

In Brief

PM Modi to visit Assam on Jan 17, 18

Guwahati, Jan 10: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will arrive in the state on January 17 on a two-day visit. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that during the visit the Prime Minister will lay the foundation of 34.5-km-long elevated corridor at Kaziranga National Park on January 18. PM Modi will also attend the grand cultural spectacle where nearly 10,000 Bagurumba dancers will perform together at Arjun Bhogeswar Baruah Sports Complex in Guwahati on January 17. The Prime Minister will also virtually flag off two trains, one will run from Dibrugarh to Gomti and the another from Guwahati to Raota. This will be PM Modi's second visit to Assam within a month. Last time he visited the state was on December 20-21, 2025 when he launched Rs 15,600-crore development projects.

Two more accused chargesheeted by NIA

Guwahati, Jan 10: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has chargesheeted two more accused in the Assam Independent Day IED seizure case of 2024. In its supplementary chargesheet filed before the NIA Special Court, Guwahati, on Friday, the anti-terror agency has indicted Bhargab Gogoi and Sumu Gogoi under various sections of IPC, Explosive Substance Act and UA(P) Act. This takes the total number of accused chargesheeted in the case to five as NIA had earlier, in June last year, charged three other accused in the case.

Mizoram makes gains in HIV prevention

Aizawl: Mizoram has recorded steady progress in HIV prevention efforts and has moved up to third place in the national ranking for 2025-26. However, the state continues to face a serious public health challenge, as it still reports the highest adult HIV prevalence rate in the country at 2.75 per cent, officials have said. This figure is far above the national average of 0.20 per cent. The tests were conducted after screening more than 1.4 lakh blood samples during the same period.

40 acres of poppy fields destroyed in Senapati

Imphal, Jan 10: A combined team of security forces, forest department along with executive magistrate yesterday destroyed about 40 acres of poppy field at Ngatun Hill Range, Senapati-PS, Senapati district. Eleven makeshift huts, fertilizers and salt, pipes for irrigation, spray pumps etc found at the site were also destroyed.

CM Rekha Gupta Announces "Pink Smart Cards" for Women

New Delhi, Jan 10: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta made a significant policy announcement today during a press briefing at the Delhi Secretariat. The government is introducing "Pink Smart Cards" for all working women and students in the national capital.

CES 2026 Concludes with Focus on "AI Sustainability"

New Delhi, Jan 10: The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2026 officially drew to a close today in Las Vegas. The final day's highlights focused on "Green Computing," with the "Best of Show" award going to a startup that developed the first high-performance AI processor made from recycled semiconductor waste that operates with 60% less power consumption.

2nd Senate Meeting of DMU held at Lok Bhavan

• The 2nd Senate Meeting of Dhanamanjuri University, Manipur, took place at Lok Bhavan, led by Chancellor Ajay Kumar Bhalla. Registrar Dr. R.K. Joteen Singh initiated the proceedings, followed by Vice-Chancellor Prof. W.Chandbadu Singh's welcome address.

Imphal, Jan 10: The 2nd Senate Meeting of the Dhanamanjuri University, Manipur was held at the Durbar Hall, Lok Bhavan with Chancellor of Dhanamanjuri University and Governor of Manipur, Ajay Kumar Bhalla in the helm of affairs. With the permission of the Chancellor, Registrar Dhanamanjuri University, Dr. R.K. Joteen Singh initiated the proceedings. Vice-Chancellor of Dhanamanjuri University Prof. W.Chandbadu Singh welcomed all the members of the Senate and the invitees and also presented the overall position and progress of the university. The Chancellor of the university in his address also welcomed the MPs, MLAs,

and other members of the Senate. In his address, he highlighted the university's emergence as a great centre of higher education while maintaining its own long drawn legacy of highly acclaimed colleges that imparted best education at the college levels.

Despite many problems due to shortage of modern infrastructure in terms of classrooms, laboratories, research equipments, office space, library, sports infrastructure etc., the Chancellor expressed his satisfaction in the university's progressive approach towards excellence in education and research. He appreciated the university's efforts towards the steps taken up for implementation of NEP 2020 in its true sense and spirit, introduction of Multiple Entry & Multiple Exit system, emphasis given on Vocational & Skill Developments in curricula, integration of Indian Knowledge System, and holistic education perspectives. When the discussions on the agenda-items started, the Proceedings of



the 1st Senate Meeting held on February 26, 2021 was placed in the August gathering by the Registrar for confirmation and approval. Prof. L. Nandababu Singh, Dean, School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences placed the proceedings of the Syndicate meetings held between December 2021 to December 2025. Prof. S. Lanchenba Meetei, Dean, School of Humanities placed a gist

of the DMU Annual Reports 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 while Rojendrakar Nongthomba, Finance Officer DMU placed the Annual Accounts Reports for the last three years, and Prof. N. Jayanti, Dean, School of Business Studies placed the Revised Estimate 2023-24, 2024-25 and Budget Estimate 2025-26 for consideration and approval. After the completion of the discussion

on the agenda-items of the meeting, Registrar, DMU proposed the vote of thanks, extended to the members of the Senate and with the permission of the Chancellor and Governor of Manipur the meeting ended with an open invitation from the Vice-Chancellor to all the members of the Senate to attend the 1st Dhanamanjuri University Convocation to be held on January 17.

Govt encourages citizens to report extortion threats

Imphal, Jan 10: The Government of Manipur has encouraged the citizens to report any extortion threats from calls, messages, letters, or other sources to the Integrated Anti-Extortion Cell set up within the Home



Department on January 26, 2025. The unit brings together members from the State Police, Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFS), and Assam Rifles/Indian Army to work in unison against extortion activities across the State. For public reporting, the toll-free helpline - 1800 202 3326 of Anti-Extortion Cell is available 24/7. Citizens can use it to report any extortion threats from calls, messages, letters, or other sources, said a press release issued by the Commissioner cum Secretary (Home). It encouraged everyone, including government employees, to promptly report such incidents and cooperate fully with the authorities, saying the Integrated Anti-Extortion Cell will respond quickly by coordinating with relevant police stations and security forces to take effective measures. The Government of Manipur remains strongly committed to upholding law and order and seeks ongoing public collaboration to combat extortion and related crimes, it said.

Centre steps up support for Arunachal as NEC releases funds for health, roads, tourism and livelihoods

Arunachal Pradesh has received substantial development support from the Centre, with significant funding directed towards healthcare, road connectivity, tourism, and livelihood generation through the North Eastern Council (NEC).

Itanagar, Jan 10: Arunachal Pradesh received strong development support from the Centre over the past year, with major funds released for projects linked to healthcare, road connectivity, tourism facilities and livelihood generation, officials said on Friday. The assistance was routed through the North Eastern Council (NEC), the apex planning and development body for the Northeastern states. According to an official statement, the NEC released Rs 4.24 crore in December for several priority projects in Arunachal Pradesh. These projects focus mainly on improving basic services in remote and border areas, where access to health care and infrastructure remains a challenge. Among the key projects sanctioned are the construction of a nursing hostel at the district hospital in Yingkiong in Upper Siang district and a maternity and



child care centre at Miao in Changlang district. Both projects are expected to strengthen health services, especially for women, children and frontline medical staff. In addition, the development of the Tissa viewpoint near Tissa Camp in Tirap district has been approved to support tourism and create local employment. To improve road connectivity, the NEC also released Rs 13.50 crore under the NESIDS-Roads scheme. The funding covers the construction and upgradation of the 21-km Murung Gika-Panior bridge point road via several villages in Papum Pare district, as well as the Bana EAC to Richukrong headquarters road in East Kameng district. Officials

said these roads will improve access to administrative centres and remote habitations, directly benefiting nearly 19,500 people across 15 villages. The statement also highlighted the completion of a Rs 2.60-crore livelihood project for migrant workers who returned to the state during the Covid-19 pandemic. Implemented under the industries sector, the project focused on skill training and self-employment, helping beneficiaries earn sustainable incomes locally and reduce distress migration. In the education sector, students from Arunachal Pradesh took part in the NE-SPARKS programme, a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER). Under the programme, students visited centres of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in Bengaluru to gain exposure to space science and technology. Overall, the NEC released Rs 76.78 crore across the Northeast in December 2025, reflecting the Centre's continued focus on balanced and inclusive development, particularly in Arunachal Pradesh and other border states.

Nagaland sets up high-powered committee to oversee Hornbill Festival management

Kohima, Jan 10: The Nagaland government has set up a standing high-powered committee to take overall charge of the planning, coordination and conduct of the Hornbill Festival, the state's most prominent cultural event. The move is aimed at bringing better coordination among departments, improving transparency, and ensuring smoother management of the festival, which draws large crowds from across India and abroad every year. The decision has been approved

by the Governor of Nagaland and marks a shift towards a more centralised system of governance for the festival. The newly formed body will act as the main governing authority for all major decisions related to the Hornbill Festival, from planning and partnerships to finances and on-ground operations. The Chief Minister of Nagaland will chair the committee. Both deputy chief ministers, several cabinet ministers and senior government officials have been included as members. The Chief

Secretary will serve as the member secretary. Officials from key departments such as tourism, art and culture, industries and commerce, and horticulture are part of the panel. Representatives from the Tourism and Arts Federation of Mega Achievers have also been included to ensure wider coordination. One of the key responsibilities of the committee will be to oversee strategic planning and coordination among various departments involved in organising the festival. The body will also

approve major collaborations, sponsorships and partnerships. Special attention will be given to monitoring corporate social responsibility contributions and sponsorship funds to ensure financial transparency and proper utilisation of resources. The committee will have authority over operational matters at the festival venue, the Naga Heritage Village at Kisama. This includes decisions on site allocation, pricing of materials and events, and approval of new initiatives. Any cultural,

musical or related programmes proposed at the heritage village outside the official festival period will also require prior approval from the committee. To manage day-to-day coordination, a convener and a festival director will be appointed from among the committee members. They will work closely with departments and agencies involved in organising the event and ensure that decisions taken by the governing body are implemented on the ground.

Assam CM says documents on Gaurav Gogoi's alleged Pakistan links will be made public this month

Guwahati, Jan 10: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said that documents related to alleged links between Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi and Pakistan would be made public before the end of January. His remarks have further sharpened the political confrontation in the state, just months ahead of the Assembly elections. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a government programme at Goreswar, the Chief Minister said officials were finalising the paperwork and that the material would be released "before February". He claimed that the state government had sufficient documents and evidence and that officers were currently examining them before making them public. Sarma said the disclosure was delayed due to the death of cultural icon Zubeen Garg in September, though he did not explain how the two developments were linked. He added that the

matter was serious and should be seen from the point of view of national security rather than electoral politics. The Chief Minister also questioned Gogoi's suitability for the top post in the state, referring to the British citizenship of his wife and children.

He said senior officers would face difficulty in official interactions if a chief minister's immediate family members were not Indian citizens. Sarma further claimed that people of Assam understood these issues and would not accept such leadership. When asked about the impact of the allegations on the upcoming elections, Sarma said Pakistan was an enemy country and any alleged connection with it was a matter of grave concern. He reiterated earlier accusations that Gogoi had links with Pakistani nationals, claims which the Congress leader has consistently denied. Gogoi has dismissed the allegations as

politically motivated and baseless. He has accused the Chief Minister of making reckless statements without evidence and has said the remarks were aimed at diverting attention from real public issues. Meanwhile, Sarma also announced that the Bharatiya Janata Party-led alliance would field candidates for all three Assam seats in the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections. Addressing a press conference, he said the ruling front was confident of winning two seats and would make a strong attempt to secure the third as well. The three seats, currently held by two BJP MPs and one Independent member, are set to fall vacant in April. With a comfortable majority in the Assembly, Sarma said the alliance was well placed and would contest aggressively. The Congress, however, has accused the BJP of using central agencies and sensitive issues to target opposition leaders as the election season approaches.

ITLF endorses KZC's stand on govt formation

Imphal, Jan 10: The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF), in its meeting held yesterday, unanimously endorsed the decision of the Kuki-Zo Council (KZC) Governing Council that the Kuki-Zo people cannot and shall not join the formation of the Manipur Government under the present circumstances. According to a press release of ITLF, the Kuki-Zo people have been subjected to inhuman treatment, killed, butchered, paraded naked, and forcibly chased out from the Imphal Valley.

Thousands of houses have been burnt, places of worship destroyed and desecrated, and over 40,000 people remain internally displaced, having lost their homes, land, and livelihoods. It said that the violent separation and forced displacement of the Kuki-Zo people from Meitei-dominated areas have irreversibly broken trust and coexistence.

Under such conditions, continuing within the present Manipur administrative framework is untenable.

Hence, the demand for a Separate Administration is a constitutional and political necessity, it said. Accordingly, the Kuki-Zo people have placed their demand for a Union Territory with a legislature before the Government of India. After formally seeking this political solution, there is no logic in joining the Manipur Government, it continued. On May 12, 2023, following the failure of the Manipur State to protect the Kuki-Zo people, Kuki-Zo MLAs sought Separate Administration from the Union of India. This position stands firm.

No Kuki-Zo MLA shall join the Manipur Government. Any deviation shall be viewed as a betrayal of the collective will and sacrifices of the Kuki-Zo people, ITLF said.

Dibrugarh University International Literature Festival to host 150 writers from 25 countries

Guwahati, Jan 10: Positioning Assam as a growing hub for global literary exchange, the third edition of the Dibrugarh University International Literature Festival (DUILF) will host more than 150 writers, poets and speakers from 25 countries in February, organisers announced on Friday. Acclaimed litterateurs expected to attend include Ann Morgan, author of A Year of Reading the World; award-winning Djiboutian novelist Abdourahman Waberi; South Korean author Kyung-sook Shin; renowned Indian writer Yesse Dorei Thongchi; celebrated Australian author Gideon Haigh; and Egyptian novelist Mai Khaled, among others. Organised by Dibrugarh University in association with the Foundation for Culture, Arts and Literature (FOCAL), a Guwahati-based non-profit trust, the four-day festival beginning February 18 aims to further strengthen India’s footprint on the global literary map.

Alongside authors, the festival will feature storytellers, performers and cultural practitioners, with an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 literary enthusiasts expected to attend. DUILF 2026 will include author conversations, panel discussions spanning poetry, fiction and international affairs, as well as sessions on films and sports, readings, workshops and community-led cultural experiences. DUILF curator and chief coordinator Rahul Jain said the festival was conceived as a meeting ground for global literary voices and the cultural imagination of North East India. “The 2026 edition deepens this dialogue by bringing Middle Eastern and North African narratives into conversation with young audiences, students and readers,” he said. British author Ann Morgan, who will be attending DUILF



for the third time, said the festival offers a rare platform for meaningful exchange. “It is uncommon to see such a wide range of international voices engaging with young people in this way. The warmth and hospitality of Assam help forge connections that last a lifetime, opening hearts and minds,” she said

Villagers denied MGNREGA wages as JCBs replace manual labor

Agartala, Jan 10: Allegations of irregularities have surfaced in the implementation of an MGNREGA road project in Boko Development Block, raising concerns over misuse of funds and denial of employment to local villagers. The project, titled “Construction of Agribundh cum Road from Hahim PWD Road to Roumari Sahipara via Dhanhati”, is part of the 2025-26 financial year’s MGNREGA initiatives. Sanctioned with an estimated outlay of Rs 9,57,519, it aims to boost rural connectivity and strengthen the local agrarian economy in the 70 No. Dakhin Pub Luki Gram Panchayat. Of the total funds, Rs 7,75,972.40 is earmarked for wages, and Rs 1,81,546.60 for materials. The project is expected to generate approximately 3,031 mandays of employment, offering direct wage support to villagers while creating durable infrastructure for farmers and residents in the Hahim-Roumari area. However, reports indicate that the construction has been carried out using excavator vehicles (JCBs), rather than manual labor

by villagers. While mechanization accelerates work, it reportedly deprives residents of their rightful MGNREGA wages. On Friday, a group of villagers staged a protest at the construction site, prompting the work team to halt operations and leave. Allegations have since been raised against project overseers. Chandan Kumar Boro, president of Dhanhati village, accused Panchayat member Jitumoni Rabha and BJP booth committee president Karmeswar Rabha of leading the malpractice. Villagers allege that such irregularities have been ongoing, with JCBs replacing manual labor and contractors allegedly withholding job cards. According to residents, many villagers who rely on daily wages for their livelihood—When contacted, Boko Block Development Officer Rajiv Das confirmed that an inquiry would be conducted. He reiterated that MGNREGA rules mandate work be carried out by villagers holding valid job cards, and that using mechanized equipment like JCBs violates these provisions.

Meghalaya secures Rs 13.45 crore in NEC funding for infrastructure



Agartala, Jan 10: Meghalaya received Rs 13.45 crore in December 2025 as part of a wider funding push by the North Eastern Council to accelerate development across the Northeast, according to an official statement issued on January 9. The allocation formed part of a total of Rs 76.78 crore released by the NEC during the month to Northeastern states and regional agencies, with a focus on infrastructure creation, livelihoods, cultural assets, research and innovation. Meghalaya’s share was directed at projects that combine urban improvement with rural connectivity and community facilities. Key works funded in the state include tourism infrastructure at Laitlyngkot (Lamlyer) in East Khasi Hills and the development of the Seng Khasi Ri Raid Laban Cultural Complex at Lum Shat Sngi, Kenches Trace, Shillong. The NEC has also backed the construction of an RCC G+4 commercial building at Iewdak Laban Municipal Market to support the sale of agricultural, horticultural, handicraft, piggery and floriculture products.

Education infrastructure received a significant boost, with funds released for new school buildings at multiple locations, including RKM School and institutions at Laidiengsai, Mawrah, Laitryngew, Wahlong, Pynursla, Pomsahmen and Nongkynrih.

Urban services and market-area upgrades were another focus. Projects covered pipeline realignment, utility ducts, public toilets at five sites, waste management facilities, lighting, painting and building beautification, along with replacement of supply lines along the main approach road to Iewdhuk market. Under the NESIDS (Roads) scheme, the NEC released an additional Rs 3 crore for road improvement works in Meghalaya, including the Shill-

ong city—Umroi Airport road. The project is expected to improve connectivity for around 10 villages, benefiting a population of nearly 7,300. Beyond state-specific funding, the NEC disbursed Rs 26.47 crore to regional and other agencies for project and non-project activities across the Northeast. These included support for kiwi orchards, education sponsorship for 91 boarder scholars and 622 day scholars, banana tissue culture facilities, GI registration of 166 regional crops and commodities, pig breeding units, medicinal and aromatic plants-based livelihoods, high-tech horticultural nurseries, smoked meat production units, and integrated agriculture projects covering fisheries and piggery. Research initiatives supported during the period ranged from 5G use-case development for societal challenges to socio-ecological and economic analysis of Sone Beel for sustainable management. Non-project activities spanned youth cultural exchanges, festivals, handloom and handicraft fairs, women empowerment programmes, sports events, academic and linguistic workshops, AI-enabled digital transformation training, and studies on governance, entrepreneurship and sustainable development. Implementation involved agencies and institutions such as NERCRMS, NEDFi, NEHHDC, NERAMAC, USTM, Assam University, Mizoram University and several regional societies. Meanwhile, the NEC completed a Model Handloom Production Centre at Mangar in Ri-Bhoi district in December 2025. Built at a cost of Rs 1.43 crore under the Industries sector, the centre aims to revive traditional handloom practices, strengthen skills—especially among women weavers—and improve the market competitiveness of Meghalaya’s handloom products.

Purabi Dairy opens new milk booth at Shradhanjali Kanan in Guwahati

Guwahati, Jan 10: Purabi Dairy, the consumer brand of West Assam Milk Producers’ Cooperative Union Limited (WAMUL), on Thursday opened a new milk and milk products booth at Shradhanjali Kanan in Guwahati as part of its partnership with the Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) to expand access to hygienic and affordable dairy products across the city.

The booth was formally inaugurated by SB Bose, Managing Director of North East Dairy and Foods Limited (NEDFL), in the presence of SM Hussain, General Manager, NEDFL; Kuldeep Borah, General Manager, WAMUL and officials from NEDFL and WAMUL. Speaking on the occasion, Bose said that the growth of the dairy sector in Assam is closely linked to expanding organised retail and improving product penetration. More such booths are planned at key public locations in the city under the WAMUL–GMDA collaboration to strengthen last-mile access to dairy products while supporting sustainable livelihoods for farmer members of the cooperative. The prefabricated booth infrastructure has been procured by WAMUL under the World Bank-funded APART project supporting organised dairy development in Assam. Kuldeep Borah said, “Milk production, procurement and consumption are all growing



in Assam. Now, if we increase our product penetration, the market will grow, the farmers will grow, and ultimately this business belongs to Assam and its farmers.” Purabi Dairy products are manufactured by West Assam Milk Producers’ Cooperative Union Limited (WAMUL) and

marketed by North East Dairy and Foods Limited (NEDFL). The new booth at Shradhanjali Kanan will offer the full range of Purabi milk and value-added dairy products, ensuring convenient access for visitors and residents in the surrounding areas.

Kamala hydropower project approval a major boost for Arunachal Pradesh: CM Khandu

Itanagar, Jan 10: The Public Investment Board (PIB) has approved an expenditure of Rs 26,069.50 crore for the proposed 1720 MW Kamala hydro project in Arunachal Pradesh. Chief Minister Pema Khandu said the approval of the 1,720 MW Kamala Hydroelectric Project marks a significant milestone for Arunachal Pradesh, with the project expected to play a key role in India’s energy transition and regional development. “The approval of the 1720 MW Kamala Hydroelectric Project is a landmark moment for Arunachal Pradesh and the nation. This green, storage-based project will strengthen India’s energy transition and advance the Net Zero 2070 goal, while also providing flood moderation in the Brahmaputra basin,” Khandu said in a post on X. He further added, “The project will deliver 12% free power to GoAP, generating about Rs 486 crore annually, contribute Rs 40 crore per year to LADF, boost regional infrastructure, and cre-



ate large-scale employment with 300 direct jobs and 2,500 contract workers during peak construction. The State will also earn a first-year return of Rs 127 crore on its equity backed by Central Financial Assistance.” The Kamala hydroelectric project is a storage-based scheme with a flood moderation compo-

nent, proposed on the Kamala River (a major tributary of the Subansiri River), located in Kamle, Kra Daadi and Kurung Kumey districts of Arunachal Pradesh. The project involves the construction of a 216-metre-high concrete gravity dam and an underground powerhouse with a scheduled com-

pletion period of 8 years. In addition to power generation, the project also envisages providing flood relief in the Brahmaputra valley. Under the project framework, the state government will receive 12 per cent free power, translating into an estimated annual revenue of around Rs 486 crore.

Sikkim MP Indra Hang Subba flags slow NH projects, demands Union Minister’s intervention

Sikkim, Jan 10: Sikkim Lok Sabha MP Indra Hang Subba on January 9 met Union Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways Harsh Malhotra in New Delhi and discussed the status of national highway projects being implemented by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) in the Himalayan state. During the meeting, Subba apprised the minister of the slow progress is crucial for improving regional connectivity. He urged the Union minister to personally intervene to resolve existing bottlenecks and ensure the timely completion of the project. The statement said Malhotra assured due consideration of the issues raised by the MP and reiterated the Union Ministry’s commitment to strengthening road infrastructure in Sikkim and other Himalayan regions. The minis-



ter also conveyed that efforts would be made to address implementation challenges and expedite

progress on key national highway projects in the state.

Manipur journalists to get concessions at Babina healthcare facilities

Itanagar, Jan 10: Manipur-based Babina Group of Companies has announced healthcare concessions for journalists in the state, offering subsidised diagnostic and hospital treatment at its medical facilities. The announcement was made during a media interaction organised by the group at Babina Multi-Speciality Hospital in Khabeiso, Imphal East, on January 9. The interaction coincided with the New Year and was positioned as a gesture of support for the media fraternity’s work in the state. Chairman and Managing Director of the Babina Group of Companies, Dr Thangjam Dhabali Singh, said journalists in Manipur would be eligible for a 30 per cent concession on diagnostic services and a 20 per cent concession on hospital treatment at Babina-run facilities. He said the decision was taken in recognition of the role played by journalists in keeping the public informed, particularly in a conflict-affected state. The concessions will be available at Babina Multi-Speciality Hospital and Babina Diagnostic Centre, both operated by the group. During the interaction, Singh also spoke about the group’s operations across sectors such as healthcare, hospitality and education, employing nearly 1,300 people.

He said the ongoing conflict in Manipur has affected businesses and livelihoods but added that the group has continued to provide services despite the challenges. Referring to the hospital’s performance since its inauguration last year, Singh said Babina Multi-Speciality Hospital has carried out kidney transplants, open heart surgeries and device closures for congenital heart disease.

Ghatowar: Ousting Gandhi From MGNREGA Is ‘Unfortunate’

Dibrugarh, Jan 10: Senior Congress leader and former Union minister Paban Singh Ghatowar on Saturday criticised the Centre for dropping Mahatma Gandhi’s name while re-branding MGNREGA. He described the move as “unfortunate and surprising”.

Speaking to the media at Rajiv Bhavan in Dibrugarh, Ghatowar strongly objected to the renaming of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act as the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Grameen), or VB G RAM G. According to him, the removal of Mahatma Gandhi’s name raises serious concerns. “MGNREGA is not just a welfare scheme. It carries the legacy of the Father



of the Nation and stands for dignity of labour and social security for the poorest,” he said. Moreover, Ghatowar pointed out that the UPA-era scheme has served as a crucial safety net for millions of rural families across India. By dropping Gandhi’s name, he argued, the Centre is attempting to distance the programme from its original values and intent. “This appears to be a deliberate effort to rewrite history and undermine the contributions of previous governments,” he said.

Luangchum Kamsuan clan holds first get-together

Imphal, Jan 10: The Luangchum Kamsuan Clan celebrated its first get-together at Luangchum Village, Noney district today, under the theme “Know Thy Root”. The event brought together clan members from across Manipur and Nagaland. The event began with the hoisting of the Clan Flag by Pou Norbert Disinang Kamson IAS (Retd). While Rev. Fr. Tinglung Francis Kamson SDB, Chaplain of the “Family of Faith” invoked blessings over the congregation and the clan flag, Pou Kadi Anthony Kamsuan, President of Luangchum Kamsuan Clan, welcomed the attendees and set the tone for the celebration. Speakers included Pou Gaihomlung Kamsuan, the Pakhanglak of Luangchum, who spoke on “Kamsuan Clan and Totem”, Pou Sagongam Kamsuan, the Vice-president of the Clan, on “The Clan’s History and Statistics”, Pou Nobert Disinang Kamson IAS (Retd) on “Know Thy Root”, Pou Lungthiamnang Joseph o “Relationship between Sib-



lings” and Kaipui Lukinliu Kamsuan on “Role of Clan Housewife”. Notable attendees included Pou Kabilan, the oldest of Kamsuan Clan of Luangchum Origin, Pou Poupangai Kamei, the Khunbu, Pou Guikhamlak Kamei, the Attorney Chairman, Pou Thudunnang Gonmei, President of Gonmei Clan, and Pou Merachao Kamsun (Sangaiprou). Exhortations were offered by Dr. Stephen Kamsuan

IRHS, Pou Joseph Pauline Kamsuan IAS, Pou Kenan Kamsuan (Longmai), Pouhuamlung Kamsun (Sangaiprou). The programme featured a minute’s silence for departed clan members, souvenir release, choreography, songs, felicitation, and prayer sessions. The event provided opportunity to share nostalgia, rediscovery of genealogy, introspection, promote unity and strengthen clan bonds.

Two more accused chargesheeted by NIA in Assam IED seizure case

Guwahati, Jan 10: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has chargesheeted two more accused in the Assam Independent Day IED seizure case of 2024.

In its supplementary chargesheet filed before the NIA Special Court, Guwahati, on Friday, the anti-terror agency has indicted Bhargab Gogoi and Sumu Gogoi under various sections of IPC, Explosive Substance Act and UA(P) Act. This takes the total number of accused chargesheeted in the case to five as NIA had earlier, in June last year, charged three other accused in the case.

The duo, both residents of Dibrugarh district of Assam, were arrested in June 2025 by NIA, which took over the case from the Dispur police in September 2024. NIA investigations had revealed that the two men had provided terror funds to chargesheeted accused Jahnu Boruah, who had confessed to planting four of the 11 IEDs that were seized by the police in August 2024. The IEDs had been planted as part of a protest and Independence Day boycott call given by ULFA(I) chief Paresh Baruah.

The Assam Police had initially registered the case, relating to the ULFA (I) conspiracy to wage war against the Government of India by attempting to carry out multiple IED blast across Assam, at Dispur police station.

786 students from NE visit ISRO centres under NE-SPARKS

Guwahati, Jan 10: A total of 786 students from the Northeast ISRO centres under the North East Students Programme for Awareness, Reach, and Knowledge on Space (NE-SPARKS) in 2025.

According to an official statement, NE-SPARKS was executed in eight batches between April 2025 and December 2025, with a minimum interval of one month between consecutive batches. Each batch comprises 90-100 students representing the eight Northeastern states, accompanied by 10 coordinators who facilitated and guided the educational journey.

An initiative of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, Government of India, the North East Students Programme for Awareness, Reach, and Knowledge on Space (NE-SPARKS) is a flagship initiative designed to promote space science and technology awareness among students in India’s North Eastern Region.

This transformative programme provides selected students with direct exposure to India’s space research achievements through guided visits to ISRO centres in Bengaluru, effectively bridging



geographical and informational gaps that have historically limited access to such opportunities.

The initiative represents a collaborative effort involving the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER), the North Eastern Council (NEC), the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC),

and the State Governments of the Northeast.

The programme is jointly coordinated by NESAC and ISRO’s Capacity Building Programme Office (CBPO), with active support and participation from respective State Governments ensuring effective implementation at the grassroots level.

With a total sanctioned cost of

Rs 3.83 crore, the programme follows a 60:40 funding ratio, where NEC contributes Rs 2.3 crore and the State Governments collectively contribute Rs 1.53 crore.

This financial arrangement reflects the shared responsibility and commitment of both central and state authorities toward nurturing scientific talent in the region, the statement said.

Mizoram makes gains in HIV prevention, but high infection rate remains a major concern

Aizawl, Jan 10: Mizoram has recorded steady progress in HIV prevention efforts and has moved up to third place in the national ranking for 2025–26. However, the state continues to face a serious public health challenge, as it still reports the highest adult HIV prevalence rate in the country at 2.75 per cent, officials have said. This figure is far above the national average of 0.20 per cent.

According to officials of the Mizoram State AIDS Control Society (MSACS), the improvement in ranking reflects better implementation of prevention and treatment programmes under the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO). At the same time, the overall disease burden in the state remains high due to long-standing social and behavioural factors. MSACS Project Director Dr Jane R Ralte said



Mizoram has seen a consistent fall in new HIV infections over the past several years. Speaking on January 9, she said the decline has been visible since 2018, indicating that prevention strategies and early intervention measures are beginning to show results. “Mizoram has achieved significant progress on NACO’s scorecard in terms of AIDS prevention and response. The number of new HIV infections has

been declining steadily since 2018,” Ralte said. Despite this positive trend, recent data shows that HIV continues to affect a large section of the population. Between April 2024 and November 2025, a total of 3,257 people tested HIV positive in the state. This included 953 women and 179 pregnant women. The tests were conducted after screening more than 1.4 lakh blood samples during the same period.

Scientific Camera Trap Survey Maps Leopard Presence Across Guwahati

Guwahati, Jan 10: A comprehensive scientific camera trap study has been conducted across Guwahati to assess leopard presence, habitat use, and movement patterns, marking the first grid-based leopard estimation exercise in eastern India, forest officials said.

As part of the study, camera traps were deployed across key forests, wildlife corridors, and fringe areas of the city. The initiative is expected to generate crucial data for mapping leopard habitats and movement routes, thereby strengthening science-based wildlife management and promoting human-leopard coexistence in the rapidly urbanising capital.

Survey teams covered all major hill

ranges in and around Guwahati, including Adingiri, Gotanagar, Nilachal, Kharghuli, Hengerabari, and Bhangagarh. Officials confirmed that multiple signs of leopard presence—such as pugmarks, scent markings, scat, scratch marks, and rake marks—were recorded across several locations in the city, indicating a healthy and widespread leopard movement pattern.

In addition to leopards, the presence of the clouded leopard has been established in the Garbhanga forest area, further underlining the region’s ecological significance.

Officials said the camera traps were installed for a period of two months and are now being withdrawn. “It will take approximately one month to

compile and analyse the data,” an official stated.

According to findings from an earlier study, Guwahati contains around 18.97 square kilometres of highly suitable leopard habitat. Areas identified as most suitable include Fatasil Hill, Japorigog Hill, and parts of the Amchang Reserve Forest. Additionally, nearly 67.67 square kilometres of land in and around the city has been categorised as suitable habitat where leopards can survive and thrive.

Notably, many of these suitable habitats are located within or close to densely built-up urban areas, increasing the likelihood of human-leopard interactions. Leopards typically maintain territories of around 35 square ki-

lometres, making habitat connectivity crucial for their survival.

The study is being carried out under the Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation-II, funded by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD).

The fieldwork has seen active participation from student volunteers of Gauhati University, Pragjyotish College, Dakshin Kamrup College, and Cotton University, particularly MSc students, who assisted survey teams in data collection.

Officials believe the findings will help authorities formulate informed conservation strategies while addressing human-wildlife conflict in the expanding urban landscape of Guwahati.

Petrol pumps shut indefinitely against bomb attack

Imphal, Jan 10: In protest against the bomb attack carried out two days back at a fuel station in Bishnupur district, the Manipur Petroleum Dealers Fraternity (MPDF) announced an indefinite closure of all petrol pumps in the “valley area and its peripherals” starting from Saturday till its demands are fulfilled. In a letter to addressed to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, MPDF said, “Though the state authorities have taken up strict actions towards the safety of petrol pump/dealers, we are still facing severe threats as evidenced from the bomb blast on Thursday night.” Demanding compensation for the damages caused by the bomb blast at the fuel station, the MPDF said it has unanimously resolved to indefinitely shut all petrol pumps in valley areas and its periphery from

Saturday till an “immediate attention and amicable solution” is provided. Mention may be made that on Thursday night, unidentified miscreants hurled a bomb at a fuel station at Moirang in Bishnupur district, triggering an explosion. No one was injured in the incident. The MPDF demanded the government to ensure no similar incident takes place in future by enhancing the security of the petrol pumps, dealers and staff. It also asked the “government to take full accountability in case of any future incidents like bomb blast, kidnapping, and liable to compensate for the damage at petrol pump infrastructure and also maximum monetary compensation if dealers or staffs gets injured or killed in such incidents henceforth.

Novotel Guwahati celebrates Magh Bihu with ‘Flavours of Assam’

Guwahati, Jan 10: Novotel Guwahati GS Road will celebrate Magh Bihu with Flavours of Assam, a special themed dinner at its all-day dining restaurant, The Square. The hotel will host the event on January 14 and 15, 2026, from 7 pm to 11 pm.

The celebration aims to highlight the rich traditions and authentic flavours of Assamese cuisine. Magh Bihu, also known as Bhogali Bihu, marks the harvest season. It symbolises abundance, gratitude and togetherness. To keep this spirit alive, Novotel Guwahati has curated an elaborate Assamese menu. The spread will feature traditional delicacies such as til pitha, gila pitha and assorted larus. Guests can



also relish duck cooked with black sesame, ari masor tenga, lai xaak gahori, omitar khar and kola chawlor kheer. The menu also includes several other seasonal dishes. Chefs will prepare the food using fresh local ingredients to reflect Assam’s culinary heritage. Meanwhile, The Square will wear a festive look with traditional décor. The setting will

recreate the warmth and vibrancy of Magh Bihu celebrations. In addition, guests will enjoy a lively festive ambience with music and cultural elements that define Bihu. Speaking on the occasion, Novotel Guwahati General Manager Vineet Kumar Mishra said harvest festivals across India carry different names but share the same spirit.

Role of media in ensuring road safety stressed

Imphal, Jan 10: A media sensitization programme in connection with the National Road Safety Month 2026 was held at the Conference Hall of Directorate of Information & Public Relations (DIPR), Nityaipat Chuthek, Imphal today. The sensitization programme with the theme ‘Strengthening Media Partnership for Safer Roads’ was organised by the Transport Department, Government of Manipur. It may be mentioned that the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways organises National Road Safety Month 2026 annually in India during the month of January. The main goal of organising the campaign is to promote road safety awareness and reduce accidents. The 2026 theme is “Sadak Suraksha Jeevan Raksha”. This month highlights vital road safety rules and guidelines across the nation. Anurag Bajpai, IFS, Addl. Chief Secretary (Textiles, Commerce & Industries and Transport) addressing the gathering as the Chief Guest stressed that the observation is to reaffirm our commitment to save lives, strengthen traffic discipline and build safer community across

the state. The observation should not be just an event but an event to inculcate road safety rules as a habit from the very beginning of educating the children. Stating that everyone has the knowledge of the importance of observing Road Safety Month, he said media plays a vital role in shaping the public behaviour towards road safety. Road safety month reminds us of a profound truth that most road accidents are preventable and every life lost in road accidents is a tragedy for the family, the community and the state, he said. In Manipur, both in valley and hill district, ensuring road safety must be a top priority among infrastructure development. He urged the media persons to observe the shortcomings of the road safety guidelines such as construction of caution marks in the school areas to avoid unwanted incidents. It is for the welfare of the society and the community, he added. Stating that during this month, both from the Government of Manipur and Transport Department, effort is made to intensify Engineering, Enforcement and Education, he said measures are being

taken to improve road designs, signages, fixing black spots, pedestrian safety etc. He said the department will organize a series of events engaging in educational activities in schools and District Collectors have been informed to organize the events in their respective districts. The aim is to sensitize the citizens regarding traffic rules, responsible driving and protection of human lives in line with the theme “Sadak Suraksha Jeevan Raksha”. Bajpai urged the media to provide extensive coverage of the activities across the state and indulge in active participation in promoting a culture of road safety. He said the role of media is crucial and is not just a messenger but also a powerful partner in shaping public behaviour and social attitudes. Responsible reporting can help create a culture that safe driving is valued and urge the reporters to highlight the cause of road accidents. Media can play a vital role in countering misinformation with sensible reporting. The government of Manipur is committed to work with stakeholders to disseminate accurate information, safety advisories and



public awareness messages, he added. Regarding initiation of an award for exclusive road safety reporting, he said necessary steps will be taken up. He appealed to the citizens of Manipur to follow traffic rules by wearing helmets, seat belts, avoid speeding and drunk driving, respect pedestrians and called upon all stakeholders to spread the message of traffic rules consistently. He further said that road safety is not about fines alone, it is about saving lives and with collective effort, responsible media engagement and public cooperation, Manipur can become a safer state. Ng. Uttam, MCS, Director, IPR, in his speech stressed on the alarming issue of road safety in India considering the global scenario.

Quebec’s Lake Rouge vanished – but was it a freak natural event or caused by human actions

Manoel Dixon had just finished dinner one night last May when a phone dinged nearby with a Facebook message.Dixon, 26, was at his family’s hunting camp near their northern Quebec home town of Waswanipi. They knew the fellow hunter who was messaging Dixon’s father, but what he wrote didn’t make sense.“He said: ‘Lake Rouge is gone,’” Dixon said.Lake Rouge was a calm lake nearby with trout, sandy banks and a surface area of about 3 sq km. By “gone”, they weren’t sure what the man was getting at.Dixon and his parents got their first glimpse as they walked up a logging road the next day. All the water of Lake Rouge had, in fact, vanished. Eagles and crows soon began to circle over the mud and dead fish that remained. He said his father “was quiet” when he first saw it, but then started narrating a rush of memories – the lake’s “really clear water”, and how moose gravitated there.A massive mud plain cutting northeast made it clear where the water had gone. It had travelled almost 10km overland into a bigger lake. Amazingly, no one had been hurt in this gigantic – was it a landslide? A flood? Nobody was sure what to call it. “I was devastated,” said Chief Irene Neeposh of Waswanipi, an Indigenous Cree community. She called an emergency meeting, though she wasn’t sure who to invite.“Call me if you have a lake that drains, right?” she said. “Nobody knows what to do in this type of situation.”

There is a name for this kind of sudden drainage of a lake – an outburst flood – but in recorded history these have usually happened at glacial lakes, when the underlying ice cracks, or at manmade reservoirs when the dam fails.Half a dozen international experts in the field told the Guardian they had never heard before of an outburst flood from a natural, non-glacial lake. Lake Rouge did not even empty through its normal drainage paths but cut a new outflow spot, an “absolutely amazing” case to see, said Diana Vieira, a scientist at the Joint Research Centre at the European Commission.The tougher question is: was this a freak natural event? Or was it human-caused? It can be impossible to untangle this

mystery for a single extraordinary event, experts say, but the detective work is still important as they try to anticipate other surreal mass movements of water around the world.Natural geology was key to Lake Rouge’s demise.

The lake was elevated and its banks were relatively soft with a pre-existing weak spot. The year’s snowfall and speed of spring melt were also reportedly both high. But some scientists and Cree elders say you must zoom out on the whole region’s history to really study the flood. Two rounds of wildfire torched Quebec forests in the last six years, including the mammoth 2023 fire that ate through a square mileage the size of mainland Denmark.“Unfortunately, these two successive major fires removed most of the mature vegetation cover [around] inflowing lakes and rivers directly leading to Lake Rouge,” concluded a report by the Quebec Cree forestry department. The spot where the shoreline broke was also burned.But in the even bigger picture, northern Quebec, including the Waswanipi region, has been heavily logged for decades. Logging companies are also often invited after wildfires to salvage wood at a discount.“You know, there’s about 6ft, 7ft of snow” in the area’s typical winter, said Paul Dixon, a 68-year-old distant cousin to Manoel Dixon.“When the forests were there, it would take three months to melt” under the shade, he said. “Now, you have the same amount of snow that melts in one month. That’s like putting a block of ice in a microwave oven.”Lake Rouge’s muddy banks have gradually “weakened because there’s no cover”, said local elder and forestry expert Allan Saganash.

All soil can withstand pressure from the water it holds, up to a point, experts said.A coniferous forest normally absorbs about half the rain or snowfall in various ways. Without it, the excess reaches the groundwater, which feeds lakes and rivers and can oversaturate their banks. “Any disturbance on the land – wildfire, clearcut, logging, whatever ... causes the groundwater table to move up to higher elevation” more often and for longer, said Younes Alila, a University of British Columbia

hydrologist. “Instead of just one day, maybe several days. Instead of one week, maybe a couple of weeks.”Each time, the soaked soil loses strength, he said. “The soil starts to break. But where [is it] going to break first? On the banks of lakes and the banks of rivers.”On top of this, wildfire can make soil water-repellent for a few years, increasing runoff. And logging companies often “scarify” the ground after they log, essentially breaking up roots and dirt for replanting. This happened in one corner of Lake Rouge’s catchment area. “It feels like you’re in ... fields of corn,” said Nicolas Mainville, a biologist at Snap Quebec, an environmental nonprofit, who visited Lake Rouge after it drained. “But it used to be a forest.”

The Quebec government concluded Lake Rouge’s disappearance was natural and has not studied it. It also said that according to a study its forestry department commissioned in 2004, if half or less of the forest in a given watershed is disturbed by logging or wildfire, there will be only a “negligible” chance that waterways will be altered by high peak flows. As scientists began to chatter about Lake Rouge, a single similar case came to light. A small lake 200km away had drained in under three hours in 1974. A sandy esker lay between that lake and a bigger one, and a fisher had dragged his boot through the sand, not expecting the whole lake to flow out.If lakes were going to suddenly vanish, Canada would be the place, said François-Nicolas Robinne, a forest hydrologist for the province of Alberta. “It’s a very young landscape that’s evolving very fast,” he said, meaning it was covered by glaciers until only about 15,000 years ago.On Lake Rouge, drainage was probably imminent, maybe next year or “a century from now”, Robinne said. Logging and fire could have sped it up.Others have different takes on those odds.

Alila said he was seeing a new pattern in changes along rivers and lakes in areas that have similarly lost tree cover. In western Canada, for example, the downtown of Quesnel – located on the banks of the Fraser River, and in a heavily logged, wildfire-beset re-

gion – has for almost 30 years been sliding several centimetres toward the river with every major spring thaw, Alila said. The town links the annual movement to increased groundwater.About 100km downstream, a landslide in August 2024 on the banks of the Chilcotin River released so much debris that it created a natural dam, backing up water into an 11km-long impromptu lake.“The government went through panic mode,” said Alila, fearing the dam’s burst.

But scientists disagree in this case, too, on whether this landslide was caused more by geology or fire.It has long been known that wildfire can transform rivers. A decade after a 1988 wildfire at Yellowstone national park, researchers showed that more severely burned streams and rivers had become faster and deeper than others.Debri flows, another well-known post-wildfire risk, happen when heavy rain picks up sediment from a burned hillside, like the 2018 debris flow in Montecito, California, that killed 23. These may involve masses of water, but their flow cannot be predicted like water, said geomorphologist Luke McGuire of the University of Arizona.“One of my students once described it as like a milkshake,” he said.The shape-shifting of burned lakes has been less studied. In theorising that Lake Rouge’s disappearance was human-influenced, Alila said two clues seem key to him.One is timing. The lake vanished in spring, after the major thaw – one hint that the soil was exhausted from repeated soaking, he said. By contrast, the lake that drained in 1974 did so in early fall.The other clue is what is happening nearby.

Across Quebec Cree territory, increasingly, “the banks of a river will collapse along the sides”, said Saganash. Mudslides on local hills have become commonplace, said Paul Dixon.He had not cried since childhood, but seeing Lake Rouge drained “the first time, I cried”, he said.At almost 70, he suddenly had a scary sense that anything could happen. Chief Neeposh said she urgently wants to notify people of the risk they face, but has no idea what to tell them.“I need to find out if there’s other potential lakes that could do this,” she said.

Guwahati’s Traffic Crisis: Time for Action

Guwahati’s roads tell a story of urban planning struggling to keep pace with rapid growth. Daily commutes have become ordeals of congestion, with vehicles crawling through bottlenecks at VIP Road, GS Road, and major intersections. The city’s narrow colonial-era roads, never designed for today’s vehicle density, are overwhelmed.

Poor traffic management compounds the problem. Signal timing seems arbitrary, lane discipline is virtually absent, and enforcement remains inconsistent. Two-wheelers weave dangerously through traffic, while pedestrians risk their lives

crossing roads without adequate infrastructure.The solutions aren’t mysterious: synchronized traffic signals, strict enforcement of traffic rules, dedicated bus lanes, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. Other Indian cities have shown improvement is possible with political will and sustained effort.Guwahati deserves better than this daily chaos.

Its residents lose countless hours to traffic that could be spent productively or with family. The time for half-measures has passed—comprehensive traffic reform must become a priority before the city grinds to a complete halt.

They have no regard for us!

The song “They Don’t Really Care About Us” is not a relic of the past; rather, it serves as a warning that has been ignored.Michael Jackson did not sing merely for entertainment; he used his platform to make accusations. He named the violence of power that smiles for cameras and turns deaf to people. Today, his words bleed into our streets. People speak, but are not heard. They vote but are not represented. They suffer and are told to be patient. Democracy has become a performance where applause matters more than truth. Governments change faces, not habits. The language is always development, security, nationalism-but beneath it lies the same old disregard. Farmers cry, workers collapse, minorities fear, and youth rage-and the response is silence, suppression, or slogans. Pain is managed, not healed. Dissent is labelled. Questions are treated as threats.“They don’t really care about us” is no longer rebellion; it is reality. It plays in empty pockets, in censored newsrooms, in streets where justice arrives late or never. The system hears noise, not people. It counts numbers, not lives. India’s aviation sector is set to welcome three new airline companies-Shankh Air, Al Hind Air, and FlyExpress-as the government has recently granted them no objection certificates (NOCs) to begin preparations for commercial services in 2026.These new entrants aim to boost competition and offer passengers more choices in a market. Shankh Air plans to operate regional routes from Uttar Pradesh, while Al Hind Air and FlyExpress are expected to focus on domestic connectivity across smaller cities, as per news reports.For passengers, the benefits are significant: lower fares through competitive pricing, better regional connectivity, particularly to tier-2 and tier-3 cities, and reduced pressure on existing airlines that have recently faced operational disruptions. More airline options also mean more flight frequencies and routes, enhancing travel convenience for business and leisure flyers alike. Overall, these approvals mark a step towards a more dynamic and passenger-friendly aviation landscape in India. GMCH is a lifeline for thousands of patients not only from Guwahati but also from every corner of Assam and even neighbouring states. Every day, the hospital struggles with an overwhelming rush of patients. Long queues, a shortage of beds, a lack of doctors, and overworked nurses have become a daily reality. Patients often wait for hours, sometimes days, just to receive basic treatment.The situation becomes more painful for poor and rural patients who depend entirely on government hospitals. Due to the excessive load, doctors are forced to work under extreme pressure, which affects the quality of care. In times of crisis,

emergency wards remain overcrowded, leaving attendants helpless. While the population is increasing, healthcare infrastructure has not grown at the same pace. More medical colleges, district-level hospitals, modern equipment, and regular recruitment of doctors and staff are urgently needed. Strengthening primary healthcare centres can also reduce pressure on GMCH. Healthcare is a basic right, not a privilege. Immediate and sincere action is required to prevent the collapse of our public health system. A helmet is an essential component of motorcycle or scooter driving. But people generally avoid wearing helmets for various reasons. By avoiding helmets, people are risking their lives and putting the family into unnecessary trouble. Even pillion riders will have to wear helmets. A helmet is insurance for life after all, as most accidental deaths are due to head injuries. While a recent National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) report declares that motorcyclists are about 18 times as likely as car occupants to die in a traffic crash and three times as likely to be injured, a study conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuroscience, Bangalore, has also confirmed that the severity of head injury, death due to head injury, incidence of skull fracture and occurrence of post-traumatic epilepsy were higher among those who were not using helmets as compared to those who did. Protective headgear certainly reduces the severity of the impact on the brain. Unfortunately, the majority still prefer a severely injured brain to a fractured helmet. They don’t realize that head injuries occurring in those wearing helmets are almost never critical, provided they wear a quality helmet, preferably one with an original ISI mark. This is applicable to the pillion rider as well. Using helmets of the right size can also prevent neck pain. Some people complain about losing their hair by wearing a helmet, which is simply an excuse not to wear one. Inputs gathered from manufacturers and sellers of helmets too confirm positive attitudes that are even being reinforced by responsible corporate employees. It is now up to individual states to make helmet use mandatory in order to provide a clear affirmative answer to the question, “Helmet use: YES?” Through the columns of your esteemed newspaper, I would like to draw the attention of the authorities and the general public towards the dangerous use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Artificial intelligence has become a part of our daily life. It is used in education, healthcare, business and communications. However, the misuse of AI is creating serious problems. AI is being used to create fake videos, fake voices, and false news, which mislead people and spread rumours. Deepfake technology is a major

threat to privacy and reputation. Moreover, excessive dependence on AI is reducing human creativity and employment opportunities. Many people are losing jobs due to automation. Students are also misusing AI tools to complete assignments, which affects their learning ability.Without strict regulations, AI could potentially harm society. The government should introduce proper laws to control the misuse of AI. Awareness programmes should also be conducted to educate people about its ethical use.I hope the concerned authorities will take immediate steps to regulate the use of artificial intelligence for the safety of society. Nowadays it is very heartening to note that a few filmmakers have started making films based on some untold true stories of the past. In this regard, one must quote the names of Kashmir Files and Bengal Files, which depict the true stories of extreme violence committed against Kashmiri Pandits and Bengali Hindus in Kashmir and in undivided Bengal. Once released, both the films drew strong protests from the leftists who project themselves as the custodians of secularism due to reasons best known to all bonafide patriotic Indians, as these two films depicted the true stories of extreme violence committed upon the Hindus in Hindustan itself. The so-called secular brigade dismissed the films as propaganda at the behest of the RSS, which were made to give the BJP an advantage in electoral politics. We can only hope and pray that the production of another fact-based film, named Assam File, does not happen in the near future. The news article ‘Department fails to provide cold storage: farmers’ livelihoods at stake,’ published in your esteemed daily on January 8, has drawn our attention with great shock. The state’s annual vegetable production is huge, but, surprisingly, the number of cold storage facilities in the state is minimal. Lack of adequate cold storage makes both farmers and consumers bear the brunt. It is indeed regrettable that the Assam Agriculture Department has failed to develop an effective marketing mechanism and establish sufficient cold storage facilities, particularly in the vegetable-growing areas. As a result, farmers are selling perishable items like potatoes, cauliflowers, and green peas at throwaway prices. The middlemen are profiting greatly from this situation, charging exorbitant prices to consumers for various seasonal vegetables in the state’s markets. Due to lack of facilities, farmers are forced to dump seasonal vegetables, causing immense loss. The state needs mini cold storages in large numbers in vegetable-growing areas in the larger interest of the farmers and consumers immediately. The state CM should intervene in the matter to ameliorate the farmers’ woes before their plight goes out of control.

What does your car say about you? A global portrait of people and their rides, from Shanghai to Santa Monica

In my novels I find that I very rarely write “a car” or “a van” or “a lorry” – I always tend to specify the marque and the model, often with some pedantic precision. Why should this be so? After all, I am a non-driver, someone who claims to be able to drive (I did learn), but who never passed his driving test. And yet, paradoxically, I’m something of a car enthusiast – a sort-of petrol-head, I confess – perhaps a consequence of spending many hours, or maybe that should be years, in the back of minicabs that conveyed me here and there around London. In my long experience of minicab use I’ve found that most conversations with minicab drivers often end up being about cars. I’ve learned a lot.There is another reason why I like to specify. I have a conviction that the type of car, or vehicle, that you drive is as much an expression of your personality as the clothes you wear or the decor of the home you call your own. Even the blandest of mid-price cars – the Toyota Prius, the Kia Picanto, the Volkswagen Jetta, for example – are making a covert statement about you, the owner. You chose that car – and your choice is surprisingly eloquent.All this is by way of a preamble to Martin Roemers’ Homo Mobilis, a remarkable series of photographs of people posed with the various vehicles they drive. Moreover, these photographs,



I would claim, bear out the thesis that the car, the van, the lorry, and so forth, are an extension of, and a window to, their owner’s personality and, quite possibly, an indication of their value system as well. Roemers has ranged far and wide to photograph the various vehicles that catch his eye. Among the many countries he’s visited are the US, India, Ukraine, Senegal, the Czech Republic, China and the Netherlands. And the type of vehicle he photographs is equally eclectic – not just cars and trucks but also campervans, invalid trikes, handcarts and minibuses, people-carriers, ice-cream vans and tractors, road-rollers, donkey-carts, motorbikes and hearses. The variety of vehicles on display is astonishing but one’s eye is inevitably more drawn to the eccentric: the mud-splattered, multi-dented taxis, the rust-badged family saloons, the

lurid paint-blistered lorries, the MOT-challenged, spavined minibuses.

However, Roemers’ stroke of genius is to have removed the geographical and urban context of the vehicles in his photographs. Richard Avedon shot his famous 1985 series of portraits, In the American West, with the subjects seated in front of a completely neutral, starkly white backdrop. The effect was to concentrate all attention on the sitter. These human beings became entirely what they presented to the camera lens – there was no distraction, no prop or identifier beyond the features of their face and whatever items of clothing were visible. It was a uniquely desolate and unsettlingly graphic form of portraiture. Roemers has cleverly adopted the same technique and has isolated his vehicles and their owners and passengers by erecting a huge white cloth backdrop

draped over an armature of scaffolding and has parked the cars and trucks in front of it. The vans and lorries, three-wheeled scooters and autorickshaws look as if they’re stuck in some vast, empty snow-field. It’s the same Avedon-effect: all concentration is focused on the vehicle and its textures and patinas, its colours and contents, in a way that makes them seem more like an art installation or some form of bizarre modern sculpture. The fact that these images are, effectively and essentially, about modes of transport seems secondary. It’s the aesthetic dividend that resonates in these photographs. Never has a decrepit jalopy looked more intriguing, and, in a strange way, shot in this manner, it has become a beautiful object in its own right – its form suddenly separate from its mundane function.

The one further observation I have is not so much a

critique but a kind of compliment. Roemers’ unique vehicle photographs could run and run, as it were – the subject matter is almost infinite, after all – but one finds oneself wondering if the demographic could be extended. The cars, taxis and lorries in these photographs are largely owned by poorer, hard-working people as their scuffed and dilapidated means of transport testify. What would Roemers make of soccer-moms in their huge 4x4s? Or executive chauffeurs with their glossy Mercedes S-Class limos or 7 Series BMWs? Or well-heeled boy-racers with their Lamborghinis and Maseratis? Or cyclists with their bicycles? It’s a tribute to the complete success of this photographic enterprise that we can ask for more, please.

The writer Stephen Bayley, in his book Death Drive, declared that: “Cars have a talismanic quality. No other manufactured object has the same disturbing allure. More emotions are involved in cars than in anything else we make or use.” Roemers’ work in Homo Mobilis establishes the truth of that statement and also that the allure of a given vehicle doesn’t necessarily have anything to do with price or design or exclusivity. “We are what we eat” is a tried and tested truism; these superb photographs establish that “we are whatever we drive” is just as valid..

SEBI relaxes tech glitch norms for stock brokers

small firms get major compliance relief

New Delhi: India’s market regulator has changed the rules on how stock brokers report technical glitches, easing the burden on smaller firms while keeping scrutiny on problems that actually affect trading or investors. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) announced the revised framework on Friday, signalling a shift away from one-size-fits-all regulation. SEBI said the decision was taken to align regulatory oversight with actual risk exposure, noting that smaller brokers typically handle lower volumes and simpler operations.What will no longer count as a reportable glitch?

The regulator has also clarified what qualifies as a technical glitch, explicitly excluding several categories that previously fell under the reporting net. Glitches originating outside a broker’s trading architecture such as outages at global cloud service providers, failures at market infrastructure institutions, or disruptions at banks and payment gateways will no longer attract penalties.Similarly, issues that do not directly impact trading functionality or have negligible market impact have been taken out of the definition. These include problems in back-office systems, new account processing, decision-support tools like charts or profit-and-loss statements, and other non-trading applications. Acknowledging industry feedback that identifying and diagnosing glitches within an

hour was often impractical, SEBI has extended the reporting window from one hour to two hours.

Brokers will now file preliminary incident reports within one trading day of the occurrence, followed by a detailed root-cause analysis within 14 calendar days through the common portal.Penalties rationalised, focus shifts to material risksSEBI has also reworked the financial disincentive structure, taking into account the nature of the glitch whether major or minor - its frequency and the newly introduced exemptions. Detailed guidelines on this aspect will be issued by stock exchanges in consultation with SEBI.The move comes after brokers, especially smaller ones, repeatedly complained that

the earlier rules were too sweeping and costly, and often blamed them for technology issues beyond their control.

Under the new framework, fewer glitches will need to be reported, timelines have been relaxed, and many brokers have been kept outside the ambit of the rules altogether One of the most significant changes is the revision of eligibility criteria. Under the new framework, only stock brokers with more than 10,000 registered clients will be covered. This move alone is expected to exclude nearly 60 per cent of brokers from the technical-glitch regime, most of whom operate at a smaller scale with limited reliance on high-frequency trading systems.

Tata AIA launches AURA platform to build next generation of insurance entrepreneurs

Aizawl: Tata AIA Life Insurance has rolled out Tata AIA AURA, a new platform aimed at transforming insurance advisors into full-fledged entrepreneurs, as the company looks to deepen insurance penetration and support India’s long-term goal of “Insurance for All by 2047.”India currently has over 31.5 lakh life insurance advisors, yet life insurance penetration remains modest at around 3.7 per cent of GDP in FY24. Against this backdrop, Tata AIA said AURA is designed to equip advisors with digital tools, structured training, mentorship and business guidance to help them scale sustainably and serve customers beyond major urban centres.Amit Dave, Head of Advisor Distribution at Tata AIA, said the company views advisors as entrepreneurs rather than mere intermediaries, adding that AURA focuses on building long-term, trust-based relationships with customers instead of transactional sales.The initiative also comes at a time when the removal of GST on life insurance policies has made products more affordable, providing fresh momentum to the sector and improving the attractiveness of insurance advisory as a career.In Aizawl and other parts of Mizoram, demand for life insurance is gradually rising as awareness about financial protection improves. Industry observers say platforms like AURA could help local advisors expand their reach, tap first-time policy buyers and strengthen insurance adoption in semi-urban and hill markets.

Tata AIA, which reported a 99.4 per cent claim settlement ratio in FY25 and has over 1.5 lakh advisors, said AURA underlines its commitment to building a stronger, more professional insurance advisory ecosystem across India.



This sector set to shine in 2026: Motilal Oswal sees a big ahead

New Delhi: After two turbulent years of global uncertainty, shifting interest-rate cycles and patchy equity returns, commodities have quietly taken the lead in India’s investment landscape. Motilal Oswal’s latest analysis suggests this is not a one-off rally. The brokerage expects commodities - especially precious metals to head into 2026 with strong structural support, keeping investor interest firmly alive. In 2025, commodities stole a march on other asset classes in India, delivering stronger returns than both equities and bonds. Stock market benchmarks found it hard to hold on to gains, while precious metals surged, helped by a mix of global developments and homegrown factors. According to Motilal Oswal’s report, domestic silver prices jumped more than 170 per cent during the year, while gold rose over 76 per cent, far ahead of broader market returns. This outperformance was not a one-off spike. Rising gold-to-equity ratios through the year showed that investors continued to favour metals even during phases when risk appetite improved. In other words, gold and silver were no longer just defensive bets - they became core portfolio assets. A striking feature of 2025 was the sheer scale of investor participation in commodities. Motilal Oswal points out that assets under management in domestic gold and silver ETFs more than doubled during the year. Globally too, ETF flows swung



back into positive territory in the latter half, reversing the outflows seen earlier.Currency trends added to the appeal. t against equities and bonds.Another factor quietly strengthening the case for commodities is the changing behaviour of long-term investors in India. Importantly, this shift is happening even among younger investors, who traditionally preferred equities. For many, precious metals are no longer a panic hedge but a stability anchor something that can balance risk when stock markets turn volatile and fixed-income returns fail to keep pace with rising prices.Silver takes the lead

within precious metalsWhile gold retained its reputation as a safe haven, silver clearly stole the show. to ease quickly, making silver a key driver of the precious-metals story going into 2026.Gold’s role has evolved beyond a hedgeGold’s strength in 2025 was equally telling, but for different reasons. The brokerage points out that gold has evolved from being a cyclical hedge into a strategic reserve asset. Central banks continued to buy more than 1,000 tonnes of gold annually, reinforcing long-term price support and accelerating the broader shift away from dollar dependence.

USCIS’ revised costs for fast-track H-1B, F-1, O-1 applications revealed

US visa fees increased:

New Delhi: Under the Trump administration, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published a final rule, announcing the increase in US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) fees corresponding to several visas, including nonimmigrant student and work categories. As per a news release dated January 9 (US time), the authorities have made these revisions on the basis of the impact of inflation witnessed from June 2023 through June 2025.The latest announcement also stands in line with the mandate established by the ‘USCIS Stabilization Act,’ which allows the DHS to adjust premium process fees every two years so that the amount of inflation can be taken into account.

According to the official announcement, the rule will go into effect March 1, 2026.

This means that if you submit a request for premium processing on or after March 1, you must pay the revised fee for required benefit. As has already been established, to request premium processing, applicants must submit Form I-907, aka the ‘Request for Premium Processing.’

“Fees will continue to be adjusted agencywide to account

for inflation and protect the real dollar value of the premium processing service we provide,” read the official USCIS news release. “The revenue generated by this fee increase will be used to provide premium processing services; make improvements to adjudication processes; respond to adjudication demands, including processing backlogs; and otherwise fund USCIS adjudication and naturalization services.” According to the official USCIS website, adjudicative action on a case after a premium processing request is filed will require 15 business day for most classifications. For Form I-765, however, 30 business days may be needed. Form I-539 applicants requesting a change of status to F-1, F-2, M-1, M-2, J-1 or J-2 nonimmigrant status may face a 30-day wait as well.

Meanwhile, those concerned with Form I-140 E13 multinational executive and manager and Form I-140 E21 national interest waiver classifications may need 45 days for approval.



TCS Q3 Results Preview FY26: AI push, strong deals, but will margins hold

Board to consider dividend

New Delhi: TCS Q3 Results Preview FY26: Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), India’s largest IT services company, is set to kick off the December quarter earnings season. IT firm is expected to report steady growth in Q3FY26, despite a cautious global demand environment. Investors will track revenue growth, margins, and management commentary on artificial intelligence (AI), new-age services, and deal wins. In a regulatory filing dated December 24, the company said the board will approve and take on record the audited standalone and consolidated financial results for the quarter and the nine-month period ended December 31, 2025. As per Zee Business Research, For the December quarter, TCS is expected to report revenue of around Rs 66,706 crore, compared with Rs 65,799 crore in the September quarter. This implies a quarter-on-quarter growth of about 1.4 per cent. Dollar revenue is seen at \$747 crore, marginally higher than \$746 crore in the previous quarter. EBIT is estimated at Rs 16,702 crore versus Rs 16,565 crore in Q2FY26, indicating a growth of 0.8 per cent.Operating margin is expected at around 25.04 per cent, largely flat compared with 25.2 per cent in the September quarter. Analysts expect margins to stay under pressure due to wage hikes, despite cost control measures.Net profit after tax (PAT) is estimated at Rs 13,078 crore, up from Rs 12,075 crore in the previous quarter. This reflects a quarter-on-quarter growth of about 8.31 per cent.

In constant currency terms, revenue growth is expected at around 0.5 per cent. The BFSI segment is likely to show strength, after recovering in Q2FY26 following a weak Q1. Management commentary on the growth trend in new-age services and AI revenue will be closely tracked. TCS has earlier said its annual AI revenue contribution stands at about \$1.5 billion, while new-age services contribute around \$11 billion annually.The annualised AI revenue of \$1.5 billion accounts for nearly 5 per cent of TCS’s estimated FY26 revenue. The company has also indicated that new-age services are growing faster than its overall revenue growth rate Investments made in AI infrastructure during the December quarter



will be in focus. Analysts will watch for management’s outlook on how higher AI capex could impact margins and cash flows.TCS has announced plans to invest about \$6.5 billion in AI infrastructure over the next five to seven years. So far, the company has remained confident of maintaining its margin guidance of 26–28 per cent.Deal wins and acquisitions

Deal wins in Q3FY26 are expected to be strong, with total contract value (TCV) estimated in the range of \$9–11 billion. The company announced eight large deals during the quarter, the highest among tier-I IT players TCS’s acquisition of US-based Salesforce company ListEngage in October 2025 is expected to add a marginal inorganic contribution of around 0.1 per cent.TCS has fixed Saturday, January 17, 2026, as the record date for determining eligible shareholders. Investors whose names appear in the company’s records on this date will be eligible to receive the dividend, if declared. IT firm is expected to report steady growth in Q3FY26, despite a cau-

tious global demand environment. Investors will track revenue growth, margins, and management commentary on artificial intelligence (AI), new-age services, and dea. 3 Results Preview FY26: Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), India’s largest IT services company, is set to kick off the December quarter earnings season. IT firm is expected to report steady growth in Q3FY26, despite a cautious global demand environment. Investors will track revenue growth, margins, and management commentary on artificial intelligence (AI), new-age services, and deal wins. In a regulatory filing dated December 24, the company said the board will approve and take on record the audited standalone and consolidated financial results for the quarter and th As per Zee Business Research, For the December quarter, TCS is expected to report revenue of around Rs 66,706 crore, compared with Rs 65,799 crore in the September quarter. This implies a quarter-on-quarter growth of about 1.4 per cent.e nine-month period ended December 31, 2025

H-1B spouses sue DHS over rule ending automatic work permit extensions



New Delhi: A new lawsuit filed by spouses of H-1B visa holders argues that a Department of Homeland Security rule that ends the automatic extension of foreigners’ work licenses with pending renewal applications is illegal and ought to be overturned, reports Bloomberg Law.Andrew Kreighbaum, Immigration and Labor Reporter, covering employment-based immigration for Bloomberg Law, writes that a group of spouses of H-1B visa holders is challenging a DHS rule ending automatic extension of Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) for foreign workers renewing their EAD in specific employment authorization categories. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced an interim final rule, effective October 30, 2025, which required that the renewal process must now begin within 180 days before EAD expiration, instead of the previous allowance of 540 days.

“The suit in the Central District of California says DHS violated the Administrative Procedure Act and didn’t have legitimate reasons to issue the rule without public notice. The purported need for additional screening of immigrants was also false, the suit says, because the agency could already vet them for security con-

cerns at any time,” said Kreighbaum. The October interim final rule eliminating those work permit extensions violated the Administrative Procedure Act because it was arbitrary and capricious and failed to establish good cause for skipping notice and comment rulemaking, according to a complaint in the Central District of California, reported Bloomberg Law. “The Trump administration in October eliminated those automatic renewals, a move that’s expected to force thousands of workers out of the labor force this year,” writes Kreighbaum in his LinkedIn account. U.S. employers must ensure all employees, regardless of citizenship or national origin, are authorized to work in the United States. Having an Employment Authorization Document (Form I-766/EAD) is one way to prove that you are authorized to work in the United States for a specific time period.

EAD is required to be applied for by foreign workers for permission to work. To request an EAD, you generally must file Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization. You will need to apply for an EAD if you are authorized to work in the United States because of your immigration status or circumstances (for example, you are an asylee, refugee, or U nonimmigrant) and need evidence of that employment authorization.

Links Revealed Between Top UAE Official and Emirati Supplier of Mercenaries

Rapid Support Forces in El Fasher

London: A new investigation by The Sentry reveals the close relationship between the United Arab Emirates’ most senior bureaucrat and the businessman supplying Colombian mercenaries to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia in Sudan. In September 2025, the Sudanese government submitted a complaint to the United Nations Security Council naming both GSSG and A4SI and accusing the UAE of meddling in its ongoing war. Colombia’s President Gustavo Petro has denounced “mercenarismo” and apologized to Sudan’s government. The UAE has publicly denied providing supplies or support to the RSF and says



claims that the country supplies mercenaries are based on fabricated evidence. The United States, European Union, and United Kingdom should investigate and, if appropriate, sanction Mohamed Hamdan Alzaabi, Global Security Services Agency (A4SI), and Global Staffing SA under authorities related to Sudan or other applicable programs for activities related to undermining the peace, security, and stability of Sudan and providing material support to sanctioned members of the RSF. The Sentry is an investigative and policy organization that seeks to disable multinational predatory networks that benefit from violent conflict, repression, and kleptocracy. Pull back the curtain on wars, mass atrocities, and other human rights abuses, and you’ll find grand corruption and unchecked greed. These tragedies persist because the perpetra-

tors rarely face meaningful consequences. The Sentry aims to alter the warped incentive structures that continually undermine peace and good governance. Our investigations follow the money as it is laundered from war zones to financial centers around the world. We provide evidence and strategies for governments, banks, and law enforcement to hold the perpetrators and enablers of violence and corruption to account. These efforts provide new leverage Financial institutions should conduct enhanced due diligence on customers and transactions involving UAE private security providers, their owners, and their suppli-

other security companies with Ahmed Mohamed Al Humairi, theNick Donovan, Investigator at The Sentry, said: “The Sentry has already detailed how the UAE permits RSF front companies to operate on its soil. The involvement of Alzaabi, a man trusted enough to be a longtime business partner to Al Humairi, in supplying mercenaries to the RSF could be an indicator of support for the militia at the highest levels of the UAE government. The relationship raises the question: Who is paying Alzaabi’s firm to supply mercenaries?”GSSG contracted with a Colombian securi-

ty recruitment agency, International Services Agency (also known as the Academy for Security Instruction, or A4SI) to supply hundreds of former soldiers to support the RSF, according to leaked documents obtained by Colombian media outlet La Silla Vacía. A4SI is reportedly controlled by Álvaro Quijano, the contracted mercenaries are processed through Panama registered company Global Staffing, which pays the soldiers via an offshore account. John Prendergast, Co-Founder of The Sentry, said: “El Fasher is experiencing some of the most horrific war crimes in the world today, undoubtedly made worse by mercenaries. Governments should urgently further investigate these businessmen and companies and impose sanctions if they are currently supplying mercenaries to support the brutal Rapid Support Forces militia.”

Foreign Policy Argument: Libya’s Oil Corruption Is Bad for Business

Washington: International oil companies are lining up to reenter Libya’s oil sector. Libya is currently rolling out its first bid round for new oil exploration and development in nearly two decades, and there appear to be many takers from around the globe, including U.S. companies.

At first glance, this might appear to be a promising development for the Libyan people. The country desperately needs reconstruction, political stability, and investment. But new oil deals are unlikely to provide these benefits. Libya suffers from an entrenched system of predatory graft through which the country’s oil riches have been siphoned off by a corrupt elite. The result is to drive up fuel prices for everyday Libyans and leave them struggling. To avoid perpetuating this corrupt network, policymakers and executives in Britain, Europe, and the United States should proceed with caution. While new commercial opportunities may deliver short-term gains for Libya, they will offer little long-term benefits so long as leaders in Tripoli and Benghazi continue to line their pockets while excluding the Libyan people from the country’s vast natural wealth. Only an effective, transparent, and accountable Libyan state can be the partner international companies require.

By 2024, almost \$7 billion in subsidized fuel—about 15 percent of total public spending—was stolen annually. This is billions of dollars in public wealth that should fund hospitals, schools, and other essential infrastructure. The scheme has deprived the central bank of the hard currency needed for essential imports such as food and medicine, driving consumer price inflation and the Libyan dinar’s depreciation. In an ironic twist, citizens of one of the world’s richest oil nations are often forced to wait in long lines at petrol stations and pay inflated black market prices for fuel. Early this year, the NOC said it was ending crude-for-fuel swaps. Even so, fuel import volumes remain unjustifiably high, and large-scale smuggling persists.

International oil companies and Western policymakers are clearly hoping that there are profitable deals to be made in Libya’s oil sector. They are not wrong about the fundamentals: Libya’s geology, both onshore and offshore, remains rich with untapped reserves, and the NOC is, by and large, staffed by a cadre of skilled hydrocarbons professionals. But foreign companies would be wise to consider how sustainable their new projects are likely to be. As the Libyan state

is hollowed out by vested interests, the risk of social unrest and renewed conflict rises. A new round of war, particularly one that rearranges the country’s political leadership, could quickly put any new deals at risk. So, what can the United States and like-minded states actually do about this? Quite a lot. Libya’s oil sector is wedded to the U.S. dollar. This provides a means of applying direct pressure and dictating the terms on



which international companies can reenter Libya’s market. According to our research, this cost the Libyan state almost \$20 billion in three years.

In 2021, Libya’s National Oil Corp. (NOC) began to directly swap Libyan crude oil for refined fuel from abroad. Previously, the proceeds from all sales of crude went to Libya’s central bank, which would in turn provide funds to the NOC to purchase fuel in line with budgetary allocations. But unlike allocations from the central bank, swaps did not register on the public balance sheet. This meant the NOC was able to increase its fuel imports without any increase in reported state spending. The result was that, in just three years, Libya’s fuel imports more than doubled, reaching about 41 million liters per day by late 2024. Why did imports skyrocket? The Libyan authorities suggest that the increases were needed due to shifts in the gas supply chain and the growing need for fuel to power Libya’s electricity grid. But the amounts imported are far above what Libya’s legitimate economy could reasonably consume. The reality is that more than half of this fuel is smuggled back out of the country, by sea or by land.

Saddam Haftar, the ambitious son of Khalifa Haftar—who rules much of eastern Libya as head of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF)—was the

primary force behind this escalation. Saddam has used his role as heir apparent in the LAAF to consolidate control over both maritime smuggling operations and crucial overland routes into sub-Saharan Africa. As a result, he was instrumental in bringing smuggling to unprecedented levels. Benghazi’s old harbor serves as Libya’s principal channel for reexports, using doctored papers and “dark” vessels to move mil-

lions of liters per voyage. LAAF officer and Saddam subordinate Ali al-Mashay acts as the main gatekeeper. While Libya remains politically divided, everyone got a cut of the illicit profits. The recent surge may have been orchestrated by Haftar’s family, but they were operating in tacit conjunction with figures linked to the Tripoli-based government of Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh. Culpability also extends to northwestern Libya, where local warlords such as Zawiyah’s Mohamed Koshlaf and Misrata’s Omar Bughdada (who is aligned with Prime Minister Dbeibeh) move fuel by sea and by land. Large volumes head south, where Haftar’s forces take over. Many of the international backers of Libya’s civil war are involved as well. The Haftar coalition, for example, diverts subsidized diesel, gasoline, and jet fuel to Russian military personnel entrenched at several air bases in Libya, who in turn ship the fuel to other Russian missions in sub-Saharan Africa. The Haftar coalition has also been a strategic fuel supplier to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) throughout the ongoing civil war in Sudan, enabling the paramilitary group’s atrocities in Darfur. Neither the fall of El Fasher in late October nor the horrific massacres of civilians that followed have changed that arrangement: The Haftar family continues to provide fuel to the RSF.

Sanctions Urgently Needed as Myanmar Junta Rebrands to Evade Accountability

Washington: A new joint policy brief by The Sentry and Justice For Myanmar exposes how the Myanmar military junta is attempting to evade international sanctions and manufacture false legitimacy by rebranding its executive, legislative and judicial structure and engaging lobbyists in the United States to further the effort. As the military prepares to stage a sham election while continuing widespread atrocities against civilians, the brief warns that the junta is exploiting gaps in sanctions regimes to maintain access to international political and financial systems. The brief calls on the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand and other like-minded governments to urgently update and expand sanctions to close these loopholes and target the junta’s international enablers. On 31 July 2025, the junta dissolved the already-sanctioned State Administrative Council (SAC) and replaced it with a newly created body, the State Security and Peace Commission (SSPC). Despite the change in name, the SSPC is led by the same senior military figures, performs the same functions, and remains firmly under the control of junta leader and military commander Min Aung Hlaing. “Nothing has changed except the letterhead,” said Yadanar Maung, spokesperson for Justice For Myanmar. “The junta’s rebranding is a deliberate attempt to evade sanctions and create a fraudulent narrative around its sham election, while it continues to slaughter civilians with blanket impunity.” The brief documents extensive overlap in senior figures between the SAC, the SSPC and the National Defence and Security Council (NDSC), noting that nearly all SSPC members are current



or former senior military officers who are already sanctioned in at least one jurisdiction. Since the SSPC’s establishment, the military has continued indiscriminate airstrikes, shelling and mass arrests with impunity. Alarmingly, within days of the rebranding, two US lobbying firms — DCI Group AZ, LLC and the McKoon Group — entered into contracts with junta-controlled entities. According to filings under the US Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), the firms agreed to provide public affairs and lobbying services aimed at influencing the US government on behalf of Myanmar’s military junta. “The junta is racing to reinvent its image and is enlisting foreign enablers to normalize its rule,” said Justyna Gudzowska, Executive Director of The Sentry. “Providing

political services that ultimately benefit a military junta responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity carries serious legal, ethical, and reputational risks.” The Sentry and Justice For Myanmar urge governments to: Immediately designate the SSPC under existing Myanmar-related and Global Magnitsky-style sanctions regimes. Apply coordinated, multilateral targeted network sanctions against enablers of the junta. Strengthen sanctions enforcement and investigate potential violations. Publicly denounce the junta’s sham election and reject its results, and refuse any form of recognition or support. The brief also calls on private sector actors, including professional service firms and financial institutions, to terminate any dealings with junta-controlled entities and to

exercise enhanced due diligence when engaging with Myanmar-related clients. “Sanctions must evolve as the junta adapts,” said Yadanar Maung. “Without decisive action now, the military junta will continue to launder its crimes through rebranding, lobbying and international complicity while waging a campaign of terror against the people.” The brief warns that unless sanctions lists are updated to include the SSPC—either as an alias of the SAC or as a newly designated entity—international actors may unknowingly do business with the junta or, in more troubling instances, be given the cover of plausible deniability. This risk is especially acute in the lead-up to the junta’s planned sham election, which has already been condemned by the European Union.

U.S.-led Peace Deal Won’t End War Without New Pressure

Washington: President Donald Trump will host the presidents of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda to sign a peace accord aimed at ending the deadliest conflict globally since World War II, the war in eastern DRC. However, the agreement does not alter incentives on the ground in eastern DRC, where Rwanda is continuing its invasion via the proxy force M23, and fighting is raging. The Trump administration has led a peace process for eastern DRC in 2025 alongside Qatar, following the Rwanda-backed intervention that escalated in January. Over 5 million people are currently displaced in eastern DRC, making it the world’s fourth highest displacement crisis. On its face, the peace process has produced three peace accords, including framework deals between the DRC and Rwandan governments and between the DRC and the M23, and an economics-for-peace agreement.

But on the ground, M23 has expanded its territory and committed extensive human rights abuses, including ethnically targeted mass killings and torture that are likely war crimes, and over 2 million people have been newly displaced in 2025. Meanwhile, the DRC government continues to collaborate with deadly armed groups such as the Wazalendo and FDLR.

Sasha Lezhnev, Senior Policy Advisor at the Sentry, said: “The U.S.-led economics-for-peace deal is a helpful vision for the future, but ending the war in eastern DR Congo will require a much bolder approach now. The U.S., U.K., and European Union must escalate pressure and sanctions against Rwandan and DRC officials and their networks who continue to back M23 and other armed groups. Otherwise, there is a high risk that eastern DRC could become partitioned into a Rwanda-backed enclave, and the war would intensify.”



Meanwhile, all sides are profiting from conflict gold and other minerals. M23 controls key gold and tantalum mines, pillaging \$70 million worth of gold since May and smuggling to Rwanda. Rwanda is set to export a record \$2 billion worth of gold in 2025, a five-fold increase since 2021. DRC-backed armed groups control other gold mines and smuggle to Uganda, and conflict gold from both countries flows to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where it is refined and laundered

into global gold flows. John Prendergast, Co-Founder of The Sentry, said: “Conflict gold is a major profit incentive for Rwanda to continue its invasion via its M23 proxy, as it launders smuggled conflict gold to Dubai. The U.S., U.K., and European Union must change this incentive by escalating sanctions against conflict gold smuggling networks in the region, and banks and gold refiners should do enhanced due diligence on gold from Rwanda, Uganda, and the UAE.” The SSPC—either as an alias of the SAC or as a newly designated entity—international actors may unknowingly do business with the junta or, in more troubling instances, be given the cover of plausible deniability. This risk is especially acute in the lead-up to the junta’s planned sham election, which has already been condemned by the European Union.

Sip Your Way To Healthy Hair With These Amla, Curry Leaf Shots To Reduce Hairfall

If you have been facing hairfall, especially during the wintertime, you are not alone. This season can bring about a lot of hair loss, and it is heartbreaking. But if you want to stay away from chemicals and other beauty procedures, this simple make-ahead shot of amla and curry leaves can offer a natural remedy to hairfall. Have this shot in the morning, as it is packed with nutrients that can help you strengthen roots and even encourage growth. However, it doesn't happen overnight. Add it to your routine, and consistency is the key to finding your hair growing back.

Health Benefits of the ingredients used in the shot Amla, or Indian gooseberry, is rich in vitamin C, almost 20 times more than oranges. It boosts collagen and gives you stronger hair follicles, reduces oxidative stress that causes hair fall, and balances scalp pH to prevent dandruff. Amla has antioxidants like polyphenols that fight premature greying and stimulate new growth.

Curry leaves are loaded with beta-carotene and proteins. They minimise breakage of hair and can prevent greying by improving pigmentation. Curry leaves are rich in iron and antioxidants, which enhance blood circulation to the scalp, fostering thicker strands and natural shine.

Turmeric has curcumin, which has anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties. It can soothe itchy scalps and curb fungal infections. Turmeric acts as a natural detoxifier, promoting healthier follicles for robust regrowth.

Ginger contains gingerol, which improves scalp circulation. It helps to deliver nutrients directly to the follicles for faster hair growth. It has an anti-inflammatory effect that can tame dandruff, while antioxidants protect against environmental damage.

Methi, aka fenugreek seeds, are high in lecithin and proteins. They lubricate the scalp, condition each hair strand and can curb thinning of the hair. It has soluble



fibres that strengthen the roots, reduces fallout, and adds volume to your hair,

along with natural shine.
Amla Pro Max cubes for hair care

Recipe by chef and content creator Neha Deepak Shah

Ingredients:
6 to 7 – Amlas
8 to 10 – Curry leaves
2 slices – Fresh turmeric (1/2 tsp – turmeric powder)
1 slice – Ginger
1 tsp – Methi Seeds, soaked
A pinch of black pepper helps the curcumin to be absorbed

Method:
Blend all the above-listed ingredients with a splash of water into a smooth paste.
Pour this mixture into ice cube trays and freeze overnight.
Do not strain this, as it will get rid of the fibre and nutrients.
Pop out the cubes and store in an airtight container or bag in the freezer (lasts 2-3 months).
How to Use: Drop 1-2 cubes into a cup of hot water, let it steep for 5-10 mins, strain, and sip daily. Sweeten with honey if desired. Enjoy warm for the best absorption

The Aftermath Of Winter Smog: Why Your Lungs May Still Be Suffering



As winter fades and air quality numbers begin to improve, many assume the health risks of smog disappear along with the haze. But doctors warn that the human body, particularly the lungs, does not reset as quickly as pollution levels do. Winter smog, dominated by fine particulate matter and toxic gases, can leave behind inflammation, impaired lung function, and heightened vulnerability that persist long after the season ends. For millions living in high-pollution regions, the real damage unfolds quietly, weeks or even months later.

What Winter Smog Does Inside The Lungs

“Prolonged exposure to winter smog, especially fine particulate matter PM2.5, penetrates deep into the lungs, causing persistent airway inflammation, oxidative stress, and reduced lung function,” explains Dr. Vikas Mittal, Director – Pulmonologist at CK Birla Hospital, Delhi. He adds that these microscopic particles bypass the body’s natural defence mechanisms and settle deep in the airways and alveoli, triggering immune responses that don’t simply shut off once exposure ends. According to Dr. Mittal, large population studies such as the Harvard Six Cities Study and American Cancer Society cohorts have consistently linked long-term PM2.5 exposure to chronic lung disease, lung cancer, and increased cardiopulmonary mortality. “Importantly, the damage does not fully reverse once the smog season ends,” he notes, pointing to evidence from the World Health Organisation that repeated seasonal exposure leads to cumulative lung impairment over time.

Why Children Are At Higher Risk

Children bear a disproportionate burden of winter smog exposure. “Children breathe faster than adults and spend more time outdoors, which increases their exposure to PM2.5, nitrogen dioxide, and other pollutants,” says Dr. Chandrasekhar Singh, Paediatrician at Madhukar Rainbow Children’s Hospital, Delhi. As a result, many children continue to



experience chronic cough, wheezing, breathlessness, or frequent chest infections weeks after winter ends. Dr. Singh highlights a more concerning long-term impact: “In younger children, whose lungs are still developing, repeated exposure to smog can harm normal lung growth and reduce lung capacity over time.” This can increase the risk of developing asthma, worsen existing respiratory conditions, and weaken lung defences against future infections and allergens. Infants and toddlers, he adds, are especially vulnerable due to immature immune and detoxification systems.

The Hidden, Long-Term Inflammatory Burden

Even adults without prior lung disease are not immune. “Winter smog does not disappear from our bodies the moment the air clears,” says Dr. Ankit

Bhatia, Senior Consultant at Yashoda Institute of Respiratory Medicine & Interventional Pulmonology, Ghaziabad. He explains that pollutants inhaled during winter can reach the smallest airways and even enter the bloodstream, leading to persistent airway inflammation. Dr. Bhatia notes that many people continue to experience cough, chest tightness, wheezing, and shortness of breath long after pollution levels drop. “In patients with asthma or COPD, winter smog can accelerate lung function decline and increase the frequency of flare-ups even after the season ends,” he says. Emerging evidence also suggests weakened local lung immunity, increasing susceptibility to respiratory infections well beyond winter.

Why Repeated Exposure Matters

What makes winter smog particularly dangerous is its cumulative effect. Each polluted season adds to an invisible inflammatory load on the lungs, slowly reducing lung reserve and exercise capacity while increasing the risk of chronic respiratory and cardiovascular disease. Vulnerable groups such as children, older adults, and those with pre-existing lung conditions face accelerated decline if preventive steps are not taken year-round. The end of winter should not signal the end of vigilance. Lingering lung inflammation, reduced immunity, and long-term structural damage mean that recovery takes time, and in some cases, may never be complete. Protecting lung health requires sustained awareness, regular medical follow-ups for high-risk individuals, and proactive prevention beyond peak pollution months.

Sharvari Nails The Bridesmaid’s Style For Her Sister’s Wedding

Sharvari made it clear who’s the prettiest bridesmaid at her sister, Kasturi Wagh’s, dreamy wedding. The heartfelt celebration took place near Lonavala on the last Christmas Eve, at their bungalow, The House by the Lake, featuring earthy tones, floral prints, and typical shunning decor. But it was the actress’ elegant outfits that made some noise. Days after the ceremony, costume designer and stylist Tanya Ghavri shared a series of pictures on Instagram, featuring Sharvari’s looks for her sister’s wedding. The Munhya fame can be seen wearing a pearl gold silk zari tissue lehenga set from the shelves of ace designer Aditi Gupta, and looked every bit enchanting.

Decoding Sharvari’s Regal Look For Her Sister’s Wedding

The diva’s Kalidar lehenga set features a surreal blend of pearl, gold silk, zari tissue and Jacquard silk Banarasi. According to the designer’s label, the piece was adorned with Jharokha-inspired panels, elongated paisley embroidery and intricate embellishments, giving it a distinctly royal touch. Sharvari teamed it with a sleeveless, embroidered blouse adorned with paisley motifs and a plunging neckline. The precisely designed choli complemented the voluminous skirt and elevated her overall look. She finally styled her look with a pearl gold



dupatta detailed with paisley cutwork and pearl details all over it, alongside the scalloped border enhanced by the tassel detailing. For accessories, the 28-year-old fashionista went for Razwada Jewels. It included an emerald-embedded Kundan necklace teamed with matching earrings, a combination of a stack of kadas and a statement ring. She complemented the beige tones of her ensemble with a dewy, flawless foundation base. Nude peachy tints on her lips, subtle smokey eyeshadow and thin strokes of her eyeliner added an oomph factor to her beauty. She



wrapped off her look with a tiny bindi and a back-brushed, blow-dried ponytail hairdo. Altogether, she looked every bit gorgeous on her sister’s D-Day.

Sharvari’s Undeniable Beauty In A Satin Dress

This is not the first time when the actress has worn a head-turning outfit in nude shades. Previously, she draped a champagne gold draped satin skirt with a cape from the same Aditi Gupta’s label. It included an Armani satin skirt featuring intricate detailing near the waist, embodying refined elegance. The skirt was gracefully paired with an embroidered blouse and cape, adorned with blooming monochromatic florals, delicate threadwork, shimmering dori, subtle sequins, and dainty pearl detailing—creating a harmonious blend of sophistication and charm. The actress completed her look with diamond jewellery, glam makeup and half-done, middle-parted, open tresses. Sharvari’s graceful looks in nude-toned ensembles exuded pure charm.



ENTERTAINMENT

Sara Arjun of Dhurandhar wins over fans with a seductive new photo session



Mumbai: Since starring opposite Ranveer Singh in Dhurandhar, Bollywood’s newest star, Sara Arjun, has received a lot of attention on social media. In the film, Sara plays the naive daughter of a politician, a role that has won her widespread acclaim. She recently posted pictures from a fresh photo shoot, looking chic

as always.Sasha Jairam, a fashion photographer, took the pictures. Sara is shown with her hair pulled back in an untidy bun and wearing a crimson dress with a deep back. The shot took place in a dimly lit space with framed paintings and lights all around.Danish Pandor, who portrayed Uzair Baloch in the film,

added heart emojis to the pictures. With the caption, “Sara Arjun drops new photoshoot pics-is she the hottest young actor to debut who is also super talented?” the images were also posted on Reddit.”Finally we got someone who looks like a movie star,” someone said in response. “Personally, I don’t think

she had much of a chance to prove herself yet, so it’s too early to say,” remarked another. Let’s see how she does. She hardly played a part in Dhurandhar.Sara thanked her followers on Instagram following the release of Dhurandhar. “The audience is one of my greatest Dhurandhars. You have made Dhurandhar’s journey what it is. I am very grateful to you for carrying this movie forward with all of your love and presence. We have complete control over the process as artists and makers, but we have no control over the audience, and that is lovely.We put all into it and hope that someone will find us. One of the most satisfying emotions in the world is when that connection occurs.Aditya Dhar is the director of Dhurandhar, which also stars Arjun Rampal, R Madhavan, Ranveer Singh, and Akshaye Khanna. Over ₹1200 crore has been earned at the global box office.

A Twisted Love Story Between Shahid Kapoor and Triptii Dimri, Coded by Kabir Singh



Mumbai: The eagerly anticipated teaser for Vishal Bhardwaj and Shahid Kapoor’s joint film O’Romeo has been released, providing a glimpse of the grim, gloomy story of Romeo. Key characters portrayed by Shahid Kapoor, Triptii Dimri, Disha Patani, Vikrant Massey, Avinash Tiwary, Tamannaah Bhatia, Farida Jalal, and Nana Patekar were revealed in the one-minute-35-second teaser released by the producers on Saturday.Shahid plays the tough and fierce Romeo in the opening teaser, prepared to engage in combat. Shahid’s character seemed to be sculpted by violence and carried rage beneath the surface, as evidenced by his violent demeanor and raw, unpolished appearance. Additionally, the teaser is jam-packed with intense fight scenes that highlight the plot of the movie.The appearances of performers Triptii Dimri, Disha Patani,

are among the other cast members. The first O’Romeo poster was unveiled to fans just one day prior to the teaser’s release. The actor is shown in the billboard as a character who is brutally intense, with cuts and blood all over his face and a wild, maniacal grin. Shahid has

a rough appearance due to his tattooed arms, open-neck shirt with chains, and bulky belt.Additionally, the strong stance and red background highlight an enigmatic, rebellious attitude. “Romeo O Romeo where art thou O’ROMEO!” On Instagram, Shahid wrote with the poster.Vishal Bhardwaj and Shahid Kapoor, who have previously collaborated on movies like Kaminey, Haider, and Rangoon, are working again for the fourth time on O Romeo. The film’s title, release date, and new poster were revealed earlier by the producers. Starring Triptii Dimri and Nana Patekar, the film is directed by Vishal Bhardwaj and presented by the visionary Sajid Nadiadwala. O’Romeo, which is produced by Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment, is scheduled to open in theaters on February 13, 2026, during Valentine’s Week.

Ram Gopal Varma Attacks the Censor Board During the Jana Nayagan Row

Mumbai:Originally slated for release on January 9, Jana Nayagan was hailed as Vijay’s last film before he becomes a full-time politician. On Friday, January 10, the Madras High Court delayed the single judge judgment that had instructed the Censor Board to give the movie a UA certificate. The case has now been rescheduled by the court until January 21, following the Pongal holidays. Filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma has criticized the Censor Board, calling it “outdated,” and not only in relation to Thalapathy Vijay’s Jana Nayagan. Ram Gopal Varma attacked the Censor Board in a lengthy X letter, claiming that it had “long outlived its purpose.” ”It is truly foolish to think that the Censor Board is still relevant today, not just in the context of JanaNayagan’s censor issues, but in an overall manner,” he wrote. It has long since outlived its usefulness, but the film industry as a whole is primarily to blame for its continued existence due to a lack of interest in discussing its current applicability.” “At the same time, everyone in every segment of society speaks in abusive language, from news channels to YouTubers and other apps,” he went on. If you cite the long-held notion that movies are a strong



medium, don’t overlook the reality that social media has a considerably wider audience than movies and is rife with character assassinations, communal poisoning, political hate speech, and live, uncensored shouting bouts in the guise of arguments. Furthermore, it is absurd for the honorable Censor Board to think that altering a word in a movie, eliminating a shot, or obscuring a cigarette will “protect society”

in this day and age. ”The Censor Board currently only engages in theatrical activities rather than providing protection. In Oscar-caliber performances, it’s a ritual of authority where moral pretense travels under the garb of responsibility and scissors take the place of thought. The director further clarified that the Censor Board “assumes” that people are children forever, pointing out that they have no idea what

minors can access. After a hearing on Friday, January 10, the Madras High Court postponed the release of Thalapathy Vijay’s Jana Nayagan until January 21, following the Pongal holidays.The Madras High Court directed the Censor Board to award a UA certificate on Friday morning after the filmmakers made the necessary changes. The court called it a “dangerous trend” and chastised the board for considering such complaints against the movie.

Mukesh Bhatt on the postponement of Emraan Hashmi Awarapan 2

Mumbai: Producer Mukesh Bhatt has spoken out about Awarapan 2’s postponement, emphasizing that it has nothing to do with avoiding major releases. In response to rumors that the crew was avoiding Toxic: A Fairytale for Grown-Ups and Dhurandhar Part 2, Bhatt stated unequivocally, “I’m not scared of Dhurandhar 2 and Toxic.”Due to an on-set injury that needed surgery, the eagerly anticipated sequel, which was originally scheduled for release in April, has now been rescheduled for May or June.



The team decided to delay the release instead of rushing through the last stage of development because they still had an action-packed timetable to complete. ”Awarapan 2’s release date has been moved to either May or June due to Emraan Hashmi’s mishap during filming, which required surgery. He is therefore prohibited from acting for 45 days. In response to rumors that the producers were avoiding competition, Bhatt stated, “All the action scenes will be performed later.” Awarapan 2, written by Bilal Siddiqui and directed

by Nitin Kakkar, is a sequel to the action romance Awarapan, which was first directed by Mohit Suri in 2007. Although the company has not formally announced the entire cast, rumors indicate that Disha Patani and Shabana Azmi will also appear in the sequel.With box office receipts exceeding Rs 840 crore in India, Aditya Dhar’s film Dhurandhar, starring Ranveer Singh, has become a phenomenon. One of 2026’s

most anticipated films, Toxic, which stars Kannada actor Yash and is directed by Geetu Mohandas, is fueling rumors of high-profile fights this summer. The creators of Awarapan 2 are currently concentrating on finishing the project. Only a 20-day schedule is left, according to Bhatt, and it will be filmed in Malaysia starting in March if Hashmi is given the go-ahead for full-fledged action work.

Akshay Kumar played alongside Suriya in the third season of the ISPL



Mumbai: The Indian Street Premier League (ISPL) season three opening ceremony was conducted in Surat on Thursday, and actors Amitabh Bachchan, Akshay Kumar, Suriya, and Ram Charan were there. On social media, a number of images and videos of the performers having fun and interacting with one another from the event surfaced. Cricket player Sachin Tendulkar and Ram Charan welcomed and conversed in a video. Ram hurried over to give Amitabh a hug as soon as he arrived. Additionally, he congratulated Amitabh on Kalki 2898 AD. As he spoke with Ram, the seasoned actor complimented the movie’s visual effects. Another video showed Akshay Kumar on the field playing catch with Ram and Suriya. Additionally, he made the actors laugh by making fun of them while

they performed. Suriya, Akshay, and Ram posed for the cameras in a different video. During the occasion, Ram was also spotted signing autographs for his followers. Ram, Akshay, and Amitabh were also spotted watching the game together.Ashish Shelar, the Maharashtra Minister of Cultural Affairs, posted photos of Amitabh, Akshay, and Sachin on X (previously Twitter). “Game On!” was his caption for the photo. ISPL Season 3 begins. Today marks the start of ISPL Season 3, which honors the genuine spirit of grassroots cricket and provides a potent platform for up-and-coming talent. Amitabh Bachchan, Sachin Tendulkar, Akshay Kumar, Suriya, Ram Charan, and other notable dignitaries were among the luminaries and icons I was happy to meet at the event.

At the Sangeet of Sister Nupur Sanon and Stebin Ben, Kriti Sanon dances her heart out

Mumbai: Actor and businesswoman Nupur Sanon, the sister of Kriti Sanon, announced her marriage to singer Stebin Ben last week. She posted a lovely carousel of her engagement photos on Instagram. A day ago, Stebin and the Sanon family were spotted at the airport on their way to Udaipur for their wedding celebrations.Videos of an enjoyable saangeet night have been circulating this morning, and Kriti Sanon is the only person who could have performed brilliantly for her sister.Nupur Sanon and her bridesmaids were also seen dancing to the tune Sajna Ji Vaari Vaari in one of the videos. Additionally, Kriti and Varun Sharma performed for Lollipop Lagelu. In a different video, Kriti Sanon and her mother, Geeta Sanon, gave a moving performance for the prospective bride.On January 11, Nupur Sanon and Stebin Ben are reportedly being married in a Christian ceremony followed by traditional pheras. Nupur posted a number of pictures from



the romantic proposal. Stebin is seen asking Nupur to marry him in the first image. “Will you marry me?” signs are displayed in the background.The actress is also seen showing off her diamond ring in the photos.The headline read, “In a world full of maybes, I found the easiest YES I’ve ever had to say.”Nupur is seen wearing a frock with flowers on it. In contrast, Stebin chose a blue blazer, matching pants, and white shirt. According to

reports, Nupur Sanon and Stebin Ben will tie the knot in Udaipur on January 11. Attendees will be close relatives and family, making the wedding a close-knit event.Stebin denied the dating rumors involving Nupur in a previous interview with Hindustan Times, stating, “I haven’t announced anything yet, so of course I am still single and enjoying my life.” I’ll make everything public when the time is appropriate, but you never know.

In that sense, I am pretty traditional. ”It’s fine, as in this industry, people need conversations about you, so I don’t really care about it,” he said in response to rumors that he was close to Nupur. As long as it’s all positive and doesn’t damage my reputation or image, I don’t mind if others talk about me. Since Nupur is a close friend of mine, I honestly don’t interpret it differently, and I don’t make an effort to dispel the rumors.”

Agastya Nanda’s Picture Makes Rs 85 Lakh

Mumbai: Agastya Nanda’s film Ikkis is still doing well at the box office. The war drama, which was produced by Maddock Films and directed by Sriram Raghavan, debuted on January 1. In its first week of release, the movie brought in Rs 25.5 crore.Sacnilk, an industry tracker, reports that Ikkis made Rs 85 lakh at the ticket counter on Day 9. As a result, the film has made a total of Rs 26.35 crore at the box office.On its second Friday, January 9, Ikkis had an overall Hindi occupancy rate of 11.57 percent, according to the study. 6.75 percent of viewers attended the morning shows, compared to 10.43 percent for the afternoon shows. Night performances had the highest occupancy at 15.74 percent, while evening screenings were at 13.36 percent. Agastya Nanda makes her stage debut in Ikkis. The Archies, a 2023 film directed by Zoya Akhtar, featured the grandson of renowned megastar Amitabh Bachchan. Netflix, a massive over-the-top platform, launched it.In addition to Agastya, Ikkis also includes the late actor Dharmendra, Simar Bha-



tia, Vivaan Shah, Sikandar Kher, and Jaideep Ahlawat. Dharmendra’s final movie is Ikkis. The seasoned celebrity passed away in November of last year. He was eighty-nine. The He-Man of Bollywood asked fans to watch Ikkis in a previous chat with philanthropist and businesswoman Usha Kakade on her podcast. ”Meri ek film aa rahi hai, Ikkis,” Dharmendra remarked. Woh zaroor dekhniyega. Humaare Sriram (Raghavan) is the director. Inhone this, Johnny Gaddaar banayi. This is an image of the border. Lekin bahut touching bhi hai. Achhi, achhi, achhi movie hai. (Ikkis, my movie is on the way. You have to see it. Raghavan, our Sriram, is an excellent director. That Johnny Gaddaar was made by him. This is an image of the border. However, it’s also quite moving.

“Get Rs 10 Lakh by Impregnating Childless Women”: How Bihar Conned Men

New Delhi, Jan 10:It began with a prize of up to Rs 10 lakh for getting a woman pregnant. The so-called “All India Pregnant Job” was advertised online and posted on social media. Free sex and money were enticing to men. Before they realized they were being duped, they paid “initial charges” in the hopes of getting money and sex. The Nawada Cyber Police in Bihar have busted a gang that was deceiving gullible people by offering cheap loans, fictitious jobs, and rewards for getting childless women pregnant.A minor has been detained on suspicion of cybercrime, and Ranjan Kumar, a resident of Nawada, has been arrested. As humorous as it may sound, the “All India Pregnant Job” was actually a scam disguised as a loan and employment offer. They of-



fered low-cost loans under the names “Dhani Finance” and “SBI cheap loans,” and they made a number of deceptive pitches, such as “Playboy Service.” These terms were used in fake ads that were posted on Facebook and WhatsApp in an attempt to draw in victims.The accused offered males Rs 10 lakh in exchange for getting childless

ladies pregnant. They were guaranteed half of the money even if they didn’t succeed. Potential victims were enticed with the promise of free sex after seeing pictures of female models. However, there was a catch. Initial charges for what the con artists said were hotel rates, registration fees, etc. were demanded from the victims. Until the

victims realized they were being conned, the extortion persisted.Many lost their cash because they thought it was a simple method to make a million dollars. Most of the time, they didn’t call the police or tell anyone because they were afraid of social stigma.Ranjan Kumar, a resident of Nawada, was taken into custody by a Special Investigation Team (SIT). In this regard, a minor was also taken into custody. According to Superintendent of Police Abhinav Dhiman, four cell phones used in the scam have been found. A case has been filed under relevant provisions of the Information Technology Act and the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS). The police claim that the Nawada district has previously discovered multiple instances of this kind of cyberfraud.

Himanta Sarma Regarding Mamata Banerjee's I-PAC Raid Behavior

New Delhi, Jan 10: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was chastised by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for her actions during Enforcement Directorate (ED) raids connected to the political consulting business Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC) in Kolkata. Sarma told reporters in Guwahati on Friday that Banerjee’s actions at the raid locations were really alarming and might cause her to lose the respect of the public. “It is quite alarming how she acts, how she acts at the crime scene, how she removes official documents, and how she uses offensive language against the Home Minister. The public’s esteem for her is likely to be damaged by such acts, he said. “I don’t want to say anything more, but it is really regrettable when a Chief Minister in office acts in this way, seizing documents and purportedly holding people. Sarma continued, “This goes far beyond what is acceptable.”The comments were made following the highly dramatic ED raids on I-PAC chief Pratik Jain’s home and the firm’s office on Thursday. Banerjee stormed into the locations during the raids, claiming that the central agency was attempting to obtain the TMC’s private information in advance of the crucial assembly elections. Banerjee was accused of hindering a legitimate inquiry by the ED, which has maintained that the operations were a part of an investigation into an alleged multi-crore rupee coal pilferage fraud. The ED further claimed that Banerjee and the state police had forcibly removed “key evidence” during the searches. Sarma went on to criticize the Mamata Banerjee-led government for the problem of illegal immigration from Bangladesh, claiming that in order to properly handle the issue, West Bengal requires a change in leadership. “Working extensively in Bengal is crucial, and our party must become the government there.



Jemimah Rodrigues receives a bat-shaped guitar from Sunil Gavaskar



New Delhi: The star of the Indian women’s cricket team, Jemimah Rodrigues, will always treasure the moment that legendary former captain Sunil Gavaskar honored a promise and surprised her with a guitar shaped like a bat. Before they sat down to jam on Friday, Gavaskar gave Jemimah a specially made guitar in the shape of a cricket bat. On the eve

of the Women’s Premier League, the touching encounter honored a more humorous and intimate aspect of two Indian cricket generations.As she opened the gift, Jemimah was clearly ecstatic and admired the bat-shaped guitar’s craftsmanship, which was a nice homage to her dual identities as a passionate singer and a cricket player. As he encouraged her to open the

wooden box and joked that he wasn’t the “opening bat” for the day, Gavaskar, who was always the performer, was at his most humorous. India’s incredible domestic Women’s World Cup campaign served as the inspiration for the moment. In an interview with India Today, Gavaskar had assured Jemimah that he would jam with her if the team went on to win the trophy after India easily advanced to the final after winning the semi-final.Jemimah herself maintained the pledge in a lighthearted manner. The India batter discussed Gavaskar’s confidence at the Agenda AajTak summit in December 2025. She even sang a song on stage to thunderous acclaim. She smiled and said she was waiting on “Sunil sir” to keep his word. Gavaskar lived up to his reputation. In response to Jemimah’s playful question about whether the bat-shaped guitar was intended for playing or batting, he said that she could do both and that, even when she scores runs, her batting has a grace and rhythm, much like a guitarist in full flow.

After taking on Virat Kohli in the “Easiest Format,” Sanjay Manjrekar doubles down

New Delhi: Sanjay Manjrekar, a former batter for the Indian cricket team, reiterated his position after previously asserting that Virat Kohli opted to play the easiest format (ODIs) out of the three. Manjrekar expressed earlier this week that he finds it painful to witness Kohli “giving up” on Test cricket in favor of playing only ODIs. He went on to say that the great batter’s choice to retire from Test cricket may have been influenced by his inability to overcome his deficiency.

He reiterated his earlier statements in his most recent remarks, stating that he thought ODIs were the simplest format to play since top-order hitters end up scoring a lot of runs. He did note, though, that many top-order hitters in ODIs are hesitant to play in the same position in Tests. Many people have questioned me about why I consistently claim that top-order hitters find ODI cricket to be simple. Take a look at the players who were opening for India in 50-over cricket for a considerable amount of time in the past. In Test cricket, those players were middle-order hitters. They had no desire to



bat in the top three or open in Test cricket. Manjrekar posted on Instagram, “They were thrilled to perform at No. 4, 5, and 6. However, he did point out that a lot of ODI top-order hitters are reluctant to play in the same position during Test matches.I’ve been asked a lot of times why I always say that ODI cricket is easy for top-order batters. Look at the guys who used to open for India in 50-over cricket for a significant period of time. They were middle-order hitters in Test cricket. In Test cricket, they had no ambition to open or bat in the top three. “They were thrilled to perform at No. 4, 5, and 6,” Manjrekar wrote on Instagram. Manjrekar praised players like Yuvraj Singh and MS

Dhoni for scoring a lot of runs in ODIs despite playing lower in the order.You simply play out the first ten to fifteen overs if you are a competent enough player. The field then expands, and if you are a skilled rotator of strike, you eventually reach a 100. In one-day cricket, Yuvraj Singh, Suresh Raina, or MS Dhoni would bat in positions 4, 5, and 6, which are difficult. Manjrekar stated, “Those were the difficult positions.” Therefore, you won’t find a batting great in one-day cricket, particularly at number one, two, and three. He continued, “There’s just too much going for people who bat in the top three in one-day cricket, so that’s the last place I would look at to see my batting great of today.”

NATIONAL & SPORTS

A small plane crashes in Rourkela, Odisha, injuring six people

New Delhi, Jan 10: According to Odisha’s Commerce and Transport Minister BB Jena, a private airline’s tiny aircraft crashed near Rourkela on Saturday, injuring at least six individuals with minor injuries.He claimed that the incident happened close to Rourkela.”There was an accident on a private A-1 aircraft with nine seats that was transporting six people from Rourkela to Bhubaneswar. The passengers are stable and have only minor injuries. It happened ten kilometers from Rourkela at Jalda. This isn’t a serious accident, by God’s goodness,” Jena said reporters. “The aircraft was en route from Bhubaneswar to Rourkela,” stated Prasanna Pradhan, director of Biju Patnaik International Airport. Ten kilometers prior to Rourkela, it crashed. There were two crew members and four passengers. Everyone is secure. India One Airlines is operating the service. The light’s number is C-208. According to the minister, the Director General of



Civil Aviation has been informed of the issue by the state administration. “Our director will also soon visit the accident site,” he stated.The injured were taken to the hospital right away

for treatment as rescue crews raced to the scene.According to airport sources, it was a routine flight operated by a private operator between Rourkela and Bhubaneswar.

After raids, I-PAC promises complete cooperation with the probe agency

New Delhi, Jan 10: The Enforcement Directorate’s (ED) simultaneous raid and search operations on Thursday at the Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC) office at Salt Lake on the northern outskirts of Kolkata and at the home of I-PAC co-founder Pratik Jain at Loudon Street in central Kolkata caused the Trinamool Congress to overreact. In response, I-PAC released a very circumspect statement on Friday.Simultaneously, I-PAC promised in its statement that it will cooperate with the central investigating agency’s investigation. “The I-PAC office and our Director, Pratik Jain’s home in Kolkata, were searched by Enforcement Directorate personnel yesterday. For a profession-



al organization such as I-PAC, it was a challenging and regrettable day. This, in our opinion, creates a troubling precedent and raises grave concerns. In any case, we have offered total assistance and will continue to do so as needed, interacting with the process in full compliance and respect for the law,” the I-PAC statement stated. In the statement,

I-PAC officials asserted that, despite what happened on Thursday, the organization would continue to be fully committed to carrying out its work with consistency and accountability guided by the same purpose that has shaped us from the beginning because it has always upheld the highest standards of professional integrity.I-PAC also made it clear in the

statement that their responsibilities as strategists for various political parties are restricted to open, expert political consulting that is unaffected by ideological disagreements. The Bharatiya Janata Party, Indian National Congress, Aam Aadmi Party, All India Trinamool Congress, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, YSR Congress Party, Telangana Rashtra Samithi (now BRS), Janata Dal (United), and Shiv Sena are just a few of the political parties that I-PAC has professionally advised over the years. We don’t run for office or run for office. The I-PAC statement stated, “Our role is limited to transparent and professional political consulting, uninfluenced by differences in political ideology.”

PV Sidhu withdraws from the Malaysia Open

New Delhi: IPV Ace Indian shuttler In the women’s singles semifinals of the season-opening Malaysia Open Super 1000 here on Saturday, Sindhu lost straight games to Wang Zhiyi of China, ending her remarkable run.In a 16-21, 15-21 loss to the world number two, the two-time Olympic medallist was unable to withstand the pressure and made too many careless mistakes.Sindhu gave up an 11-6 lead in the second game while competing in her maiden competition following her recovery from a foot ailment that kept her out of action since October of last year.Additionally, the defeat ended India’s tournament campaign.Sindhu used her reach and powerful blows to take the fight to her superior opponent early on. She quickly took a 5-2 lead because to her signature cross-court smashes, but Wang’s deft touch allowed her to even the score with a run of points.Sindhu took a 9-7 lead thanks to a few misses from Wang, but the Chinese player rallied once again to take a narrow one-point lead at halftime as Sindhu struggled at the net.After the restart, with the scores tied at 13-13 and multiple points wasted at the backline, both players struggled for length.Wang increased the pressure from 15 to 14, combining well-timed lifts that hovered just out of reach with aggressive attacking strokes that squeezed Sindhu. She wrapped out the first game as Sindhu went wide after surging to 18-



14, giving up one point in a tough rally, and earning four game points.After two careless mistakes in the second set, Sindhu fell behind 1-3, but she immediately recovered and built powerful rallies to take a 6-3 lead.Sindhu controlled the mid-phase by pushing her opponent to the corners with precise angles, built up an 11-6 lead at halftime, while Wang steadied herself to close the gap. After the restart, Wang rallied quickly, but Sindhu responded with nearly flawless net strokes to maintain their lead at 13-9. Wang retaliated once again as Sindhu fired strokes wide and into the net, tying the score at 13-13 before taking the lead. The Chinese player gained a 16-13 lead after a superb net exchange.After that, Sindhu missed the backline twice, and Wang was awarded five match points by a backhand net fault. Wang’s spot in the final was secured when Sindhu missed another stroke, ending the match.

UP Police Look for the Accused After a Dalit Woman Is Murdered



New Delhi, Jan 10: In Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, tensions were high when a 22-year-old man killed a Dalit mother and abducted her daughter on Thursday.One day after the event, more police were sent to the Kapsad village while the women were making their way to their farms. They were stopped close to a canal by the accused Paras, a compounder for a nearby physician, who then started mistreating the women. When the mother objected, she was struck with a sugarcane sickle. The 20-year-old

daughter was then taken away by force by the man. Villagers arrived at the scene after hearing the elderly woman’s pleas and transported her to the hospital. While receiving care for her wounds, she passed away.Protests broke out shortly after her death as campaigners and Bhim Army members called for the perpetrators to be arrested right away. Following numerous hours of discussions with the government and BJP lawmaker Sangeet Som, the woman’s family cremated her body on Friday.

The cameraperson at the WPL 2026 opener irritated Smriti Mandhana

New Delhi: A cameraperson irritated Smriti Mandhana, captain of Royal Challengers Bengaluru, prior to Friday’s WPL 2026 opening match versus Mumbai Indians. Mandhana was seen practicing on the ground before a camerapist disturbed her in a video that went popular on social media. The Indian women’s cricket team player was obviously annoyed by the interruption when he got too close to her as she was facing throwdowns. Mandhana only managed 18

from 13 deliveries during the game, but Nadine de Klerk’s brilliant batting performance helped her team win by three wickets. Smriti Mandhana, captain of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), expressed joy after her team defeated the Mumbai Indians (MI) in an exciting Women’s Premier League (WPL) campaign opener. She said her team is “known to play thrillers” and that her team was on the winning side after losing some very entertaining games the previous season.

Neeraj Chopra officially ends training partnership with legendary Czech javelin coach Jan Zelezny after split

Javelin star fulfills childhood dream learning from idol

New Delhi: Two-time Olympic medal-winning javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra on Saturday announced an end to his partnership with Czech coach Jan Zelezny after just one season, which the Indian said was marked by “progress, respect, and a shared love for the sport.” Chopra did not specify the reason for ending the stint with Zelezny, a bonafide legend of the sport who holds the world record and under whose tutelage the Haryana-lad breached the 90m mark last year. Reflecting on their work, Chopra said to learn directly from an athlete he had admired since childhood was a dream come true and gave him a completely new “toolbox of exercises, technical ideas, and fresh perspectives”.

“Working with Jan opened my eyes to so many new ideas. The way he thinks about technique, rhythm, and movement is incredible, and I learned a lot from every single session we had together,” Chopra said. “What I’m most proud about is the friendship I’ve built with someone who has been my



idol all my life. Jan is not only the best javelin thrower of all time, but also one of the best human beings I have ever met,” he added. The 59-year-old Zelezny also reflected warmly on the partnership and the progress they made together. “Working with an athlete like Neeraj was a great experience. I’m glad we met and were able to work together, that I got him to break the 90-metre barrier for the first time.” Apart from the World Championships, he finished at worst second and that is not a bad record. Unfortunately, the back injury 12 days before Tokyo significantly affected his chances,” he said in a press release. Zelezny said Chopra has

huge potential for the coming years. “Our relationship is very positive also on the human side and we will continue to stay in touch, we will definitely meet at some training camp or, for example, on vacation with our families in Europe or India,” Zelezny said. Looking ahead, Chopra said he plans to take the lead in shaping his own coaching direction. “I’m looking forward to what 2026 has in store. I started my preparation in early November. As always, the goal is to stay healthy, and I am already excited to be competing again soon,” Chopra said. “At the same time, I’m especially looking ahead to the year with the World Championships

in 2027, and the big goal beyond that is the Olympic Games in 2028,” he added.

Chopra had finished eighth in the world event after the 90m high achieved in the Doha Diamond League last year. Star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra and JSW Sports on Monday announced the conclusion of their formal partnership. The move comes as Neeraj begins a new chapter with the launch of his own athlete management firm, Vel Sports. Neeraj’s association with JSW Sports began in 2016, when he was first scouted through the JSW Sports Excellence Program (SEP) - a moment that marked the start of one of India’s most successful athlete-management. He joined and over the next decade, the partnership became a defining force in Indian sport, according to a press release. Neeraj’s achievements have been historic. Fondly called the ‘Man with the Golden Arm,’ he became the first Indian circuit. Jadumani’s aggressive style and confidence could make him a strong contender for India’s future medal hopes.

Delhi Capitals launch Jemimah Rodrigues era, face struggling Mumbai Indians in WPL 2026 opener



New Delhi: After three successive heartbreaks, Delhi Capitals (DC) will embark on a fresh start to their Women’s Premier League 2026 (WPL 2026) campaign as they take on defending champions Mumbai Indians (MI) in their opening fixture on Saturday, January 10, at the Dr DY Patil Sports Academy, Navi Mumbai. Much has changed for Delhi since last season, with the most significant development being a change in leadership. Jemimah Rodrigues has been handed the captaincy following Meg Lanning’s exit. The right-handed batter is currently at the zenith of her professional career, buoyed by her recent World Cup success. The three-time runners-up added considerable firepower to their squad at the auction, acquiring the services of last season’s sensation Chinelle Henry and South Africa star Laura Wolvaardt. Meanwhile, the spin department has been strengthened with the inclusion of Sneha Rana alongside Shree Charani. Delhi have shown faith in most of their former players, re-signing them at the auction, and will be aiming for a rollicking start to their campaign under Jemimah’s leadership. On the other hand, Mumbai will be rueing their defeat in the opening fixture against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB). The Harmanpreet Kaur-led side had complete control of the match for the majority of the contest, with RCB reeling at 65/5 while chasing 155. However, Nadine de Klerk’s clutch knock of 63* off 44 balls snatched victory from the jaws of defeat for the 2024 champions. MI have plenty to rectify ahead of their second fixture, having failed to get off to a flying start against RCB, managing just 21 runs in the first five overs. In the

bowling department, they allowed the Smriti Mandhana-led side to claw their way back into the contest, despite having them under severe pressure at one stage. The third fixture of the tournament promises to be a blockbuster clash, given the history of fierce battles between the two teams. Mumbai and Delhi have been involved in several memorable encounters in WPL history, with both teams having won four matches apiece ahead of the upcoming season. However, DC hold the upper hand in the most recent meetings, having won three of the last four fixtures between the two sides. The pitch used for the opening fixture showed signs of slowness, with batters finding it difficult to get going in the initial overs. Spinners are expected to extract good purchase from the surface, which is likely to improve for batting as the match progresses. Winning the toss and opting to bowl first could prove to be the ideal strategy for the captains. Nat Sciver-Brunt, G Kamalini (wk), Amelia Kerr, Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Amanjot Kaur, Nicola Carey, Poonam Khemnar, Shabnim Ismail, Sanskriti Gupta, Sajeewan Sajana, Saika Ishaque Mumbai and Delhi have been involved in several memorable encounters in WPL history, with both teams having won four matches apiece ahead of the upcoming season. However, DC hold the upper hand in the most recent meetings, having won three of the last four fixtures between the two sides.

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Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli make captain’s job easier: Shubman Gill on duo’s ODI impact

New Delhi: India’s ODI captain Shubman Gill believes the presence of senior batters Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli makes leadership at the highest level far more manageable, especially as India gear up for a three-match ODI series against New Zealand. Gill underlined how the experience and calmness of the two stalwarts provide a safety net in pressure situations, allowing younger leaders to lean on their judgment and game awareness. Speaking at the pre-match press conference in Vadodra ahead of the series opener, the Indian captain explained why having Rohit and Kohli in the dressing room is such a valuable advantage. “The two names that you have taken — one is one of the greatest openers of all time, Rohit Sharma, and Virat bhai is one of the greatest ODI batters ever. So definitely, when you have these two in your team, it makes your life easier,” he said. “Whenever you are in a tough situation, they have been in those kinds of situations and conditions many times in their life, so you can always go to them and see how they are thinking and what they would do, and that piece of information is very valuable for any captain,” he added. Both Rohit and Kohli are set to return to ODI action in the New Zealand series starting January 11, and they do so on the back of impressive recent form. The duo played key roles in India’s series against Australia and South Africa, with Rohit earning the Player of the Series award in Australia and Kohli claiming the same honour in the home series against South Africa. Kohli finished the South Africa series as the leading run-scorer, amassing 302 runs that included two centuries and an unbeaten 65 in the final ODI. Rohit, meanwhile, offered consistency at the top, most notably with a fluent 75 in the third ODI that laid the plat-



form for India’s innings. Their performances are reflected in the latest ICC ODI batting rankings, with Rohit occupying the top spot and Kohli close behind in second place.

Their impact has extended to domestic cricket as well, with both making emphatic returns in the Vijay Hazare Trophy. Kohli opened his campaign with a commanding 131 off 101 balls against Andhra Pradesh, during which he surpassed Sachin Tendulkar to become the fastest to 16,000 List A runs in just 330 innings. He then struck a brisk 77 off 61 balls against Gujarat in Bengaluru, earning Player of the Match as Delhi won by seven runs. Rohit, meanwhile, lit up Jaipur with a blistering 155 off 94 balls for Mumbai against Sikkim at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium, delighting a packed crowd. His campaign also saw a rare low, falling for a golden duck against Uttarakhand, but the buzz around his return was unmistakable, with fans lining up as early as 6 am to watch him bat. Their sustained form has also reignited hopes among Indian fans that the celebrated ‘Ro-Ko’ pairing could continue through to the 2027 ODI World Cup. With consistency still on their side, the prospect of the duo extending their careers and chasing the one major ODI trophy that has so far eluded them remains very much alive. New Zealand batter Will Young said he was not surprised to see Indian battering superstars Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma back in prime form, as he explained the star duo’s influence on the Blackcaps camp ahead of the three-match ODI series. Virat and Rohit will be back in action in the ODI series against New Zealand, starting January 11 in Vadodra. Both batters have been in impressive form in recent series against Australia and South Africa Kohli bagged the honour in the home series.

PV Sindhu suffers semifinal defeat to China’s Wang at Malaysia Open



Kuala Lumpur: Ace Indian shuttler P V Sindhu’s impressive run came to an end after a straight-game defeat to China’s Wang Zhiyi in the women’s singles semifinals of the season-opening Malaysia Open Super 1000 here on Saturday. The two-time Olympic medallist could not sustain the pressure against the world number two, committing too many unforced errors in a 16-21, 15-21 loss. Playing her first tournament after recovering from a foot injury that kept her on the sidelines since October last year, Sindhu also let slip an 11-6 lead in the second game. The loss also brought down curtains on India’s campaign in the tournament. Sindhu took the fight to her higher-ranked opponent early, hitting hard and using her reach effectively. She produced her trademark cross-court smashes to race to a 5-2 lead before Wang’s subtle touch helped her draw level with a run of points.

A few misses from Wang allowed Sindhu to edge ahead 9-7 but the Chinese player clawed back once again to take a slender one-point lead at the interval as Sindhu fal-

tered at the net. Both players struggled for length after the restart with the scores locked at 13-13 and several points squandered at the backline. From 15-14, Wang upped the pressure with relentless attacking shots that cramped Sindhu, mixing them with well-judged lifts that floated just beyond reach.

She surged to 18-14, conceded one point in a fierce rally, then earned four game points and closed out the opener as Sindhu went wide. The second game saw Sindhu slip to 1-3 after two unforced errors but she regrouped quickly, constructing rallies with authority to move ahead 6-3. Wang steadied herself to narrow the gap, yet Sindhu dominated the corners with sharp angles opening. She surged to 18-14, conceded one point in a fierce rally, then earned four game points and closed out the opener as Sindhu went wide. The second game saw Sindhu slip to 1-3 after two unforced errors but she regrouped quickly, constructing rallies with authority to move ahead 6-3. Wang steadied herself to narrow the gap, yet Sindhu dominated the mid-phase by pushing her opponent to the corners with sharp angles, opening up an 11-6 lead at the break. Wang came out firing after the resumption, engaging in brisk rallies but Sindhu countered with near-perfect net shots to stay ahead at 13-9. Once again, Wang fought back as Sindhu sprayed shots wide and into the net, drawing level at 13-13 before seizing the initiative. A deft net exchange gave the Chinese player a 16-13 cushion. Sindhu then missed the backline twice and a backhand net five match points.

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New Delhi: India’s star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has split with his coach Jan Zelezny. Chopra and Zelezny announced the development via a mutual statement where both of them spoke in admiration of each other. Zelezny, a legendary javelin thrower himself and one of the biggest proponents of the game, coached Neeraj for only one season. Chopra’s performances under Zelezny were a mixed bag. He started on a tremendous note, breaching the elusive 90-metre mark in their very first competition together, at the Doha Diamond League. The milestone performance ended one of the most iconic barriers in javelin throwing and firmly placed the Indian star among the global elite, if he was not there already. Reflecting on his time working with the Czech great, Chopra described the experience as deeply special, having trained under an athlete he had admired since childhood.

UPKL Season 2 record-breaking night rewrites benchmarks

Noida: Uttar Pradesh Kabaddi League (UPKL) Season 2 witnessed a landmark moment on the final day of the league stage, as multiple league records were rewritten during a historic encounter between Lucknow Lions and Gazab Ghaziabad at the Noida Indoor Stadium. Lucknow Lions produced a dominant performance to register an emphatic 87-36 victory, making it the highest-scoring match in UPKL history, according to a release. The result reflected sustained attacking intensity and tactical sharpness from the league leaders throughout the contest, as they maintained relentless pressure across both halves. The record-setting night was further highlighted by an extraordinary individual performance from Lucknow Lions’ raider Shivam Chaudhary, who set a new UPKL benchmark by scoring 43 raid points in a single match, the highest number



of raid points ever recorded by an individual in the league. His relentless raiding dismantled the Gazab defence, repeatedly producing multi-point raids and driving Lucknow’s historic total on the scoreboard. Speaking on the milestone, Sambhav Jain, Founder and Director of UPKL, said, “This is exactly what UPKL is being built for to give athletes a platform where they can express themselves, grow under pressure, and set new performance benchmarks. When a player delivers a performance of this level, it

reflects not just individual talent, but the competitive ecosystem and standards the league is striving to create.” The milestones were achieved during UPKL’s high-pressure Do-or-Die Week, a phase of the tournament that consistently delivered decisive encounters and elevated performances. Beyond the numbers, the match underlined the rapid evolution of UPKL in only its second season, with increasing pace, attacking depth, and competitive intensity on display. As UPKL Season 2 now moves into the phase.

Boxing Nationals: Jadumani shocks Panghal, secures semifinal victory and advances confidently into championship final clash

Jadumani Singh defeats Panghal, advances to Nationals final

Greater Noida: It was a fight that was keenly awaited. Two-time Olympian Amit Panghal pitted against rising star Jadumani Singh in the 55kg class at the Elite National Boxing Championships here on Friday. Both are flyweight boxers who have moved one weight class up with an eye on the Asian Games this season. While the younger Jadumani emerged winner and moved into the final, Panghal too asserted his class. The contest was far closer than the 5-0 scoreline. Panghal, the 2019 World Championships silver medallist, is searching for second wind after another disappointing Olympics campaign. The 30-year-old was not in national reckoning last year. Jadumani, 21, has tasted international success this year and is keen to make a mark in major competitions. With fast hands and quick footwork he began with a flurry of punches, and Panghal responded with combinations. Jadumani likes to fight in close range and unleashes rapid combinations, often finishing with sharp uppercuts. Panghal ducked and weaved before striking with precision, giving a stern test to the youngster in the high-intensity first round. Both were busy in the second round too but as the bout progressed it was young Jadumani who had more in reserve against the seasoned campaigner. The final will be another challenge for Jadumani as he faces Pawan Bartwal, silver medallist from World Boxing Cup Final. The other marquee men’s final will be between Md Hussamuddin and



Sachin in 60kg. Hussamuddin, on a comeback trail, continued with his fine form to beat Raman of All India Police, while Sachin got the better of Bhupinder Singh of Punjab 5-0. Two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen and Nitu Ghanghas set up an exciting final in women’s 51kg class. Nikhat, representing Telangana, defeated Kusum Baghel of UP 4-1, while former world champion Nitu defeated Railways’ Jyoti 4-0. In 48kg, world champion Minakshi beat Madhya Pradesh’s Malika Mor 5-0 and will meet Manju Rani, the 2019 world championships silver medallist, in the final. Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) advanced to the final with a clinical 5-0 win over Imroz Khan of Uttar Pradesh 5-0.

Young boxer Jadumani Singh stunned two-time Olympian Amit Panghal with a dominant 5-0 victory in the semifinals of the Elite National Boxing Championships in Greater Noida, securing his place in the finals against Pawan Bartwal.

The 21-year-old Manipuri showcased relentless aggression and speed to overpower Panghal, marking one of the biggest upsets of the tournament. - Jadumani Singh defeated Amit Panghal 5-0 unanimous decision - Jadumani relied on fast hands, relentless aggression, and high punch volume. Panghal focused on accuracy and counter-punching but was overwhelmed. - Both boxers had shifted weight classes with an eye on the upcoming Asian Games. Already tasted international success earlier in 2025. - Two-time Olympian and 2019 World Championships silver medallist. - Pawan Bartwal defeated Victor Singh of Manipur with an identical 5-0 scoreline, setting up the final clash with Jadumani. Jadumani’s victory signals a generational shift in Indian boxing, with younger talents challenging established Olympians. - The Elite Nationals are crucial for selection into international competitions, including the Asian Games and World Championships. Jadumani’s aggressive style and confidence could make him a strong contender for India’s future medal hopes. Panghal ducked and weaved before striking with precision, giving a stern test to the youngster in the high-intensity first round. Both were busy in the second round too but as the bout progressed it was young Jadumani who had more in reserve against the seasoned campaigner. The final will be another challenge for Jadumani as he faces Pawan Bartwal, silver medallist Singh of Punjab last year.