area.” Lanyon said he had spoken to leaders from the Muslim community on Tuesday.

One video showed police repeatedly punching a man in a white shirt. Another video showed officers repeatedly punching a young person in the head as they pinned him to the ground. Labor NSW upper house member Stephen Lawrence, one of four backbench government MPs to attend the rally, said the state should have facilitated a peaceful protest. He estimated about 20,000-30,000 people had been present. Police had yet to provide an estimate on Tuesday morning. Lawrence was among those who questioned the linkage of the Bondi attack and pro-Palestine protests after the extension of a public assembly restriction declaration this month and the “major event” powers unsuccessfully challenged at the supreme court. “We’ve removed that capacity to have those sorts of processions and protests authorised,” he said. “This was a pretty much inevitable consequence of that. I don’t like to be right about a thing like this but it’s been repeatedly said in parliament, and in different places, we’re basically creating a pressure cooker and we saw that last night.” Lawrence said he expected there would be criminal charges, including “maybe some charges against police ... in terms of excessive force”, but the “major events” declaration meant there could be no civil claims against the police force.

Parents of Melbourne methanol-poisoning

London: The families of two Melbourne teenagers who died after drinking methanol-laced alcohol in Laos say they have been blindsided by news the workers responsible for serving the drinks received fines of just \$185. Bianca Jones and Holly Morton-Bowles, both 19, were killed by methanol poisoning along with four other tourists after a night out at the Nana backpackers hostel in Vang Vieng, a popular tourist destination in Laos, in November 2024. More than a year later, the girls’ fathers, Shaun Bowles and Mark Jones, said they were relying on a group chat with the families of the victims, started by parents of British lawyer Simone White, for updates provided by the UK government. That’s how they learned 10 people connected to the hostel faced court in January and were fined \$185 and given a suspended sentence for destroying evidence. “We were shocked by the absolute injustice for our girls and the others,” Jones told 9News. “We have had no correspondence with anyone from the Laos government. We had no idea the court case was going ahead.” While the men initially believed the court case was linked to the deaths of their daughters, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade confirmed the destruction-of-evidence charges only related to the death of the American tourist. “We’ve been in touch with the government yesterday and last night and what we’re ... asking them to do is to step up and represent our girls in the way that they deserve to be represented,” Bowles said. “Because we just we’re out of options. It’s pretty devastating.” The Laotian gov-

ernment previously vowed to “bring the perpetrators to justice in accordance with the law”. In question time, Mr Albanese acknowledged the recent events had “added to the heartbreak” of the families. “We’ll continue to engage Laos authorities on these cases and we’ll do everything we can to support Holly and Bianca’s families at this distressing time,” he said. Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan, who has previously met the victims’ families, had outright contempt for the court outcome. “You can’t even really call it a punishment, can you? It’s just heartbreaking,” she told reporters. Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong said she made it clear to her Laos counterpart Australia expected “full accountability” and stressed charges should reflect the seriousness of the tragedy. The Laotian government previously vowed to “bring the perpetrators to justice in accordance with the law”. The department has apologised to the families for failing to keep it informed about the court outcome. “The department prides itself in its commitment to consular service and to ensuring that the interests of consular clients and their families are paramount,” it said. “On this occasion, we fell short of our aspiration.” Australia’s foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, said she had made it clear to her Lao counterpart that Australia expects “full accountability” and stressed charges should reflect the seriousness of the tragedy

“We continue to press Lao authorities on the cases relating to Holly and Bianca’s deaths, and we will continue to support Holly and Bianca’s families at this distressing time,” she said.

Ebo Taylor, Ghanaian pioneer and guitarist

London: Ghanaian musician Ebo Taylor, a definitive force behind the highlife genre, has died age 90. At the Eric Gilder School of Music in London in the early 1960s, Taylor studied Dvořák and cited the complexity of the Czech composer’s music as an influence on his own. But he also said that he learned more outside of the classroom, by sitting in with bands and attending jazz and highlife jams, and meeting acts including the Beatles and the Rolling Stones.

At the time, Nigerian musician Fela Kuti was studying at Trinity College in the capital. The pair became friends, bonding over a common interest in highlife and often jamming together. “We also had the desire to become a Miles Davis, a Charlie Christian, before you start adding things to it,” he told the Vinyl Factory in 2018. After forming the Black Star Highlife Band in London in 1964, he returned to his home country a year later, and formed bands including the New Broadway Dance Band and the Blue Monks, which both featured, for a time, fellow Ghanaian musician Pat Thomas. His son Kweku Taylor announced the news on Sunday: “The world has lost a giant. A colossus of African music. Ebo Taylor passed away yesterday; a day after the launch of Ebo Taylor music festival and exactly a month after his 90th birthday, leaving behind an unmatched artistry legacy. Dad, your light will never fade.” A spokesperson for the Ghanaian president told the BBC’s Newsday programme that Taylor would “be remembered as one of our greatest musicians ever ... a man who strove to put Ghanaian music on the global map at a time when other genres of music were prominent”. A recent interview on the music website Passion of the Weiss hailed Taylor as “the greatest rhythm guitarist in history ... with complete originality, he incorporated the diverse rhythmic traditions of the Ga, Ewe, Dagomba and his own Akan people into his compositions.” Taylor was born Dero Taylor on Ghana’s Cape Coast on 6 January 1936. He started playing piano at the age of six, his tastes shaped by American and English music, in part as a result of Ghana being a British colony at the time. Growing up during the blossoming of highlife, he switched to guitar while he was at college, and subsequently joined the Stargazers – whose members Teddy Osei and Sol Amarfo would later form the UK-based Afro-rock band Osibisa – and a succession of other bands. He became known for his rare embrace of both highlife – largely played in a major mode – and Afrobeat, which hews to minor modes.

or a Kenny Burrell,” Taylor told Post Genre in 2025. “So we had the same mood ... He was such a playful and lively person.” The two musicians became genre innovators. In 2014, Taylor told the BBC that “with the advent of James Brown and funk music there was the opportunity to develop highlife music. Fela did a lot of work introducing the funk into the Yoruba music while comparatively I did almost the same thing in Ghana.” Taylor credited Kuti with encouraging him to write distinctly African music, and he combined the influence of Dvořák and Davis with a strong sense of his own musical traditions, both from Ghana and his Malian grandmother. “I do believe that it is important for music to progress, otherwise it just becomes something for museums, but you have to know your traditional culture



View on the scramble for critical minerals: while powers vie

London: When Donald Trump boasted recently that he had stopped the conflict between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo – though fighting persists in the DRC, at appalling human cost – he made clear that his goals went beyond a long-sought Nobel Peace prize. “They said to me, ‘Please, please, we would love you to come and take our minerals.’ Which we’ll do,” the US president added. Now he is following through. Last Monday he launched a new strategic reserve plan, “Project Vault”, worth almost \$12bn. Two days later, JD Vance hosted a summit seeking to create a trade zone for critical minerals. The US – and others – are trying to counter the dominance of Beijing, which was far quicker to grasp the strategic importance of such resources. Key to its plan is a deal touted as a way to bring the DRC wealth and create incentives for peace. Few on the ground are convinced. The deal does nothing to help the DRC build processing capacity and requires it to freeze its tax and regulatory regimes for a decade. The EU likes to portray itself as taking higher ground. But in December, the parliament and council agreed to weaken key due diligence rules. The incredible resources of the DRC have been violently plundered over centuries for the benefit of richer nations and a handful of individuals on the ground. Four-fifths of the population live below the poverty line. Extraction has meant exploitation and danger. The week before the Washington gathering, at least 200 artisanal miners were crushed to death or suffocated when a coltan mine in Rubaya in the eastern DRC collapsed. It became, said one survivor, a tomb.

As the journalist Nicolas Niarchos writes in his new book The Elements of Power, “tech profiteers, politicians, and battery-makers have made a trade-off: cleaner power at home for pollution and suffering elsewhere”. Meeting climate goals will require many times the current production of materials such as lithium and cobalt. But environmental despoliation, the eviction of communities and the exploitation of labourers including children are not the inevitable results of the necessary shift away from fossil fuels. And the NGO Global Witness suggests that Mr Trump’s mineral-hunger is better explained by their use in military technology. Tantalum, extracted from coltan, is essential to jet engines and missiles as well as smartphones and laptops. Just as growing conflict helps to drive demand, so demand is fuelling conflict. Rubaya is part of the swathes of



land seized by M23 rebels in the eastern DRC in recent years, with mines there generating an estimated \$800,000 monthly, funding the insurgency. The group is backed by Rwanda (though Kigali denies it) and experts say Rwanda is now selling far more coltan than it can produce, with smuggling across the border reaching unprecedented levels. The EU minerals deal with Kigali has been rightly criticised. Natural resources are increasingly intertwined with security policies across the continent, the African Policy Research Institute noted recently, via Russian private military companies, the US promise of peacebrokering and China’s infrastructure-for-resources model. Its report suggests that resource demand

could give African states leverage to negotiate more equitable partnerships that benefit their populations. But that depends, as the authors note, on institutional strength, regional coordination and transparency in deal-making – as well as determination not to compromise human rights, environmental standards or national sovereignty. The DRC’s example is not encouraging. here was in the middle of what was a riotous behaviour,” the premier told the ABC. “Now I’m not suggesting that those who are engaging in prayer were conducting that behaviour but police are left with a difficult situation when they’ve asked people to clear the area.” Lanyon said he had spoken to leaders from the Muslim community on Tuesday.

What Is Omakase? The Japanese Bar Trend Quietly Taking Over Delhi’s Nightlife

Delhi doesn’t just follow trends, it magnifies them. Give the city a new dining or drinking concept, and within months, it’s everywhere, reinterpreted, elevated and booked out weeks in advance. We saw it with speakeasies tucked behind unmarked doors, then chef’s tables and tasting menus. Now, a quieter, more intimate ritual is making waves across the capital’s nightlife scene: omakase-style drinking. At its heart, omakase

– a Japanese phrase meaning “I leave it up to you” – is about surrendering choice to the expert. Traditionally associated with sushi counters where chefs curate each bite, the philosophy has found a new home behind the bar. Instead of scanning a cocktail list, guests let the bartender design a personalised lineup based on mood, preferences



and seasonal ingredients. It’s part theatre, part craftsmanship – and entirely experiential.

The Bar As A Stage

In an omakase setting, the focus shifts from ordering to observing. You sit at the counter, talk flavour profiles with the bartender and watch each drink

come together with precision. House infusions, rare spirits, hand-cut ice, unexpected garnishes – every detail is intentional. The result feels less like ‘grabbing drinks’ and more like a curated tasting journey. For Delhi’s increasingly well-travelled crowd, that exclusivity is the appeal. There’s something quietly luxurious about not knowing what’s coming next and trust-

ing that it will be exceptional.

Why Delhi Loves A Good Trend

If there’s one thing the capital excels at, it’s turning niche concepts into full-blown movements. Speakeasy bars, once novel, are now mushrooming across neighbourhoods. Craft cocktail programmes, once limited to five-star hotels, have become standard. Omakase feels like the natural next step – intimate, premium and experience-led. It also taps into a growing desire for bespoke hospitality. Diners today don’t just want food or drinks; they want stories, interaction and something Instagram can’t fully capture. An omakase bar delivers exactly that. What sets the trend apart is its focus on craftsmanship. Bartenders double as curators, blending Japanese techniques with local ingredients – think yuzu with kokum, sake with Himalayan botanicals or matcha-infused gin. It’s global inspiration filtered through Delhi’s palate. And unlike flashy gimmicks, omakase encourages slowing down. Fewer drinks, better quality, deeper conversations. It’s indulgence with intention. In a city where dining out is as much about social currency as it is taste, omakase has become the newest marker of insider cool. Not loud, not obvious – just quietly elevated. Because in Delhi, when a trend arrives, it doesn’t stay small for long.

How Hand Care Can Become A Grounding Ritual

In the rush of everyday life, self-care often gets framed as something elaborate – long routines, expensive treatments, or weekend resets. But true balance rarely comes from grand gestures. It’s built quietly, in small daily pauses. Something as simple as caring for your hands can become a moment of stillness, a reminder to slow down, breathe, and return to yourself. Our hands do more than we notice. They type, cook, clean, and scroll. They are constantly exposed to stress, water, pollution and fatigue. Yet they’re usually the last thing we nurture. Turning hand care into a mindful ritual, rather than an afterthought, can shift both skin health and mental clarity.

Where Ayurveda Meets Awareness

“In Ayurveda, daily rituals reflect the state of the mind. The way we care for our hands reveals how grounded and balanced we truly are,” says Rajni Ohri, Founder, OHRIA Ayurveda. Ohri views hand care not merely as hydration but as therapy. Applying a few drops of peach oil and massaging the palms becomes a sensory pause. “Gentle daily massage stimulates circulation, releases built-up tension, and encourages emotional steadiness,” she explains. Ayurveda identifies marma points in the palms that connect to the nervous system. When these points are activated through touch, the body responds with calm. The effect is subtle yet cumulative – like meditation in motion. The oil itself matters, too. Lightweight yet nourishing, peach oil restores elasticity and softness without heaviness, making the ritual feel comforting rather than clinical.

Conscious Beauty, Modern Living

For Nitin Jain, Founder of La Pink, the ritual extends beyond technique to intention. “Daily hand care rituals may seem simple, but they are powerful acts of mindfulness. Taking a few minutes to care for your hands creates a pause that reconnects you with yourself,” he says. In today’s fast-paced environment, that pause is rare. Choosing what you apply to your skin becomes part of the equation. Jain advocates for microplastic-free, thoughtfully formulated products that support both personal well-being and environmental responsibility. “When everyday rituals are mindful and responsible, balance naturally follows,” he adds. It’s a subtle mindset shift: hand care as an act of discipline and respect rather than vanity.

Turning Routine Into Ritual

The process doesn’t have to be complicated. Wash gently. Pat dry. Warm a few drops of oil or lotion between your palms. Massage slowly into fingers and cuticles. Notice the texture, the scent, the warmth. This deliberate touch encourages presence. Shoulders soften. Breathing slows. Even a minute can recalibrate the nervous system. Over time, these micro-moments add up – softer skin, steadier emotions, and a deeper connection to the body. Balance isn’t created through perfection or productivity. It’s shaped through repetition – small, intentional habits that anchor the day. When hand care becomes a daily ritual, it quietly transforms how you show up: calmer, more centred, more aware. And sometimes, that’s all it takes to feel whole again.

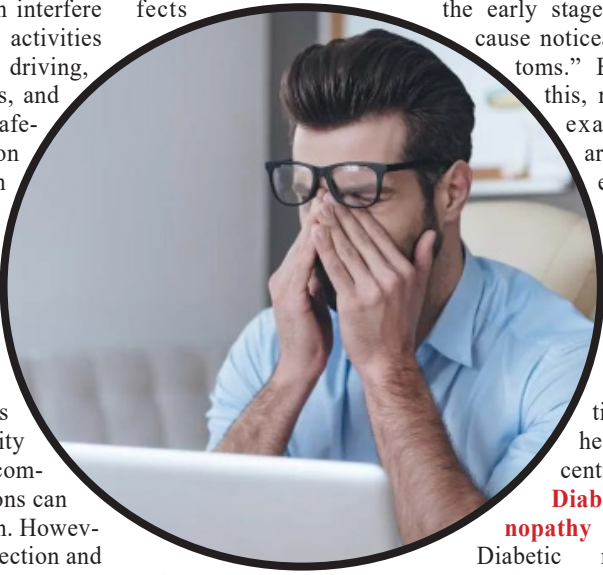


Common Eye Conditions That Lead To Low Vision And Why Early Detection Matters

Low vision refers to a significant reduction in eyesight that cannot be fully corrected with glasses, contact lenses, medication, or surgery. It can interfere with everyday activities such as reading, driving, recognising faces, and moving around safely. “Low vision doesn’t mean complete blindness,” explains Dr Mubashir Parkar, “but it does mean that vision loss has reached a point where it starts affecting quality of life.” Several common eye conditions can lead to low vision. However, with early detection and timely treatment, vision loss can often be slowed, managed, or even prevented.

Degeneration (AMD)

One of the leading causes of low vision is age-related macular degeneration (AMD). This condition affects



the macula, the central part of the retina responsible for sharp, detailed vision. “Patients with AMD often

struggle with reading, recognising faces, or seeing fine details,” says Dr Parkar. “What makes it particularly concerning is that the early stages may not cause noticeable symptoms.” Because of this, regular eye examinations are essential, especially for older adults. Early diagnosis allows for timely intervention that can help preserve central vision.

Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetic retinopathy is another major cause of low vision, particularly among individuals with long-standing or poorly controlled diabetes. High

blood sugar levels damage the tiny blood vessels in the retina, leading to bleeding, swelling, and progressive vision loss. “Diabetic retinopathy can progress silently,” Dr Parkar notes. “By the time vision is affected, the disease may already be advanced.” Regular retinal screening enables early detection, and with appropriate treatment, severe vision impairment can often be prevented.

Glaucoma

Often referred to as the “silent thief of sight,” glaucoma causes damage to the optic nerve, usually due to increased pressure within the eye. “Glaucoma typically develops without pain or early warning signs,” explains Dr Parkar. “Unfortunately, the vision loss it causes is irreversible, which is why early detection is critical.” Routine eye check-ups are the only

reliable way to detect glaucoma before significant vision loss occurs.

Cataract

Cataract is a common age-related condition in which the eye’s natural lens becomes cloudy, resulting in blurred, dim, or glare-sensitive vision. While cataracts are highly treatable with surgery, delaying treatment can significantly reduce visual function. “Cataract surgery is safe and effective,” says Dr Parkar. “But postponing it for too long can affect independence, increase the risk of falls, and reduce overall quality of life.”

Retinal Diseases

Other retinal conditions, such as retinal detachment and inherited retinal disorders, can also lead to permanent vision loss if not managed promptly. “Sudden flashes, floaters, or a shadow in the field of vision

should never be ignored,” Dr Parkar advises. “These can be warning signs of serious retinal problems that require immediate medical attention.”

Why Early Detection Matters

Early detection plays a crucial role in preventing low vision. Comprehensive eye examinations help identify eye diseases before symptoms become noticeable. “The earlier we detect an eye condition, the better our chances of preserving functional vision,” emphasises Dr Parkar. Timely treatment can slow disease progression, protect remaining eyesight, and help individuals maintain independence and a better quality of life. Protecting vision begins with awareness, regular eye check-ups, and seeking medical care without delay when visual changes occur.

Using AI Chatbots To Google Your Symptoms? New Research Says It Can Be Very Dangerous

Typing your symptoms into an AI chatbot might feel like the fastest route to figuring out what’s wrong with you but new research suggests it could be a risky shortcut. A major study reported by the BBC has found that using artificial intelligence tools for medical advice can be “dangerous”, warning that chatbots often deliver inaccurate, inconsistent, and sometimes misleading guidance when people seek help for real health concerns. The research was led by scientists from the University of Oxford, including teams from the Oxford Internet Institute and the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences. Their conclusion is blunt: despite rapid advances, AI is not ready to replace a doctor or even reliably guide patients on what to do next. “Patients need to be aware that asking a large language model about their symptoms can be dangerous,” Dr Rebecca Payne, a GP and co-author of the study, told the BBC. She warned that AI systems can give incorrect diagnoses and fail to recognise when urgent medical help is needed.

What The Research Found About AI

Researchers asked nearly 1,300 participants to assess different health scenarios, ranging from severe headaches to postnatal exhaustion, and decide



what condition they might have and what action to take. Some participants used AI chatbots, while others relied on traditional routes like consulting a GP. The results were troubling. According to the BBC report, people using AI were often given a mix of good and bad information, and struggled to tell the difference. While chatbots performed well on standardised medical knowledge tests, they faltered when faced with real-world, messy human health problems. “The AI might list three possible conditions,” Dr Adam Mahdi, a senior author on the study, told the BBC. “People were then left to guess which one applied. This is exactly where things fall apart.”

Why AI Struggles With Symptoms

Unlike a doctor’s appointment, people don’t present all their symptoms at once. They remember things gradually, miss details, or describe sensations vaguely. The study found that AI responses varied wildly depending on how a question was phrased, making outcomes inconsistent and unreliable. Lead author Andrew Bean explained that interacting with humans remains a major challenge even for advanced AI

models. The concern, researchers say, is that users may trust the confident tone of chatbots without realising how fragile the advice actually is.

A Growing Habit With Real Risks

The findings come at a time when AI use for health is booming. BBC-reported polling by Mental Health UK found that more than one in three people now use AI tools to support their mental health or wellbeing. Experts also warn that chatbots can reproduce long-standing medical biases embedded in their training data. Dr Amber W. Childs of Yale School of Medicine told the BBC that AI is “only as good as a diagnostician as seasoned clinicians are, which is not perfect either. Should You Stop Using AI Altogether? Not necessarily. Tech experts say AI could still play a role in healthcare but with strict safeguards. Dr Bertalan Meskó, editor of The Medical Futurist, told the BBC that health-specific versions of chatbots released by companies like OpenAI and Anthropic may eventually offer safer outcomes. For now, researchers are clear on one thing: AI can provide information, but it should never be the final authority on your health.

In response to Sunita Ahuja’s accusations that he isn’t assisting his son’s career, Govinda



Mumbai: Sunita Ahuja has frequently discussed Govinda’s adulterous affairs in a number of interviews, but in one of them, she accused him of not being there and of contributing to their son Yash’s film career.

Govinda recently responded to the remarks.”Maine Nadiadwala se kaha, toh he gave his guidance to Yash kaise filmein banayi jati hain, kaam kiya jata hai,” Govinda stated in a chat. (Nadiadwala helped my son learn several facets of filmmaking after I asked him to mentor him.)”

”Yash mujhse better actor niklega. Woh mujhse technically better hai. Toh mein

umeed karta hoon, uska prastutikaran kisine sahi kar diya, toh he’s huge.”

He said, “I left politics for my family as I did not want political life to hamper my family life and hurt them, especially my children. So I stepped out of politics.”

Sunita Ahuja had stated, “Being Govinda’s son, he didn’t tell him, ‘Aap meri help kardo,’” highlighting Govinda’s lack of advocacy for his son Yash’s profession. Uski koi assistance nahi ki bhi gvin-da ne. (He never begged Govinda for assistance, even though he was his son.Additionally, Govinda offered him no assistance.)”

In response

to recent statements made by his wife, Sunita Ahuja, Govinda spoke about his commitment to his career and professional behavior in the film industry while vehemently rejecting charges of an extramarital affair. “Kab nahi laga aarop mujh par?” asked Govinda. When did I not receive this charge?“Jo aarop laga raha mere bachpan ka pyaar hai,” he said, “This is an accusation from my childhood love. Regarding the subject of love. It never operated correctly. Kisi ke sochne ke mutabik ye budhape ka hai, kisi ke pyaar ho raha hai. (Someone believes that this love is an old age love.)”

While opening up about his professional ethics and respect for colleagues, the Hero No. 1 actor shared, “I have worked with four superstars, Miss Universe heroine. I have never looked at them. Ek meri heroine aisa nahi keh sakti ki maine tang kiya ho ya kisi ke liya apshabd keh diya ho. I thank all the artists and heroines. Meri jo films chali hai, for that I am thankful to my directors, songs, and heroines in the films. My mother was a heroine. I never mis-

behave with any heroines. Now she is taking the name. I have seen it. I don’t like such words. Isiliye mai kshama maangta hu meri jo newcomers hai taki mai cha raha hu sabke saath kaam karu. Kahi dar na jaaye ki iske saath kaise kaam karna hai, iske production mein kaam hi nahi karenge. (I apologise. My newcomers, I want to work with them. I don’t want them to be afraid.)”

”My mother told me, Govind, if you consider the world of four members of the family, one day they will deceive you,” he added, reciting other life lessons he had learned from his mother.

What are you going to do? I welcome all my actresses. Are they stupid? Do they lack money and respect? The world is enjoying you. All of the actors are invited. You are the reason I am here. Thank you. Tina and Yashvardhan are the proud offspring of Govinda and Sunita, who were wed in 1987. While Yashvardhan is getting ready for his acting debut, Tina made her Bollywood debut in 2015 with Second Hand Husband.

After the concert, Arijit Singh and Anoushka Shankar party in Kolkata

Mumbai: After startling fans nationwide with his abrupt retirement announcement on January 27, singer-composer Arijit Singh made an unexpected appearance at sitar master Anoushka Shankar’s concert in Kolkata on February 8. Arijit also went to a party with Anoushka and her friends after the concert.On her Instagram Stories, Anoushka Shankar posted behind-the-scenes footage from the celebration.One video shows Anoushka embracing Arijit as soon as he enters. The actors can be seen celebrating and taking pleasure in their brief moments of stardom.On his Instagram Stories, Arijit also posted a thank-you note for Shankar. Following his January 27 announcement that he was retiring from playback singing, this is the singer’s first post. It’s always a lovely experience to play with you, and I always look forward to it.I’m thankful for the music, the times, and the kindness you put into each note.”

Bikram Ghosh, a percussionist who previously performed with Anoushka, was also honored by him.Anoushka Shankar shared the note and said, “Humbled beyond belief.”

The singer initially performed Maya Bhora Raati, a Bengali classic



originally sung by Lakshmi Shankar and composed by the renowned Pandit Ravi Shankar, with Anoushka and percussionist Bikram Ghosh.Arijit mentioned that he had just spent time

writing music with Anoushka at her house.Arijit then sang a heartfelt duet with Anoushka on the song Traces of You, which she co-wrote with global superstar Norah Jones. Arijit Singh announced on social media on January 27 that he would not be accepting any more playback singing gigs.Hi there. To everyone, a happy new year. I want to express my gratitude to all of you for being such loving listeners over the years. I’m pleased to say that I will no longer be accepting any new playback vocalist gigs. I’m going to retire. “It was an amazing journey,” Arijit posted on Instagram.Arijit Singh explained in a private X post that he isn’t quitting music completely and that he will focus on developing a different genre of music in order to “motivate” himself. Arijit Singh has been the unquestioned king of melody and heartbreak for younger generations for over ten years.Over the years, Arijit has continued to be the composer of choice for everyone from Salman Khan to Shah Rukh Khan, Ranveer Singh to Ranbir Kapoor.His popular songs include “Aaj Phir,” “Kabhi Jo Baadal Barse,” “Raabta,” “Tum Hi Ho,” and “Laal Ishq,” to mention a few.

Working with Saroj Khan left Karan Johar traumatized, he acknowledges

Mumbai: While filming Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol’s classic Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, director Karan Johar once found himself the target of Saroj Khan’s wrath. Karan said that he was traumatized by the incident and disclosed that she reprimanded him in front of the entire team.In an interview, Karan recounted a scene from the Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge sets, where he was in the crosshairs of choreographer Saroj Khan due to a last-minute costume malfunction during the filming of the Mehendi Laga Ke Rakhna song. On the Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol film Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, Karan served as Aditya Chopra’s assistant. The issue began when the production unexpectedly ran out of red

scarves for the background dancers. Karan revealed that this was a last-minute request made to him.When Karan realized there were more dancers than fabric, he quickly devised a solution. “I went to Jojo, Saroj ji’s assistant, to save the situation,” he said, “and very cleverly said, unko bolo, apna ek haath pocket mein rakho (tell them to keep one hand in their pockets), stylish lagega, cool lagega (it will look cool, it will look stylish), and accha lagega (it will look good). since I had run out of clothing. Prior to Saroj Khan’s arrival, Karan’s approach appeared to be effective. The late choreographer, the filmmaker recalled, realized something was wrong right away. She reprimanded Karan in front of the entire staff on



set after realizing who was responsible. In retrospect, Karan remarked, “She literally shoved me.” “Go wherever you

According to Ram Charan’s wife Upasana, astrology was crucial in welcoming twins



Mumbai: Upasana Kamineni Konidela, Ram Charan’s wife, gave an emotional look into the intensely private process of giving birth to her twins. A few days after giving birth, Upasana posted a video that emphasized the twins’ arrival and the astrological and spiritual preparations that

went into it. Astrologer Mahesh Bang discussed how the birth moment was meticulously chosen in the video. He continued, “I found one date and time that is 31st January, 11:30 PM onwards.”The video also demonstrated how medical professionals, nurses, astrologers, and spiritual advisors collaborated to make sure the experience was seamless and fulfilling. The video also captured the happiness of Ram Charan and Chiranjeevi, which added to the moment’s emotional impact.”My heart feels full every time I watch this,” Upasana stated upon sharing the video. With folded hands, thank you. My family is truly blessed. To RC’s fans and well-wishers, I know your love comes from a place of goodness. I trust you will always protect our children & respect their safety. To everyone who prayed for

us around the world, we will always be grateful for your blessings.”

”Happy to share that we have been blessed with a baby boy & girl,” the couple stated in their first public post after the delivery. We are incredibly grateful to have two daughters and a son. Our biggest strength has been the women in our lives. I want to express my gratitude to all of our supporters, family, and well-wishers who have been there for us at every turn. Fans of Ram Charan celebrated the twins’ birth with great fervor. The actor was surrounded by people when he went to Apollo Hospital to meet Upasana and their babies. But in the end, things were brought under control. Klin Kaara, Ram Charan and Upasana’s first child, was born in 2023 after they were married in a private ceremony in Hyderabad in 2012.

Salman Khan’s commitment to his craft is quite different, according to Rani Mukerji

Mumbai: Actress Rani Mukerji is enjoying the accolades she received for her role in Mardanaa 3. One of the few female actresses to have collaborated with all three Khans, she recently celebrated her 30th year in the business. Rani discussed how each of them has a unique acting style in an interview with Galatta Plus. She also emphasized Salman Khan’s commitment to the art, pointing out that he keeps his filmmaking process a secret from many. Regarding Shah Rukh, Rani said he is a very vivacious actor who always shows his female co-stars consideration and respect. She talked on how Aamir Khan always gives it his all for a shot and commended him for his commitment as a performer. “Then I met Salman and it was a 360 degree,” Rani stated in reference to Salman. His commitment to his art is very different. Because he has this attitude that makes you think he’s not there, but he is! That may be mistaken for someone who is so... he refuses to show it! Salman comes with that attitude and that swagger. She continued by saying, “He is so attractive that you wonder, ‘Who is this person?’ when he enters the set. Salman arrived with his bindaas attitude and was quite laid back about the whole situation, but once again, he puts a lot of effort into his trade. You probably don’t recognize it since he keeps people out of that area so they can see how hard he works. I believe it’s all in his head. He is present because he wants to do something different, contributes, and discusses the scenarios. Therefore, the three of them are stalwarts in their own right, but they approach their profession in rather different ways. Rani went on to say that she had equal affection for the three Khans. For those who don’t know, Rani collaborated with Aamir Khan on Talaash and Ghulam. She costarred



with Shah Rukh in a number of movies, such as Veer-Zaara, Chalte Chalte, Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham, and Kuch Kuch Hota Hai. She appeared on screen alongside Salman in Hello Brother, Har Dil Jo Pyar Karega, and Chori Chori Chupke Chupke. Rani Mukerji has thought back on her Bollywood journey as she celebrates 30 years in the business. The actress talked candidly about her collaborations with Salman Khan, Shah Rukh Khan, and Aamir Khan in a recent interview. Rani Mukerji talked about her time spent collaborating with Aamir Khan on the Ghulam movie in 1998.It was amazing to meet Aamir and watch him at work in Ghulam. As a young girl, I had a major crush on him after seeing him in Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak. In the film, he was adorable. “I believe I had an equal crush on Juhi,” she remarked.Working with such a well-known celebrity as a teenager was both intimidating and motivating, she continued. “I remember thinking, ‘Oh my God, I’m going to work with such a huge star,’ when I signed with Ghu-

lam. However, his commitment to each shot—the sensitivity, the gravity, and the amount of himself he put into the performance—was what really stood out to me. I absorbed all of that during my early career days,” the actress continued. Following Ghulam, Rani collaborated with Shah Rukh Khan on classic movies like Chalte Chalte and Kuch Kuch Hota Hai. Before she costarred with him, she remembered seeing him in Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge.I then collaborated with Shah Rukh. As a young girl, I had seen him in DDLJ. It came out in 1995, the same year that I was filming Raja Ki Aayegi Baraat, my debut feature. It was unreal to work with these two megastars,” she remarked.She was particularly struck by Shah Rukh Khan’s kind and protective demeanor.Shah Rukh exudes a kind and perceptive aura. I was barely eighteen when I worked with him, and he still calls me ‘baby,’” she said. “He treated me like a kid.” Rani said that working with Aamir and Shah Rukh was entirely different from her experience with Salman Khan.It was a complete 180-degree turn when I met Salman,” she remarked. “He has a completely different commitment to his craft. He enters with a bindaas attitude and this swag.

Even though he may not seem to be “there,” he is actually there.Salman’s laid-back demeanor frequently conceals the amount of effort he puts into his profession, she noted. “Everyone on set just stares at him because he’s so attractive. Although he works really hard, he takes a very casual approach to his profession. Because he doesn’t allow them to enter that area, people don’t recognize it,” Rani said. She claimed that all three actors share an equal enthusiasm for movies despite their different styles.

Talking about the advantages of having “stars” as parents, Shanaya Kapoor

Mumbai: Shanaya Kapoor, the daughter of Bollywood actors Sanjay Kapoor and Maheep Kapoor, debuted in the film Aankhon Ki Gustaakhiyan in 2025 with Vikrant Massey. She is now anticipating the release of Tu Yaa Main, her next movie. Shanaya talked about the benefits of having famous parents when Farah Khan recently paid her a visit at home. Farah and Dilip went to Shanaya and Maheep’s residence, where Adarsh Gourav, who costarred with Shanaya in Tu Yaa Main, was also there for the video. Farah engaged Maheep and Shanaya in discussion throughout the visit, asking them about their experiences as celebrities’ parents. “It’s good to have a star father and mother because they help me promote the film,” Shanaya remarked. She continued by recalling an instance in which she believed followers were coming to take a picture with her, but they were actually Maheep’s admirers. Shanaya remembered that she and her mother had gone to see Marty Supreme in a theater when some females disregarded her in order to take pictures with Maheep. “I was standing there with my phone when I noticed some girls approaching us,” she claimed. “Oh, the trailer just came out, and they might want a picture with me,” I said. As I was ready to get up, these girls approached my mother and said, “We really admire you.” They also asked, “Would you mind taking a picture of us with your mother?” When Farah disclosed that this also occurs to her, admirers occasionally rush to take photos of her cook Dilip rather than her, which gave the story a hilarious twist.

Among 30,000 people, Sonu Nigam assisted a lost child in finding his uncle

Mumbai: In front of an audience of about 30,000 people at a recent Hubballi concert, Sonu Nigam momentarily stopped his performance to help a child who had become separated from his family.

Later, Nigam posted a video of the event, which has since been widely praised on the internet.In the video, the musician is seen attempting to reassure a clearly frightened youngster named Sri Sai as he is led towards the front of the stage. As he spoke to the crowd and told them about the missing family, Nigam burst into an impromptu song to help soothe the youngster. Sharing the video, he wrote, “A scared and nervous Sri Sai after getting lost in the crowd of 30,000 in Hubballi last night. Not so scared

or lost, I assume, after he found me.” Turning the announcement into a light-hearted musical moment, Nigam sang, “Sri Sai aa jao, mummy papa isko le jao... iske mummy papa kho gaye, jaldi aake isko le jao (Sri Sai, come here... mummy and papa please take him, his parents are lost, come quickly and take him).”

“Papa, mummy tumhare bina masti kar rahe hain, pata hai (Your parents are having fun without you, you know that?)” Nigam asked the youngster in jest during the exchange. “Papa nahi hai (There is no papa)” was the child’s response. “Papa, mummy nahi toh kaun aaya hai? Agar papa mummy nahi aaye toh hum kisko dhoond rahe hai (If they didn’t come, then who are we looking for?)” the singer asked, swiftly

defusing the situation. As soon as the boy said “Chachu,” Nigam jokingly declared, “Chachu, kidhar hai chachu? Hey chachu, chhod ke chale gaye chachi ke saath? (Where are you, Uncle? Did you leave him and go away with Aunt, Uncle? “Bade bhai ne zimmedari di tumhe bachche ki aur tum yeh kar rahe ho?” he continued. (Your older brother trusted you with his kid, and now you’re doing this?)” elicited chuckles from the crowd. Later, the youngster was reunited with Sri Sai after the production crew located his uncle.With his Deewana Tera concert series, Nigam is presently traveling around India. His next concert is set for February 14 in Lucknow, following appearances in Guwahati, Jaipur, and Indore.

Airlines Get Notices from the DGCA for Violations

New Delhi, Feb 10: According to government data, the aviation authority DGCA sent out 352 show-cause letters to scheduled commercial airlines for a variety of infractions over the previous two years.From January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2025, IndiGo and Air India got 98 and 84 show-cause notices, respectively.According to information given to the Rajya Sabha on Monday by the civil aviation ministry, Air India Express received 65 show cause notices during this time, along with SpiceJet (45), Akasa Air (17), state-owned Alliance Air (23), Fly Big (12), AIX Connect (7), and Star Air (1). Air India Express and AIX Connect (previously AirAsia India) have combined.The information provided in a written response by Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol indicates that 139 of the 352 show cause letters that were issued resulted in penalties for the airlines involved. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) issued warnings in response to 113 show cause notes; only seven show cause notices obtained satisfactory responses. The government did not give specific airline-by-airline information about the regulator's action. Mohol stated in a different written response that the DGCA has a strong system in place to keep an eye on airline aircraft induction, On-Time Performance (OTP), and route optimization.Up until January 31, eight aircraft—seven narrow-body and one wide-body—have been introduced by airlines this year.

Court declines to hear Kuldeep Sengar's bail plea

New Delhi, Feb 10: The Delhi High Court was instructed by the Supreme Court on Monday to give expelled BJP leader Kuldeep Singh Sengar's appeal against his conviction in the case of the father of the Unnao rape survivor's prison death an out-of-turn hearing. The court stated that a decision should be made within three months.A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Justices Joy-malya Bagchi and N V Anjaria, rejected Sengar's plea contesting a high court order from January 19 but stated that the high court should consider the victim's family's appeal, if any, in addition to Sengar's petition. Sengar's plea contesting the high court's decision to not suspend his 10-year jail sentence in the case was being heard by the bench. The CJI voiced concern during the hearing regarding the victim's attorney's remarks regarding the case in the media. "This is not an ivory tower where we sit. Justice Kant stated that he would not put up with any "parallel trial" outside of the court, saying, "We know a media trial is going on outside." It was communicated to the bench that the high court will consider Sengar's appeal on February 11.A trial court fined Sengar Rs 10 lakh and sentenced him to 10 years of severe jail on March 13, 2020. When a family's "sole bread earner" was killed, the trial judge had said that "no leniency" could be granted.Due to police brutality, the father of the rape victim passed away in detention on April 9, 2018, after being arrested under the Arms Act at Sengar's request. In 2017, Sengar abducted the minor and sexually assaulted her.

Pakistan consents to play India in the World T20 Cricket Cup



New Delhi: It is now official that Pakistan has changed its mind about boycotting India at the T20 World Cup. The Pakistani government authorized its cricket team to play India in the T20 World Cup on February 15 in a late-night announcement on Monday, meaning the game will proceed according to its original plan. With some sources estimating it at over Rs 4,000 crore, the statement puts an end to days of debate over whether or not the "costliest cricket match in the world" would take place. It happened the day after the International Cricket Council (ICC), Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), and Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) met in Lahore. "In view of the outcomes achieved in multilateral discussions, as well as the request of friendly countries, the Government of Pakistan hereby directs the Pakistan National Cricket Team to take the field on

February 15, 2026, for its scheduled fixture in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup," the government of Pakistan said in a statement."Moreover, this decision has been taken with the aim of protecting the spirit of cricket and supporting the continuity of this global sport in all participating nations." After Aminul Islam, the head of the Bangladesh Cricket Board, urged Pakistan to play for the benefit of the game, it became evident that the nation would not be making the call. Although Aminul's letter sought to present Bangladesh as making a selfless gesture "for the benefit of cricket," it seemed more like a tactic to save Pakistan's reputation.Shehbaz Sharif, the prime minister of Pakistan, had declared openly that his nation will not attend the India match. As a result, the letter offered Pakistan a way to dodge criticism from its own citizens for shifting its position.

Villarreal's victory closes the gap with Atletico Madrid in La Liga



New Delhi: In La Liga, Villarreal defeated Espanyol 4-1 on Monday, tying third-place Atletico Madrid on points. The Yellow Submarine reached 45 points thanks to goals from Georges Mikautadze, Nicolas Pepe, and Alberto Moleiro, as well as an own goal from Jose Salinas. However, a late consolation goal for the visitors from Leandro Cabrera prevented Villarreal from overtaking Atletico to take third place. On Sunday, Atletico fell to Real Betis, giving Villarreal the opportunity to get closer. With a goal differential of just one more than Villarreal's, the Rojiblancos are still in third place, but Diego Simeone's team has a game in

hand. Espanyol's fourth straight loss put them four points behind fifth-place Betis, but they are still in the running to earn a spot in the UEFA Conference League, even though they are only one point ahead of chasing Celta Vigo.Following Tajon Buchanan's knock-down, Georgian attacker Mikautadze opened the scoring with a spectacular swivelling volley from close range on minute thirty-five.

Three minutes prior to halftime, Salinas converted Moleiro's square ball into his own net, doubling Villarreal's lead.With his left foot, Pepe rifled low across the goalkeeper after dancing past a challenge on the edge of the box three minutes less than five minutes into the second half. After a quick break forward left him in acres of room in the Espanyol box, Moleiro then joined in the fun in the 55th minute with a beautiful curling finish.In the 88th minute, Cabrera gave Espanyol a quick header from a corner, but it was too little, too late as Manolo Gonzalez's team continued to struggle.

With 114 Rafale fighter jets for Rs 3.25 lakh crore, India is poised to sign the largest arms deal

New Delhi, Feb 10: Days before French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to Delhi, the Defence Ministry is expected to approve a contract for Rs 3.25 lakh crore to purchase 114 Rafale fighter jets for the Indian Air Force's Multi-Role Fighter Aircraft program this week, officials told Tuesday morning.The agreement, if approved, will be the largest weapons deal in India's history. It will also include provisions to manufacture a specific number of them—roughly 100—in India, which will entail the transfer of advanced fighter jet technology and a strategic partnership to strengthen the "make in India" initiative. Additionally, if confirmed, this agreement will highlight India's position as one of the biggest non-French operators of the Rafale, a twin-engined, multi-role fighter jet that is widely considered to be among the most lethal in the world and is renowned for carrying out precision attack and air superiority missions.In a deal costing Rs 63,000 crore, India has bought 26 naval variations, the 'M' version, and already possesses 36 Rafales, with the Air Force receiving the last 'C' model in December 2024.Four twin-seat trainers were purchased as part of the transaction, which also facilitated fleet maintenance, logistics support, and employee training under an MRO (maintenance, repair, overhaul) contract. The aircraft carriers INS Vikrant and INS Vikramaditya will carry the



'M' version of Rafales.The delivered 'C' variant jets have been split between the Golden Arrows, or No. 17 Squadron in Ambala, and the Falcons, or No. 101 in Hasimara, Bengal.The Indian military's reaction to the Pahalgam terror incident, Operation Sindoor, took place in May of last year, and the IAF fighters have already experienced combat in Ladakh.The SCALP, an air-launched cruise missile that can hit hardened targets more than 250 kilometers distant with extreme precision, is thought to have been launched by Rafales, which were deployed during Operation Sindoor.

These missiles have been employed in a number of conflicts throughout the world, including the war in Iraq and Libya. It can also carry advanced radar and targeting systems, the Hammer, a stand-off strike weapon, the Spectra, an advanced e-warfare suite, and Meteor long-range air-to-air missiles.The delivery of a backlog of Rafales to the Indian military should be greatly accelerated by the four historic production transfer agreements that France and India agreed in June of last year between producers Dassault Aviation and Tata Advanced Systems Limited. It is anticipated that Tata Advanced Systems will establish a state-of-the-art production facility in Hyderabad to manufacture the French fighter's main structural components, such as the front section, the center fuselage, the entire rear section, and the lateral shells of the rear fuselage.2028 will see the first fuselage portions come off the assembly line.The final assembly of the Rafale fighter will be carried out at Dassault's production facility in Merignac, close to Bordeaux, with the aim of delivering two complete fuselages every month.The Defense Research and Development Institute, or DRDO, is developing fifth-generation fighter jets that the Navy intends to introduce domestically. The Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft, or AMCA, being built for the Air Force will have a naval counterpart in the form of these twin-engine, deck-based fighters.

The BCCI forbids athletes from remaining with their families during the 2026 T20 World Cup

New Delhi: Team India defeated the United States to start their 2026 T20 World Cup campaign. The victory effectively kicked off the campaign for Suryakumar Yadav and his team, despite the fact that the performance was not totally convincing. The players are suffering a serious personal setback, though, as the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has prohibited families from accompanying the squad to the competition. The senior leaders were reportedly contacted by the Indian team management to get clarification on the situation. The

question, however, was shot down. "The BCCI was contacted by the Indian team management to inquire about the possibility of spouses and fiancées traveling and staying with the team. Families will not be staying with the players, the Board stated clearly. However, if they want to, they can make separate agreements," a BCCI insider said. Limiting family visits is not a recent trend. After India's crushing loss to Australia during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy visit, the BCCI issued a number of regulations. Players are allowed to bring wives or family

members along for a maximum of 14 days under these revised rules, as long as the overseas tour lasts longer than 45 days. These regulations were increased during last year's visit of Australia, even though during the COVID-19 epidemic, players were permitted to have their families present for the duration of the tours. Throughout the competition, the team will fly by private charter to make up for the loss of home comforts. Furthermore, even though some players have hired their own chefs, they have had to reserve them rooms

at different, adjacent hotels where the food is prepared and brought to the squad.The BCCI's intention to remain completely focused in the wake of recent high-stakes setbacks is shown by its "business-only" strategy. The Board is obviously putting discipline over comfort by restricting outside distractions and managing the athletes' surroundings, including their diet. The key question is whether this rigorous setting creates the mental toughness required to win the trophy or if it leads to bubble-induced exhaustion.

PM Modi calls Sharad Pawar in the hospital to inquire about his health

New Delhi, Feb 10: Today, NCP patriarch Sharad Pawar, who was hospitalized to a private hospital in Pune on Monday due to a chest infection, was called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Prime Minister asked the 85-year-old how she was feeling.Sources claim that Rajnath Singh, the minister of defense, spoke with Pawar over the phone as well.The NCP leader complained of a throat infection and cough, which led to his admission to Ruby Hall Hospital in Pune. Antibiotics were prescribed by the doctors and will be taken for the next four days. Because of the potential of infection, Pawar has been strongly urged to rest and avoid contact with people for the time being. He is presently receiving treatment in a general ward after undergoing a battery of medical examinations at the hospital. One of the treating physicians, Dr. Abhijit Lodha, stated: "He acquired a cough and chest congestion as a result of physical effort.



Numerous examinations have been carried out, and therapy is already

in progress. He is in stable health. Following receipt of all test results,

any therapy changes will be determined. His oxygen saturation levels and other vital signs are steady. He is not in the intensive care unit, but rather a normal room. In a statement issued late at night, the hospital said that the veteran politician's oxygen levels and heart rate were steady based on their preliminary evaluation.His breathing rate is a little higher, though.

The hospital stated that there is a chance he will be placed under observation for a day.The senior Pawar was accompanied by daughter and Lok Sabha member from Baramati Supriya Sule and her husband Sadanand Sule when he was brought to the hospital.

The former Union minister, who lost his nephew and deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar in an air crash on January 28, was wheeled into the top private hospital as soon as he arrived from Baramati, which is about 100 kilometers from Pune city in western Maharashtra.

1st Test series in 19 years is proposed between India and Pakistan

New Delhi: Michael Vaughan has suggested what cricket fans worldwide desire to witness: a Test series between the two adversaries, now that the India vs. Pakistan T20 World Cup match is set to proceed as originally scheduled. After nearly 20 years, the former England captain has maintained that an India-Pakistan Test series is still necessary, arguing that the UK would make the perfect host. Vaughan's proposal was made just hours after the PCB-ICC impasse was resolved, opening the door for the eagerly awaited India-Pakistan match in Colombo on Sunday. "It's great for the competition and cricket," Vaughan wrote on X after the Pakistani authorities agreed to play India on February 15. We also need them to play a Test series shortly. A three-match series would be a fantastic event to have in the UK. India and Pakistan have not played a Test series in 19 years, with the most recent series taking place in 2007 due to political difficulties between the two nations. Pakistan lost a Test series 0-1 and an ODI series 2-3 when touring India. The fact is that India and Pakistan played bilaterals for the fourth consecutive year in 2007. India made its first full-fledged tour to Pakistan since 1989 in 2004, winning the Test and ODI series. To celebrate 50 years of Pakistan's independence, India did make one trip in 1997 for a brief three-match ODI series as part of the Wills Challenge Series. Pakistan took the initiative in 2005, winning the ODIs 4-2 and drawing the Tests 1-1. When India visited Pakistan once more in 2006, Yuvraj Singh and MS Dhoni led a 4-1 ODI victory, but they lost the Test match 0-1 despite Irfan Pathan's hat-trick heroics in

Karachi. But the chances of an India-Pakistan series, in any format or situation, seem remote. Cricket and on-field relations have suffered a great deal as a result of the harm done off the field. Since 2012-2013, India and Pakistan have not faced one another in a bilateral series, and this is probably going to continue. Setting up a Test series, even at a neutral location, is still a pipe dream since PCB and BCCI have flatly refused to visit each other's nations. The only way to watch an India-Pakistan series is in your dreams, given all that happened in Pahalgam last year and Pulwama in 2019.

Despite being the highest cricketing authority, the ICC lacks the power to approve an India-Pakistan series because the two governments must provide their final consent. And we know the answer to that. A desire to organize a tri-series between India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh was really raised during the three-way conference between the International Cricket Council, the Bangladesh Cricket Board, and the Pakistan Cricket Board. It "wasn't our domain," thus the ICC had to decline. When it comes to increasing money, ad sales, the hospitality sector, ratings, and other things, India vs. Pakistan is still cricket's holy grail. Roads would be deserted during India's matches against Pakistan throughout the 1990s, 2000s, and even the 2010s. As we move into the 2020s, the only thing keeping Indo-Pak competitions exciting is how few they are. The quality of cricket in the two nations differs greatly. Over the past nine years, Pakistan has only won three games, making the rivalry even more lopsided.

Qatar Open: Zheng triumphs upon her comeback; Andreeva advances

New Delhi: At the Qatar Open Monday, Olympic gold medallist Zheng Qinwen made her comeback to the game with a three-set victory over Sofia Kenin, while Mirra Andreeva easily advanced to the round of 16. Zheng, who hasn't played since September of last year, defeated 2020 Australian Open champion Kenin 4-6, 6-1, 6-2 to advance to the second round, where she will face Alycia Parks. Zheng, who is currently ranked 26th in the world, made a statement when she won her season opener by throwing down 20 aces. "When you come back from injury, it's never totally pain-free," Zheng stated.However, I could feel it, so I think my elbow is doing well overall.I can continue serving for another two hours since I'm in a pretty excellent stage," she continued.After a bye to the



round of 64, fifth seed Andreeva defeated Magda Linette 7-6 (7/0), 6-1 to open her tournament.The day did feature a number of high-profile eliminations, though, including the retirement of third seed Amanda Anisimova after falling behind Karolina Pliskova in the third set and the retirement of former US Open Grand Slam champi-

on Emma Raducanu during the final frame of her match against Camila Osorio. Iga Swiatek and Elena Rybakina, the top two seeds, will play their opening round of 32 matches on Tuesday.After losing to rising talent Victoria Mboko in the doubles on Monday, fourth seed Coco Gauff will begin her singles campaign.

Team India’s family travel request during T20 World Cup denied by BCCI, sources confirm

New Delhi: The defending champions India are co-hosting the ongoing ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2026 with Sri Lanka and according to sources, the Suryakumar Yadav-led Indian T20 side has demanded that their family should be allowed to travel along with them throughout the tournament. According to the sources, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has declined the demand but the official confirmation is yet to come from the Indian board.

Last year, the BCCI introduced a revised travel policy after the Indian team’s 1-3 defeat in Australia at the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, capping family members’ stay to two weeks’ maximum for tours longer than



45 days. For shorter tours, the duration was restricted to seven days. Head coach Gautam Gambhir had also backed the BCCI’s directive to limit the presence of cricketers’ families during long overseas tours, saying players must realise they are not on vacation but on national duty. “Families’ roles are important, but you’ve got to understand one thing. You

are here for a purpose. It’s not a holiday. You’re here for a huge purpose. You’ve got very few people in that dressing room or in this tour who get this opportunity to make the country proud,” Gambhir had said in July, 2025. In their first Group A fixture, Indian team defeated USA by 29 runs where the skipper Suryakumar Yadav played a match-winning

knock of unbeaten 84 runs off just 49 balls. Now, the Men in Blue are in Delhi for their next clash against Namibia on February 12. They are then scheduled to play the much-anticipated World Cup match against Pakistan in Colombo on February 15, before travelling to Ahmedabad for their final group-stage clash against the Netherlands on February 18.

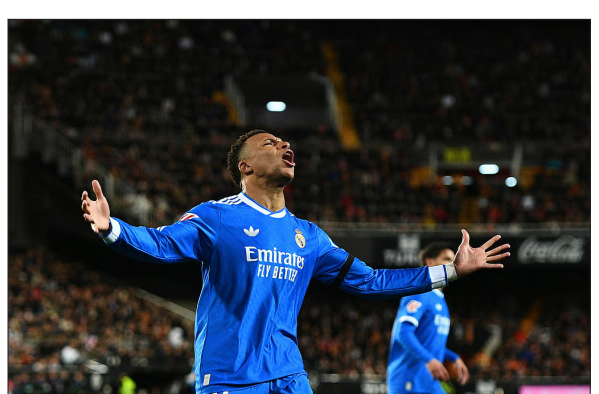
Ahead of their first match, Team India also played a warm-up fixture against South Africa at DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai. The T20 World Cup 2026 co-hosts defeated the Proteas by 30 runs after scoring 240 in the first innings. fixture against South Africa at DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai.

Mbappé’s Madrid scoring streak raises debate on surpassing Cristiano Ronaldo

Mbappé quickly matches Ronaldo’s numbers

Madrid: Kylian Mbappé’s latest impressive scoring run with Real Madrid has brought up comparisons to Cristiano Ronaldo. After Mbappé scored his 23rd goal in 22 Spanish league games in Madrid’s 2-0 win at Valencia on Sunday, coach Álvaro Arbeloa said the France striker could be well on his way to matching the success of Ronaldo at the Spanish powerhouse. What Cristiano achieved seemed extraterrestrial, something impossible to match and no one could come close,” Arbeloa said. “Mbappé has a long way to go because Cristiano was here for many years, but he has the conditions to follow in his footsteps, and you never know if he’ll be able to surpass him. But if anyone can, it’s Kylian.”

The 41-year-old Ronaldo, currently playing in Saudi Arabia, played for Madrid from 2009-18, breaking nearly every club record.



The 27-year-old Mbappé joined the Spanish powerhouse last season and quickly matched some of the numbers of the Portugal star. Mbappé scored 59 goals in 2025 to equal’s Ronaldo’s club-record tally in 2013. At the time, Mbappé called Ronaldo his “idol, the best player in the history of Real Madrid and a reference point in world soccer. It’s an honor for me.” Mbappé started this year on a roll and with even better numbers, having scored nine goals in sev-

en matches. He needed 11 games to reach nine goals last year. He has 43 goals in 35 appearances for club and country this season. It’s a great fortune, because right now he’s the best player in the world with what he’s proving day in and day out, game after game,” Arbeloa said of Mbappé. Arbeloa, who took over the club’s helm this year to replace Xabi Alonso, was a former Madrid defender who was a teammate of Ronaldo at Madrid, playing six seasons

with him from 2009-2016. Mbappé’s France and Madrid teammate Aurélien Tchouaméni also was among those saying Mbappé has what it takes to surpass Ronaldo’s numbers with Madrid, according to Spanish media.

Ronaldo left the Spanish club with 451 goals in 438 competitive appearances. Television cameras caught Mbappé criticizing the officiating crew in the game against Valencia, with the France striker apparently using the word “clown” to talk about one referee. Mbappé seemed to be looking for an explanation for an offside call but the referee didn’t appear to want to talk to the player.

Mbappé’s Madrid has won seven in a row in the Spanish league and sits one point behind leader Barcelona after 23 matches. It will face José Mourinho’s Benfica in the first knockout phase of the Champions League.

Gyokeres Lifts Arsenal, Spurs Under Pressure

London: Arsenal moved nine points clear at the top of the Premier League with a 3-0 victory against Sunderland, while Tottenham boss Thomas Frank faced renewed calls for his sacking after a 2-0 defeat at Manchester United on Saturday. Mikel Arteta’s side went ahead in the 42nd minute at the Emirates Stadium as Martin Zubimendi fired past Sunderland goalkeeper Robin Roefs at his near post. Viktor Gyokeres sealed Arsenal’s second successive league win with a 66th-minute strike before the Swede netted again in stoppage time. The Gunners, who haven’t won a trophy since the 2020 FA Cup, are chasing their first English Villa took the lead as Morgan Rogers.

Indian Racing Festival introduces thrilling street racing spectacle to vibrant Goa city



Panaji: The Indian Racing Festival (IRF) is set to break new ground this February as it stages its first-ever Goa edition, transforming the state into a motorsport hub for a high-octane Formula Street Race Weekend. Scheduled for February 14 and 15, the event marks a significant moment in the festival’s rapid rise, with Round 4 of the championship unfolding at the Manohar International Airport, according to a release.

At the heart of the spectacle lies a tailor-made FIA-grade street circuit measuring 2.064 kilometres. Featuring 12 turns carved into the airport’s expansive layout, the track is designed to encourage close racing, late braking, and constant position battles, setting the stage for an intense weekend of competition. The Goa

Street Race forms Round 4 of the Indian Racing League. With only narrow margins separating the leading teams, every lap around the Goa circuit could prove decisive in shaping the title narrative. All teams will compete in identical Ligier JS F422 machinery, powered by a 1.3-litre turbocharged Alpine engine. The combination of equal performance and a tight street layout promises wheel-to-wheel racing, where driver skill and team strategy are likely to outweigh raw speed.

One of the defining features of the Indian Racing League is its inclusive team structure. Each outfit fields four drivers: an experienced international racer, an emerging global talent, an Indian driver and a female competitor. The format is designed not only to raise competitive standards but also to nurture homegrown talent and promote gender representation at the highest level of Indian circuit racing. Among the standout names heading into the Goa round is Divy Nandan of Hyderabad Black Birds. European experience is led by Tom Canning of Kolkata Royal Tigers, a British GT champion and Aston Martin Academy graduate.

Karnataka hang on determinedly to secure place in yet another Ranji Trophy semifinal

Chennai: When Vidyadhar Patil scored the winning runs off Mumbai spinner Shams Mulani, it marked the end of another classic Ranji Trophy quarterfinal tie between these two sides. Under the blue sky at the BKC ground on Day Four, the tie saw-sewed between the fabled sides, especially post-lunch. Cruising at 265/3 in their chase of 325, Karnataka found themselves at 285/6 ten overs. India Test opener KL Rahul, who earlier posted a composed ton under pressure (131) was dismissed early. Shreyas Gopal and Kruthik Krishna did not stay for long. Smaran R, who had registered another masterful fifty before lunch, was the only recognised batter on the field, when Vidhyadhar walked in. While the 22-year-old southpaw took the cautious route, Patil decided to score quickly. As the duo guided Karnataka to their first semifinal since 2023, there were muted celebrations on the pitch, in contrary to loud roars from



the dressing room. Amidst the celebrations, Karnataka head coach Yere Goud was a relieved man. After seeing his team snatch A miraculous win against Punjab in Mohali, he witnessed yet another landmark win in his second stint as senior team coach. “Chasing 325 on day four against Mumbai, is quite a commendable job as far as Karnataka is concerned,” Goud told this daily. This year, we knew we need to start strongly. From 5 games, we were expecting around 24 points actu-

ally. But we ended up with 21 (before win vs Punjab). I think the team has gelled well and the players took care. Now, we have five Test players playing in the XI. That also makes a lot of difference,” he added.

In the final day of that game in Mohali, the visitors were up against it thanks to a thick layer of fog, which prompted a delayed start. Needing 250 runs with just one and a half session remaining, Karnataka, led by new skipper Devdutt Padikkal fired their way, amassing

the total within 28 overs. We missed two of our big-stage players in Karun Nair and Smaran. We knew that we need to have full game. The kind of innings they played, that shows the kind of quality the team possesses,” Goud said. “Even though we were given 40 overs, we knew that they would bowl only 28-29 overs. Probably, after doing so well in the league stage, missing out would have definitely hurt us,” he said. Smaran is having a breakout campaign. Only in his second season in First-Class cricket, he has taken the intricacies and the demands of it like hand to gloves. Slamming two centuries in five league games (he missed out on the last two games), his unbeaten 83 may grab eyeballs.

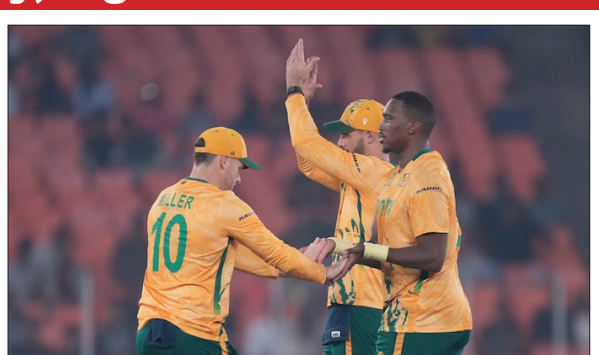
This year, he has improved his game a lot more, scored bigger runs and scored when it matters. The fact that he’s got two double hundreds shows his hunger and skill. These are the kind of knocks that push a player next way.

Ngidi, Markram star as South Africa overpower Canada, beginning campaign with clinical win

Markram fifty, Ngidi four-wicket haul secure win

New Delhi: South Africa made a stunning start to their campaign, defeating Canada by 57 runs in the Group D clash of the T20 World Cup on Monday, February 9, at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. The 2024 runners-up put in a strong batting performance, led by Aiden Markram’s half-century, before Lungi Ngidi’s four-wicket haul dismantled Canada’s chase.

With the win, the Proteas moved to the top of the table with a net run rate of +2.850, overtaking New Zealand, who also began their campaign with a victory over Afghanistan. The Black Caps will have a chance to reclaim the top spot when they face the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday at the MA Chidambaram Stadium. After being asked to bat first, the Proteas got off to a brisk start as openers Aiden Markram and Quinton de Kock dominated the powerplay, putting on 65 runs without losing a wicket. The partnership eventually reached 70 before Canada skipper Dilpreet Bajwa removed De Kock, who scored 25 off 22 balls. Markram continued to play aggressively, reaching his fifty off 28 balls, while Ryan Rickelton supported with a quick 21-run knock off 33 balls. In the middle overs, South Africa suffered



a mini-collapse, losing three wickets for 12 runs in just 14 balls to be reduced to 138 for four. Canada’s left-arm wrist spinner Ansh Patel was impressive, taking all three wickets and finishing with figures of 4-0-31-3. Markram eventually fell for 59 off 32 balls in the 12th over. While Dewald Brevis fell cheaply, an unbeaten 75-run partnership between David Miller (39) and Tristan Stubbs (34) helped the Proteas post a competitive 213 for four. Canada didn’t get off to the best start as Lungi Ngidi struck early, removing skipper Dilpreet Bajwa for a duck in the very first over of their chase. Yuvraj Samra looked promising, hitting three fours, but Ngidi dismissed him soon after. Ngidi then claimed Nicholas Kirton’s wicket, and Kagiso Rabada sent back Shreyas Movva, reducing Canada to 50 for four in the powerplay. Harsh Thaker and Navneet Dhaliwal tried to stabilise

the innings with a 69-run partnership, but the required run rate kept climbing. Ngidi broke the stand by taking Thaker’s wicket; he had made a handy 33 off 29 balls. From there, Dhaliwal played a lone hand, reaching fifty off 39 balls and finishing with 64 off 49 balls, including seven fours and a six. Backed by Ngidi’s brilliant four-wicket haul and Marco Jansen’s 2-30 from four overs, South Africa completed a clinical victory in Ahmedabad, restricting Canada to 156 for eight.

Lungi Ngidi took four wickets against Canada in the T20 World Cup 2026 match between South Africa and Canada. According to coverage of the Group D clash at the Narendra Modi Stadium, Lungi Ngidi delivered a standout performance by removing four Canadian batters, helping South Africa secure a comprehensive 57-run victory. Aiden Markram contributed with

a fifty as well, but it was Ngidi’s four-wicket haul that disrupted the Canadian deified tournament campaign. South Africa began their ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2026 campaign in emphatic fashion, brushing aside Canada by 57 runs in Ahmedabad.

The match, played at the Narendra Modi Stadium on February 9, saw the Proteas deliver a commanding all-round performance, with captain Aiden Markram leading from the front with the bat and Lungi Ngidi wreaking havoc with the ball. The result not only gave South Africa a winning start but also underlined their credentials as one of the tournament’s strongest contenders. Asked to bat first after Canada won the toss, South Africa’s top order wasted no time in asserting dominance. Quinton de Kock and Aiden Markram opened with intent, forging a fluent 70-run stand that set the tone. De Kock played the anchor role, rotating strike and allowing Markram to unleash his aggressive strokeplay. Markram’s innings was a masterclass in controlled aggression. He smashed 59 runs off just 32 balls, peppering the boundary with crisp drives and powerful pulls. His knock ensured South Africa capitalized.

Manu Bhaker misses gold in shoot-off, Esha secures bronze medal in 25m pistol event



New Delhi: Manu Bhaker narrowly missed out on a gold as she went down to Vietnam’s Thuy Trang Nguyen in an exciting final of 25m Women’s Pistol that was decided at the end of two shoot-offs in the Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship, New Delhi 2026, which is being held here at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range. Esha Singh won her second individual medal of the championship, winning bronze, according to a release. Naamya Kapoor clinched gold in the junior category in another tense shoot-off, while Anjali Bhagwat secured bronze in the same event, as India’s total medal tally rose to 60, including 37 gold, 13 silver, and 10 bronze. In the finals, Esha Singh started with a perfect five in the first series while Manu and Thuy Trang hit four. All three shooters were trading the medal positions after each series in the tightly contested finals. The Indian shooters were putting pressure on the Vietnamese shooter, but a perfect five shots in the sixth series saw her take a two-point lead. Manu and Esha took

advantage of Nguyen’s one-shot seventh series to close the gap. Esha, who was leading with a score of 30 at the end of the eighth series, missed all her shots in the ninth series to eventually be content with the bronze medal. In the last series, Manu hit three shots while Nguyen hit two shots to end the finals on 35 shots each to take the finals to a shoot-off. In the first shoot-off, both shooters hit two shots each, and in the following shoot-off, Manu missed three shots to miss out on the gold medal. The third Indian in the final, Rhythm Sangwan, finished in fourth place. In the junior finals, Naamya Kapoor survived a shoot-off to clinch the gold. The youngest Indian to win a World Championship medal, hit 29 shots, the same as Rihadatul Asyifa of Indonesia.

The young shooter held her nerve in the shoot-off, hitting three shots while Asyifa missed all her shots. Anjali Bhagwat won bronze with a score of 24. Parisha Gupta, who qualified for the finals in top spot, finished in fifth place with a score of 14. India’s shoot-

ing contingent continued its medal rush at the ongoing Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship in New Delhi, with star shooters Manu Bhaker and Esha Singh delivering podium finishes in the women’s 25m pistol event. The competition, staged at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range, witnessed huge drama as the final went down to a tense shoot-off, keeping spectators on edge until the very last shot. Manu Bhaker, a double Olympic bronze medallist and one of India’s most consistent performers on the international stage, came agonisingly close to clinching gold. She tied with Vietnam’s Nguyen Thuy Trang. Olympic double bronze-medallist Manu Bhaker came agonisingly close to winning a gold, missing out by a whisker in a tense shoot-off as she clinched a silver in 25m pistol event, while fellow Indian Esha Singh claimed a bronze at the Asian Championship here on Monday.

In one of the most closely-contested events of this edition of the continental championship, both gold medallist Nguyen Thuy Trang and Manu shot an identical 35 in the final, forcing a shoot-off, where the Vietnamese held sway. In fact, the final turned out to be a battle of nerves, with former Asian air pistol champion Trang, Manu, Esha, and Olympian Rhythm Sangwan all tightly packed and in contention for the top spot. Esha started with a perfect five in the first series while Manu and Trang hit four. All three Indian shooters were trading the medal positions after each series but a perfect five in the sixth series saw the Vietnamese take a two-point lead. Manu and Esha capitalised on Trang’s poor seventh series, where she managed to hit only one target, closing the gap. Indian team also secured the team gold in the event.