

AR organises Manipur Border Trail Run 1.0



Imphal, Jan 21: Assam Rifles successfully organised the first-ever “Manipur Border Trail Run 1.0” at Chakpikarong Football Ground under the aegis of Operation Sadbhavana, drawing an enthusiastic response from across the region. The event brought together communities from remote border villages and beyond, reflecting a growing passion for endurance sports and the spirit of unity in Manipur’s border areas. The run was flagged off at 0600 hours by Senior Official of Assam Rifles, in the presence of village authorities, civil society representatives and senior officials. Around 2,200 people gathered at the venue, with 1,250 participants taking part in the race. The inclusivity of the event stood out, with runners ranging from 10 years old to over 70, cutting across age groups and backgrounds, informed a press release of IGAR(S). The challenging hilly terrain featured three race categories: the 14 km “Tuiyang Grizzly Grind,” the 8 km “Tuiyang Deer Dash,” and the 5 km “Chakpi Rabbit Run,” open to men, women, seniors and children. Performances were spirited, with Kh. Zabeed Hussain winning the men’s 14 km in 53 minutes 30 seconds, while Baby Veineiting Baite topped the women’s category in 1 hour 21 minutes. In the 8 km race, Md Rahish Khan finished first among men, and Riflewoman Sharmila Dalai led the women’s field. The 5 km category saw Md Areeb (Men), Sinruwng Ningshinghring (Women), WS Thumison Anal (Boys) and Kharin Vashum (Girls) emerge winners in their respective groups. 48 others were also awarded medals by the DIG Assam Rifles, including categories reserved for Assam Rifles personnel, while podium finishers received prizes worth over ₹2 lakhs. Every participant was recognised with mementos, underscoring the inclusive spirit of the event. The Closing Gala Ceremony at 1000 hours featured vibrant cultural performances, Jazz and Pipe Band displays and a special appearance by MFN Bantamweight Champion Mr Chungreng Koren, “The Indian Rhino,” who inspired the youth with his journey.

Union Minister reviews Central sector infrastructure projects in NE

Guwahati, Jan 21: Rao Inderjit Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), chaired a high-level review meeting of Central Sector infrastructure projects under implementation in the North Eastern States in Guwahati. The meeting was organised in association with Transformation & Development Department, Government of Assam in the presence of Dr JB Ekka, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Assam and Dilip Kumar Borah, Secretary to the Government of Assam, Transformation and Development Department. The meeting was conducted in the presence of over 100 officers from 11 Central Ministries and their project implementing agencies and 8 State Governments of the North Eastern region.

During the review meeting, it was discussed that Infrastructure is the backbone of a developed nation and a central pillar of the Prime Minister’s vision of Viksit Bharat @2047. Guided by his emphasis on integrated, future-ready, and inclusive infrastructure, world-class physical and digital networks are being created to enhance productivity, competitiveness, and ease of living. By strengthening connectivity, logistics efficiency, and access to essential services, infrastructure is driving balanced regional development and unlocking the growth potential of every region. This sustained infrastructure push will be instrumental in transforming India into a globally competitive and self-reliant economy by 2047.

Joint Secretary, MoSPI, Supreet Singh Gula-ti, in his welcome note, setting the agenda for the meet, mentioned that a total of 221 central sector infrastructure projects, spanning 11 Central Ministries/Departments with an original cost of Rs. 2.33 lakh crore were currently under implementation in the North Eastern region.

In his opening remarks, Secretary, MoSPI, Dr. Saurabh Garg, reiterated the Government’s commitment to strengthening institutional

mechanisms for infrastructure monitoring and highlighted the role of MoSPI’s Infrastructure and Project Monitoring Division (IPMD) and the PAIMANA – Project Assessment, Infrastructure Monitoring and Analytics for Nation-Building portal in enabling data-driven monitoring of Central sector infrastructure projects costing Rs 150 crore and above. He also mentioned about the capacity building programmes conducted by MoSPI on Project Planning and Management and encouraged State Governments to nominate officers associated with infrastructure development to participate in these programmes.

During the meeting, reviews were undertaken for projects of the 11 Ministries/Departments. During the review of MoRTH projects in the North Eastern States, 177 projects covering 3,634 km were examined/reviewed. For the Ministry of Railways, nine ongoing projects were reviewed. NorthEast Frontier Railway (NFR) is implementing rail connectivity projects in the North Eastern Region, where difficult terrain, monsoon-dominated climate, limited working seasons, landslides, and remoteness pose major execution challenges. Despite these constraints, NFR has expedited works, including the inauguration of the Bhairabi-Sairang new line in Mizoram on 13.09.2025 and completion of 1,072 route km of electrification. NFR requested State support for addressing issues related to encroachments, land acquisition, law and order, and forest clearances to accelerate project execution.

For the Ministry of Power, nine projects were reviewed. While discussing the CSST and Distribution System projects of Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, issues included non-availability of contractors, local hindrances, and issues in assessment and disbursement of compensation in Reserve Forest areas were highlighted. For the Tato-I Hydroelectric Project (186 MW) of North Eastern Electric



Power Corporation Limited (NEEPCO) issues including transmission line completion and road connectivity constraints due to ongoing road upgradation works were discussed.

For the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, 21 ongoing projects were reviewed. The Ministry highlighted that certain projects in the North Eastern Region have faced implementation challenges due to external supply disruptions and land-related issues, particularly for projects initiated during the COVID-19 period. Issues regarding the North East Gas Grid Project included pending land acquisition approvals and administrative clearance for 33 km of pipeline were discussed. The recently inaugurated 2G Ethanol (Bio Refinery) at Numaligarh, Assam, the world’s first 2G Bio-ethanol Plant using bamboo, was also highlighted. It was emphasized that this project was a step towards energy “atmanirbharta” and also aligned with the “annadata se urjadata” vision of the Prime Minister.

For the Ministry of Civil Aviation, three projects costing Rs 2,534.26 crore were reviewed. Issues discussed for the “Redevelopment of Imphal Airport” included highway closures and monsoon impacts, while issues for the “Runway Widening at Pakyong Airport” related to land availability and construction of an alternate access route. The Ministry requested continued State support for dumping excavated material. For the Department of Telecommunications, two Projects costing Rs 2227.45 crore were reviewed. It was emphasized that while

optical ground wire (OPGW) along power transmission lines is already enabling bandwidth provision, coordinated development of power distribution and associated last-mile infrastructure is essential to effectively strengthen telecommunications.

For the Department of Higher Education, seven projects amounting to Rs 2,915.52 crore are under implementation in the North Eastern Region. The Department submitted that the objective of establishing one National Institute of Technology (NIT) in each State is to serve as a regional hub for technological education and innovation.

Also, the projects of the Department of Sports, Ministry of Coal, and the Ministry of Labour and Employment were reviewed, and critical issues were discussed. Ministries/Departments/Implementing agencies acknowledged and appreciated the support provided by the State Governments in facilitating project execution.

Concluding the review meeting, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Rao Inderjit Singh emphasized the importance of timely completion of infrastructure projects in the North Eastern region for strengthening connectivity, promoting inclusive growth, and supporting socio-economic development. He urged all stakeholders to adopt a proactive and solution-oriented approach to resolve bottlenecks and ensure faster project execution. He expressed confidence that, through sustained collective effort, the Prime Minister’s vision of a prosperous, connected, and empowered North Eastern Region will be realized, thereby making a meaningful contribution to the realisation of the national vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of the Government’s commitment to accelerating infrastructure development in the North Eastern States through effective coordination, continuous monitoring, and timely resolution of issues.

Kokrajhar situation under control, say authorities; community leaders appeal for calm

Kokrajhar, Jan 21: The situation in Assam’s Kokrajhar district is largely under control, with authorities saying that peace is steadily returning after recent incidents of violence. Security has been tightened across sensitive areas, and senior officials are closely monitoring the ground situation to prevent any further unrest. According to officials, security forces including the Army, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), and Assam Police have been carrying out regular flag marches in vulnerable locations since Tuesday. These marches continued on Wednesday as a confidence-building measure aimed at reassuring residents and maintaining law

and order. In view of the tense situation, the district administration imposed Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) on Tuesday to restrict unlawful gatherings and avoid any escalation. Five additional companies of police forces have been deployed across the district. Authorities said these forces are stationed at key points, including market areas, residential pockets, and along highways, to ensure smooth movement of people and vehicles. Movement on National Highway 27 was reported to be normal, with no major disruption to traffic. Relief and rehabilitation efforts are underway for those affected by the clashes. At least five temporary



shelter camps have been set up in different parts of the district. One of the largest camps has been established at Karigaon ME

High School, where 463 displaced people are currently taking shelter. Officials said arrangements for food, drinking water, and

basic medical care have been made, though there is an urgent need for warm clothing and additional supplies.

Tripura announces State Civil and Statehood Day Awards for 16 individuals and institutions

Agartala, Jan 21: On the occasion of Tripura Statehood Day, the state government has announced the names of 16 individuals and institutions who will be honoured with State Civil Awards and Statehood Day Awards for their work and service in different fields. The awards recognise contributions in education, art and culture, science, agriculture, entrepreneurship, sports, and public life. The awards will be formally presented at the state-level Statehood Day function scheduled to be held on January 21 at Rabindra Satabarshiki Bhavan in Agartala. Under the State Civil Awards, the highest civilian honour of the state, Tripura Bibhushan, will be conferred posthumously on eminent educationist Dharendra Chandra Dutta for his lifelong contri-

bution to the field of education. The Tripura Bhushan award will also be given posthumously to former Speaker of the Tripura Legislative Assembly Biswabandhu Sen. Noted screenplay writer Bip-lab Goswami, known for his work in the Hindi film Laapata Ladies, will also receive the Tripura Bhushan award. The Sachin Dev Burman Memorial State Award will be presented to well-known folk artist Surya Kumar Debbarma, popularly known as Sadagar, for his contribution to folk music and culture. The Maharani Kanchanprabha Devi Memorial State Award will be awarded to Champa Das of Kamalghat in West Tripura district. In the field of science and environment, the State Award will be given to Dr Arijit Das, Associate Professor and Head of the

Department at Bir Bikram Memorial College, Agartala. Along with the civil honours, the government has also announced several Statehood Day Awards. The Good Citizen Award will be presented to Gautam Das of East Prat-agarh in West Tripura district. Atkalapa Biotechnology LLP of Nagichhara has been selected for the Best Startup Entrepreneur Award. In the agriculture and allied sectors, Dhanbabu Halam of Simbukchak village in Salema area of Dhalai district will receive the Best Entrepreneur Award in agriculture and horticulture. Krishna Debbarma of Mohanbhog in Sepahijala district has been selected for the Best Entrepreneur Award in fisheries, while Ratan Debnath of Bishramganja will be honoured for excellence in the animal husbandry sector.

Mizoram Governor interacts with students from Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep

Aizawl, Jan 21: Mizoram Governor General Vijay Kumar Singh interacted with 40 students and 4 teachers from Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep who are visiting the Northeastern state under the “Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme” at Lok Bhavan, Aizawl on Tuesday.

The Governor warmly welcomed the visiting students to Mizoram and encouraged them to utilise this opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of Northeast India.

He highlighted that Mizoram, similar to Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep, is a sparsely populated region with scenic beauty, limited large-scale industries, and extensive forest cover, which contributes to its pleasant climate. He also noted that Mizoram is a fully literate state and is set to establish its own State University in line with the National Education Policy 2020.

The Governor mentioned that since the signing of the Mizoram Peace Accord in 1986, Mizoram has become one of the most peaceful states in India, with steady progress in development. He referred to the recent inauguration of the Bairabi-Sairang railway line last year and plans to extend railway connectivity to the southern tip of Mizoram, integrating it with the



Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMMTTP). He emphasised Mizoram’s significant potential in agriculture, horticulture, and aromatic plants, stating that with improved supply chains and market linkages, it could lead to substantial economic growth. He extended his best wishes to the students for a memorable and productive stay in Mizoram.

The Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme is a key initiative by the Central Government under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) aimed

at promoting national integration. Through this programme, students from northeastern states and other parts of India engage in exchanges to learn about diverse cultures and traditions.

The group visiting Mizoram under the Ashtalakshmi Darshan Youth Exchange Programme arrived in the state on January 15, 2026. Based at Mizoram University during their stay, they will receive lectures from experts on various aspects of Northeast India’s history and culture. They are scheduled to depart Mizoram on January 28, 2026.

Guwahati Asian Film fest to open on Jan 22 with Uzbek movie screening

Guwahati, Jan 21: The second edition of the Guwahati Asian Film Festival (GAFF) will begin on January 22 at Jyoti Chitraban, Guwahati, showcasing as many as 26 regional, national and international films from across 10 Asian countries over the next four days.

On January 22, the opening film of GAFF 2026 will be the Uzbekistan feature ‘Sunday’, directed by Shokir Kholikov. Apart from this, the opening day will feature Japanese film ‘S’ directed by Masahiro Ota in the Asian Cinema section which will have its India Premiere at the festival. Along with that, ‘An Evening Ballad’ by Bishal Swargiary in the Indian Showcase (non-competition) section will be screened during the day. The festival is being organised by Trending Now Media, with support from the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. GAFF 2026 promises a rich and diverse showcase of Asian and Indian cinema, as the organisers curate selections from over 200 film submissions, including 90 entries from outside India. “The overwhelming love we received from film lovers during our first edition inspired us to plan an even grander second edition. GAFF 2026 promises to be

bigger and better, continuing its celebration of the rich diversity of Asian cinema, with more filmmakers from outside the region joining the event,” said Monita Borgohain, Festival Director of GAFF.

Over the next four days, GAFF 2026 will showcase films from 10 Asian countries, including Vietnam, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Myanmar, Iran, Kazakhstan, and China. Alongside international selections, the festival will also present films from across India, with screenings in multiple languages such as Marathi, Bajjika, Malayalam, Hindi, Tulu, Nepali, Assamese, Karbi, Bodo, Mishing, Manipuri, and Bengali, highlighting the linguistic diversity of the region and the country. In addition to film screenings, GAFF 2026 will feature a series of masterclasses, panel discussions, and interactive sessions led by filmmakers, critics, and industry professionals from India and other Asian countries. Positioned as the only Asian film festival of its kind in this part of the country, GAFF has carved a unique space in India’s cultural landscape by bringing Asian cinema to the Northeast. The festival stands out for its focused Asian identity and its commitment to building a sustained platform for cross-border cultural exchange through cinema.

Y. Patton, BJP Nagaland congratulate Nitin Nabin

Guwahati, Jan 21: Deputy chief minister Y. Patton and the BJP Nagaland unit on Tuesday extended congratulations to Nitin Nabin on being elected as the national president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).In his message, Patton said the new responsibility reflected the confidence placed in Nabin’s leadership, experience and dedication to strengthening the party across the country. He acknowledged Nabin’s consistent work, organizational skills and strong connect with party workers, which have played a meaningful role in advancing the party’s vision and outreach. Expressing optimism, Patton said he was confident that under Nabin’s leadership, the party would continue to grow stronger, deepen its engagement with citizens and work with renewed energy for national development. Meanwhile, BJP Nagaland organized congratulatory programmes at the party offices in Dimapur and Kohima to celebrate Nabin’s election as the 12th national president of BJP.At the Dimapur programme, minister for PHED and Cooperation, Jacob Zhimomi, graced the occasion as chief guest. He described the event as a moment of joy for the BJP family across the country and said it symbolized Nagaland’s participation in nationwide celebrations following the announcement made by the Prime Minister of India. Jacob expressed confidence in Nabin, noting that the young leader in his mid-40s was expected to bring a fresh and dynamic style of leadership to the party. He highlighted Nabin’s long political journey, pointing out that he has been elected to the Bihar



Legislative Assembly for five consecutive terms since 2006 and is presently serving as a Cabinet Minister in the Bihar government.The minister also underscored Nabin’s organizational experience, recalling his tenure as president of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) and later as BJP Bihar State president.He said the party was fortunate to be led by a leader with deep grassroots experience and strong connections with eastern India, including the Northeast. “With his dynamic leadership, we are hopeful that the political landscape in eastern India, including West Bengal and the Northeast, will witness a positive transformation,” Jacob remarked. On the growth of BJP in Nagaland, Jacob emphasized the need to strengthen the party’s base beyond Dimapur and expand activities across all 17 districts of the state.

He lauded the efforts of BJP councilors and party workers in Dimapur and Chümoukedima, terming their growing presence a positive sign for the party’s future. He assured party workers of full support from the BJP Legislature Party, stating that all 11 BJP legislators in the state were committed to the party’s progress. Urging members to actively contribute, he cautioned against complacency and stressed that growth required collective effort and patience.Speaking to media persons on the sidelines, Jacob expressed optimism about BJP’s prospects in states facing upcoming elections, including West Bengal.He said the party had high expectations from Nabin’s leadership, guided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and added that the new

president’s grassroots background would strengthen the party nationwide. On a query regarding the ongoing Enforcement Directorate (ED) investigation related to the Guwahati High Court bench complex, Jacob said the matter had not been discussed by the state cabinet and maintained that the state government spokesperson would provide official clarification.He prayed that God grant the new president wisdom, understanding and discernment to take righteous and timely decisions for the nation. The programme was chaired by State Mahila Morcha general secretary, Chubala Janquinker.The invocation was pronounced by State Print Media Convener, Nini Cheng, while the vote of thanks was delivered by State Office Secretary, Keviphonuo Ngukha.

Nagaland: KPC celebrates NE Media Conclave’s 25th anniversary

Kohima, Jan 21: Kohima Press Club (KPC) celebrated its 25th anniversary on January 20 at Capital Convention Centre, Kohima, under the theme “Traversing 25 years of storytelling: Inspiring the future.”

Delivering the keynote address, president of Press Club of India, Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty, lauded KPC for commemorating its silver jubilee through meaningful engagement with journalists from neighbouring states.

She described the celebration as a timely and reflective exercise for the profession, and congratulated KPC members for their dedication and professionalism despite a small membership base.

Drawing from her three decades of experience in journalism, Pisharoty noted that the profession has never been easy, but challenges today are far more complex due to weakening financial models, corporate ownership, political interference and erosion of editorial independence. She cautioned that the line between journalism and public relations has increasingly blurred, weakening public trust and accountability.

Expressing concern over recent laws and regulations, including the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, she said journalistic exemptions had been diluted and the Right to Information (RTI) framework weakened, restricting access to information vital for public interest reporting.Highlighting technology as both opportunity and threat, she said digital platforms have expanded reach and speed but also disrupted jobs and created new vulnerabilities, particularly for journalists in smaller towns facing legal pressure and institutional insecurity.Calling for public participation in sustaining credible journalism, Pisharoty urged citizens to financially support independent media platforms. She outlined her priorities as PCI president, including protecting journalists facing legal challenges, establishing legal support cells, organising training workshops on technology and digital security, and building a federation of elected press clubs across the country. She invited KPC to join the proposed national federation to strengthen collective advocacy for press freedom.

She also highlighted the growing



leadership of women in journalism in the Northeast, acknowledging pioneers such as Monalisa Changkija, and said the region continues to set examples in inclusive media leadership.In her presidential address, KPC president Alice Yhoshü urged journalists to draw inspiration from life’s many streams that nurture hope and resilience despite challenges, and called on members to remain focused on truth and storytelling. She recalled the club’s formation in 2001 and its commitment to ethical journalism, fellowship and public service.Former KPC vice president Vibou Seyie, in her greetings, acknowledged the pioneers and visionary leaders who laid the foundation of the organisation. She reflected on the club’s journey from holding meetings in small offices to becoming a strong institution with a permanent building coming up. Sharing nostalgic experiences, she highlighted the challenges of reporting in earlier days and appreciated the growing participation of women in media today.Earlier, a minute’s silence was observed in memory of deceased members of KPC.

The inaugural programme was fol-

lowed by the Northeast Media Conclave themed “Reimagining Truth: Northeast Journalism for a Changing World.” The first session, moderated by Medolenuo Ambrocia Loucü of KPC, focused on “Evolving Nature of Media: Ethics under Pressure and Strengthening Credibility in the Age of Misinformation.” Speakers included Monalisa Changkija (Nagaland), Pradip Phanjoubam (Manipur), Geetarth Pathak (Indian Journalists Union), Karma Paljor (Sikkim) and Raymond Kharmujai (Meghalaya).The second session, moderated by Dhiren A. Sadokpam (Manipur), explored “Journalism as Peace Work: Navigating Divides, Building Bridges and Strengthening the Media Ecosystem in the Northeast.” Panelists included Vanlalrema Vantawl (Mizoram), Utpal Parashar (Assam), Ranju Dodum (Arunachal Pradesh) and Debraj Deb (Tripura).

The conclave served as a platform for cross-border collaboration among journalists of the Northeast, reaffirming the media’s responsibility in promoting truth, accountability and social harmony in a rapidly changing information landscape.

Army deployed in Assam’s Kokrajhar after mob violence claims two lives

Guwahati, Jan 21: The Army has been deployed in sensitive areas of Assam’s Kokrajhar district after mob violence claimed two lives and triggered arson and clashes, allegedly between members of the Bodo and Adivasi communities, officials said on Wednesday.Army personnel carried out joint patrols with the district administration in the affected areas of Karigaon and nearby localities on Tuesday night, a defence spokesperson said. A flag march is scheduled to be conducted in the area on Wednesday as part of confidence-building measures. Four Army columns are currently deployed in the district, he added. Officials said the situation remains under control, with tight security arrangements in place across Kokrajhar and the neighbouring Chirang district.Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had earlier said that arrangements were ready for Army deployment, while the Rapid Action Force (RAF) had already been deployed following the

violence. According to a home department official, the unrest began on Monday night when a vehicle carrying three Bodo men hit two Adivasi persons on Mansingh Road under the Karigaon outpost. The occupants of the vehicle were allegedly assaulted by nearby Adivasi villagers, and the vehicle was set on fire. One person died on the spot, while another succumbed to injuries on Tuesday. Three others who were injured are undergoing treatment at a hospital.

Tensions escalated on Tuesday as members of the Bodo and Adivasi communities blocked the National Highway near the Karigaon outpost, burned tyres, set a government office on fire and attacked the Karigaon police outpost, the official said. Police resorted to baton charge and fired tear gas shells to disperse the crowd, leaving several people, including some police personnel, injured. The Kokrajhar district administration has set up two relief camps at Karigaon High School and



Gwajanpuri Amanpara High School after several villagers fled the area fearing further attacks Prohibitory orders have been imposed across Kokrajhar district under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023. As a precautionary measure, the home department has also suspended internet and mobile data services in Kokrajhar and Chirang districts, officials said.

PM Modi greets Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura on Statehood Day

Guwahati, Jan 21: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday extended warm greetings to the people of Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura on their respective statehood days, praising their cultural richness, development journey and contributions to India’s growth.

Greeting the people of Tripura, the Prime Minister praised the state for its blend of tradition and modernity and expressed his wishes for the state’s continued development. In a post on X, PM Modi wrote, “Warm greetings to the people of Tripura on their Statehood Day. Tripura’s journey is marked by a remarkable blend of tradition and modernity.”“The state has witnessed pioneering transformations in diverse fields, and its people are adding momentum to India’s growth trajectory. I pray that Tripura prospers significantly in the coming times,” the post read. On the occasion of Manipur Statehood Day, the Prime Minister acknowledged the state’s contribution

to national progress and praised its cultural and sporting spirit.In a post on X, PM Modi wrote, “On the occasion of Manipur Statehood Day, I extend my warm greetings to my sisters and brothers of the state. People from Manipur are enriching the progress of India. This state’s passion towards sports, culture and nature is noteworthy. May the state continue to move forward on the path of development in the times to come.”Extending greetings to Meghalaya, the Prime Minister lauded the state’s cultural vibrancy and scenic beauty, while underlining its role in the country’s development. In another post on X, PM Modi wrote, “I convey my heartfelt greetings to the people of Meghalaya on their Statehood Day. The people of Meghalaya have made strong contributions to the development of our nation. The state’s cultural vibrancy and scenic beauty are widely admired. May Meghalaya keep scaling new heights of development in the future.”

Arunachal’s Keyi Panyor district goes fully digital, launches WhatsApp-based governance model

Itanagar, Jan 21: Arunachal Pradesh’s newly carved Keyi Panyor district has emerged as a national model by going fully digital, bringing government services directly to citizens’ smartphones. The district administration, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Shweta Nagarkoti Mehta, IAS, has officially launched the Keyi Panyor Suvidha outreach campaign—an initiative that enables residents to access essential government services seamlessly through WhatsApp. Arunachal Pradesh’s newly carved Keyi Panyor district has emerged as a national model by going fully digital, bringing government services directly to citizens’ smartphones. The district administration, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Shweta Nagarkoti Mehta, IAS, has officially launched the Keyi Panyor Suvidha outreach campaign—an initiative that enables residents to access essential government services seamlessly through WhatsApp.

The initiative marks a decisive shift towards 100 per cent digital and contact-less service delivery, eliminating the need for physical visits to government offices even for signatures and verification. From certificates to official



documents, citizens can now apply online and download digitally signed copies instantly after due verification, a

feature expected to be particularly critical during emergencies. Importantly, the administration has ensured that

the digital transition comes at zero cost to the public. All online applications and forms under the campaign are completely free, reinforcing the district’s commitment to inclusive and citizen-friendly governance.Designed for ease of use, the platform leverages the familiarity of WhatsApp, making digital access simple even for first-time users and those in remote areas. The outreach campaign was formally demonstrated at Yachuli, where frontline workers and community representatives witnessed the functioning of the new system.Deputy Commissioner Mehta expressed her appreciation to ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers and local market associations for actively participating in the first demonstration and supporting the digital push. She reaffirmed the administration’s resolve to expand the initiative across every village in the district, with a special focus on Self Help Groups (SHGs) in the next phase.

With this move, Keyi Panyor has not only accelerated its own administrative efficiency but has also positioned itself as a trailblazer in digital governance for aspirational districts across the country.

Nagaland government sends FNTA proposal to centre: CM Neiphiu Rio

Kohima, Jan 21: Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Tuesday said that the state government has already submitted its recommendation to the Centre for the creation of the Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA), in response to the long-standing demand raised by the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO). Addressing the second day of the Khaozaosie Hok-Ah cum Mini Hornbill Festival 2026 at Nokhu village in Noklak district, the chief minister said the government remains committed to addressing the aspirations of the people of Eastern Nagaland through dialogue and constitutional processes. He stated that the proposal for the FNTA was forwarded to the Centre after extensive consultations and careful deliberations with all stakeholders. Rio also spoke at length on the importance of preserving Naga culture and traditions. He said the state government has been encouraging tribal festivals across Nagaland to protect and promote the rich cultural heritage passed down by ancestors over generations. Ac-

cording to him, such festivals help strengthen friendship, unity and understanding among different tribes. Referring to history, the chief minister said even during the British period, the distinct identity and customs of the Nagas were recognised, leading to the introduction of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act of 1873 and the Inner Line Permit system to safeguard indigenous communities. Highlighting unity, Rio described the Pan Naga Hoho as a vital platform for bringing together Nagas living across different regions and states. He stressed that unity among Naga tribes is essential to address shared challenges and ensure collective progress. He appealed to elected representatives, civil society organisations and church leaders to work together in peace and harmony for overall development. During the programme, the chief minister inaugurated handicraft stalls set up by the Noklak District Handloom and Handicrafts Council, along with stalls of various departments and self-help groups.

Keyi Panyor sets new benchmark

Itanagar, Jan 21: Keyi Panyor district, the newly created district in Arunachal Pradesh, has taken a major step towards modern and people-friendly administration by becoming fully digital. In a move that is drawing attention from across the country, the district administration has launched a WhatsApp-based governance system that allows citizens to access government services directly from their mobile phones.

FIR Filed Against BJP MLA in Manipur

Imphal, Jan 21: Manipur Police have registered a FIR against BJP legislator L. Susindro Meitei for the alleged demolition of an under-construction school building in Imphal East district. The FIR was lodged at Porompat Police Station following a complaint by Konsam Santosh Meitei, a resident of Khurai Konsam Leikai and a site supervisor with ATW (India) Pvt Ltd. The complaint relates to the alleged demolition of a newly sanctioned building at Khurai Heikrumakhong Junior High School. According to the FIR, the incident occurred around 2 pm on January 18, when the under-construction school structure was allegedly demolished using an excavator.

Former BTC Chief Pramod Boro appeals for calm after fresh violence in Kokrajhar

Kokrajhar, Jan 21: Former Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), Pramod Boro, has expressed deep shock and concern over the recent incidents of violence in Assam's Kokrajhar district and appealed to all communities to maintain peace and restraint. Speaking on Tuesday, Boro said the killing of a young man in the recent violence had deeply saddened him. He said the incident has caused pain to many families and has once again created fear in a region that has already suffered heavily due to past conflicts. He offered his condolences to the bereaved family and said he prayed for peace for the departed soul. Boro said that following the kill-

ing, reports of further attacks had emerged, which have alarmed people across the region. He noted that both Bodo and Santhali communities have suffered in earlier phases of violence and urged them to stay away from any form of confrontation. He said past violence has left lasting wounds in society, with many people still living with painful memories and some families continuing to stay in relief camps even today. The former BTC chief also expressed concern over the impact of the unrest on students. He said the Matriculation and Higher Secondary examinations are approaching and any disturbance at this time could seriously affect students' preparation and future prospects.

Chapchar Kut Festival in Mizoram to begin on March 9, week-long celebrations planned

Aizawl, Jan 21: Mizoram is set to celebrate its much-loved spring festival, Chapchar Kut, from March 9, with a week-long programme of cultural, social and traditional events across the state. Officials said the decision was taken at a meeting of the Spring Festivals Organising Committee chaired by Chief Minister Lalduhoma. Chapchar Kut is one of the biggest and most vibrant festivals of Mizoram and holds deep cultural and historical importance for the Mizo people. The festival marks the completion of the most labour-intensive phase of jhum cultivation, when farmers finish clearing forests and wait for the sowing season to begin. It is traditionally a time of rest, joy and community bonding. The celebrations will formally begin with 'Kut Run' on March 9. As in previous years, the Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA) will prepare spe-

cial T-shirts for participants to promote unity and participation among the youth. On March 10, a range of activities will be organised, including exhibitions of handicrafts, handloom products and traditional artefacts. A food court showcasing local Mizo cuisine will also be set up, giving visitors a chance to experience the traditional flavours of the state. A flower show is scheduled to be held on the same day, adding colour and visual appeal to the festivities. Several cultural programmes have been lined up for March 11. Painting and photo exhibitions, along with a film screening, will be organised at two venues in Aizawl—Vanapa Hall and the Information and Public Relations Department's Lianchhiari Run Hall. These events are expected to highlight Mizo culture, history and contemporary artistic expression. In addition, a living museum

will be set up at Zokhua in Falkawn village, around 15 km from Aizawl, on March 11 and 12. Officials said the living museum will give visitors an opportunity to see and understand traditional Mizo village life, customs and practices in a natural setting. The main Chapchar Kut celebration will be held at Lammual ground in Aizawl on March 13. Chief Minister Lalduhoma will attend the event as the 'Kut Pa', or father of the festival, while Art and Culture Minister C Lalsawivunga will serve as the 'Kut Thlengtu', or host of the celebrations. This year's festival will also see a notable change. Officials said the traditional practice of erecting a bamboo barricade at the main venue to restrict entry will not be followed, marking a move towards a more open and inclusive celebration. The organising committee

has chosen "Mizo Code of Ethics: Peace" as the theme of this year's Chapchar Kut, reflecting the state's emphasis on harmony, values and social responsibility. The Chief Minister's Trophy, carrying a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh along with a citation and memento, will also be presented during the celebrations. Chapchar Kut will not be limited to the capital alone. The festival will be observed in various parts of Mizoram, with local communities organising their own programmes and cultural events. Historians trace the origin of Chapchar Kut back nearly 500 years to a village called Suhpi in present-day Myanmar. Although the festival was discouraged during the early missionary period in the late 19th century, it was revived on a large scale in 1973 and has since become a strong symbol of Mizo cultural identity.

Biren hails Nitin Nabin's election as BJP national president



Imphal, Jan 21: Former Chief Minister N.Biren Singh has congratulated Nitin Nabin on being elected as the national president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), saying his election will further strengthen the party and enhance its organisational reach across the country. Congratulating Nabin on assuming charge, Biren said the Bihar-based leader's elevation to the top party post marked the beginning of a new chapter for the BJP at the national level. He expressed confidence that Nabin's leadership would reinforce the party's commitment to disciplined organisation and grassroots mobilisation. Biren said Nabin's dedication to the party, clarity of vision and strong connect with the grassroots would play a crucial role in strengthening the BJP and inspiring party workers across the nation. He also extended best wishes to Nabin for leading the organisation to new heights. Noting Nabin's political journey, he said that Nabin's rise from a five-time MLA from Bankipur in Bihar to becoming the first leader from the state to head the BJP at the national level reflected the trust he has earned through consistent performance, organisational discipline and unwavering commitment. The former Chief Minister also highlighted that the BJP continues to function under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose leadership, he said, has been instrumental in shaping the party's growth and governance philosophy. Biren said Nabin's election symbolises the BJP's focus on organisational strength, clarity of purpose and nationwide expansion, and expressed confidence that the party would continue to move forward with renewed energy and resolve under his leadership.

Assam Rifles Strengthens Rural Healthcare in Manipur

Imphal, Jan 21: Assam Rifles, based at Khuga in Churachandpur district, undertook a significant healthcare initiative on January 16, 2026, by upgrading the Community Health Centre (CHC) at Beheng village under its flagship Civic Action Programme. Established by the State Health Department, the CHC serves as the primary medical facility for Beheng village and several surrounding areas. However, it had been facing serious challenges due to inadequate diagnostic equipment, an unreliable power supply, and limited emergency response capabilities. In another healthcare outreach effort, Assam Rifles organised a free medical and dental camp at Chandrakhong village in Thoubal district on January 20, 2026. The camp was conducted by a combined team of officials and troops led by the Chief Medical Officer, supported by specialist doctors and medical staff.

Manipur Celebrates 55th Statehood Day

Imphal, Jan 21: The Governor of Manipur graced the 55th Statehood Day celebrations at the 1st Battalion Manipur Rifles Parade Ground here on Wednesday, marking the State's attainment of full statehood on January 21, 1972.

The Governor was accorded a Rashtriya Salute and inspected the parade, as 14 contingents took part in an impressive march past showcasing discipline, unity and pride. Addressing the gathering, the Governor described Statehood Day as a



symbol of Manipur's democratic aspirations, constitutional empowerment and collective identity. He called upon the people, particularly the youth, to uphold peace, harmony, unity and the rule of law, and

to actively contribute towards nation-building. The Governor expressed hope that Statehood Day would inspire every citizen to strengthen democracy through unity, harmony and responsible action.

Late-Night Police Operation in Dibrugarh Uncovers Suspected Street Dog Killing Racket

Dibrugarh, Jan 21: In a disturbing late-night development that has renewed concerns over animal safety and organised cruelty, Dibrugarh Police have uncovered what is being investigated as a possible street dog killing racket. Three individuals were arrested during routine night patrolling in the early hours of Tuesday, January 20, sending shockwaves across the town, which has witnessed the unexplained disappearance of street dogs over the past several months. Police officials said a patrol team noticed a vehicle moving suspiciously within the town limits at around 2 am. The vehicle, bearing registration number AS-02Z-5386, drew attention due to its unusual movement pattern. The team discreetly followed the vehicle before intercepting it and detaining its occupants. The arrested individuals were identified as Syongkiri Rongphar (27), Waisong Rongpi (28), and Sensen Hamse (21), all residents of Karbi Anglong district. A thorough search of the vehicle led to the recovery

of 15 jute rice bags, ropes, packets of biscuits and three mobile phones. Investigators said the seized items point towards a possible pre-planned operation, deepening suspicions amid longstanding public anxiety over the repeated disappearance of stray dogs from several areas of Dibrugarh. For months, residents, animal lovers and welfare organisations have raised alarms over possible organised cruelty, illegal trafficking or mass killing of street dogs, particularly during night hours. The recovery of ropes and jute bags during the midnight interception has intensified fears that the arrested individuals may be part of a larger organised network operating under the cover of darkness. Senior police officials confirmed that the accused are being subjected to sustained interrogation, while the seized mobile phones have been sent for forensic examination. Investigators are analysing call records, location data and digital communications to ascertain



possible links to similar incidents or wider inter-district operations. The incident has drawn sharp reactions from animal rights activists and civil society groups, who have demanded a time-bound investigation and strict legal action if the allegations are proven. "If substantiated, this is not just a crime but a deeply disturbing reflection of cruelty and lack of compassion," an animal welfare activist said, urging authorities to invoke stringent provisions under animal protection laws.

Mizoram To celebrate Chapchar Kut festival From March 9

Aizawl, Jan 21: Mizoram's traditional Chapchar Kut festival, one of the state's largest cultural celebrations, will begin on March 9 with a week-long programme, officials said on Tuesday after a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Lalduhoma. The celebrations will open on March 9 with the customary 'Kut Run', during which the Central Young Mizo Association will provide T-shirts to participants, continuing a long-standing tradition. On March 10, exhibitions showcasing handlooms, textiles and handicrafts will be held, along with a food court and flow-

er show. These events will take place at Aijal Club, with the main venue to be finalised soon. Painting and photo exhibitions, along with a film screening, are scheduled for March 11 at Vanapa Hall. The Information and Public Relations Department will also organise the Lianchhiari Run in Aizawl on the same day. On March 11 and 12, a living museum highlighting Mizo cultural heritage will be set up at Zokhua in Falkawn village, around 15 km from Aizawl. The main programme will be held on March 13 at 10:30 am at Lammual

ground. Chief Minister Lalduhoma will serve as 'Kut Pa' (festival father), while Art and Culture Minister C Lalsawivunga will be the 'Kut thlengtu' (host). The organisers have announced that the festival will be observed as a garbage-free event, appealing to participants to maintain cleanliness. The theme for this year's Chapchar Kut is "Zo nun ze mawi – Inremna" (Mizo code of ethics – Peace). The Chief Minister's Trophy, carrying a cash award of Rs 1 lakh along with a citation and memento, will also be presented. Similar celebrations will be

organised across other parts of Mizoram. Chapchar Kut is traditionally linked to jhum cultivation and marks the completion of forest clearing and burning before sowing. The festival is believed to have originated about 500 years ago in Suaipui village near present-day Myanmar. Though it was discouraged in the late 19th century by Christian missionaries, it was revived in 1973 without animistic rituals or alcohol. Over the years, Chapchar Kut has become a major attraction for tourists from India and abroad.

Baghel targets Assam government, says BJP rule will end in next assembly polls

Guwahati, Jan 21: Senior Congress leader and former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on January 20 launched a sharp attack on the BJP-led government in Assam, claiming that the state's "double-engine government" would come to an end in the upcoming Assembly elections. Addressing a press conference in Guwahati, Baghel accused the government led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of corruption and misuse of power. Baghel said the Congress, along with other like-minded opposition parties, was preparing to contest the Assam Assembly elections in a united manner. He claimed that the fall of the BJP government in the state would also bring an end to what he described as corruption and "gundagiri" under the current regime. According to him, the people of Assam were watching developments closely and were unhappy with the way the government was functioning.

North East Chronicle

JANUARY 22 2026 VOL 01 NO. 322



Stop Toll Tax

Let me say these words without fear or softness: toll tax is organized daylight robbery. We are being forced to pay again and again for the same road, and this injustice has been normalized. When I buy a vehicle, I already pay road tax, which is meant for building and maintaining roads. I also pay income tax, a portion of which goes into infrastructure and road development. After paying both, I am still stopped at toll gates and asked to pay toll tax for using the same road. This is not logic—this is double charging. Roads are not luxury services. They are a basic public necessity. A daily commuter, a farmer, a truck driver—people who keep the economy running—are punished every few kilometres. Despite long queues, broken roads, failed FASTags, and a lack of accountability, payment remains compulsory. No service, full payment. This system also infringes on Article 19(1)(d) of the Constitution of India, which guarantees the right to freedom of movement throughout the territory of India. The excuse of cost recovery and PPP models does not justify exploitation. If toll tax is necessary, then abolish road tax. If road tax exists, toll tax has no moral ground. You cannot burden citizens from both ends and call it development. This system must be stopped or strictly limited. A nation does not grow by squeezing its people dry. PM Narendra Modi’s Bagurumba Dwhou 2026 address at a landmark cultural event at Sarusajai Stadium, Guwahati, will be written in golden letters. It offered the Bodo community a long overdue platform to showcase its rich heritage and tradition at an unprecedented scale. The large-scale celebration of events like Bihu performances, the Jhumoir Binondini and the grand Bodo Mahotsav in New Delhi last year undoubtedly reflected a sustained effort of the Union government to bring Assam’s indigenous art form to wider national and international audiences. Such praiseworthy initiatives must be appreciated, as they immensely help preserve indigenous art forms, strengthen intercommunity harmony and reinforce cultural pride, while highlighting Assam’s identity as a land of vibrant, inclusive and living traditions. No doubt, the Bagurumba spectacle nicely projected the lively assertion of long-awaited Bodo culture, which was also a tribute to Assam’s rich, diverse cultural heritage.

Empowerment Through Gender Parity

Poverty in India is often gendered. Women face higher barriers to land ownership, credit, and education. Self-Help Groups (SHGs): Expanding the network of SHGs can turn women into micro-entrepreneurs, creating a “multiplier effect” where increased female income leads to better nutrition and education for the next generation. The Path Forward: A Collaborative Effort Eradication is not a task for the government alone. It requires a synergy between the state’s policy framework, the private sector’s innovation, and civil society’s grassroots reach. We must move away from a “subsidy culture” toward an “opportunity culture.” Wealth creation must be decentralized. When we empower the person at the bottom of the pyramid with the tools of technology, health, and skill, we don’t just lift a family out of poverty—we ignite an engine of growth that propels the entire nation. The dream of a Viksit Bharat (Developed India) remains incomplete until the last citizen is freed from the indignity of want. (DB)

Demographic change and the future of the Assamese people

The most complex, sensitive, and decisive issue in the contemporary social life of Assam is the rapid transformation of its demographic structure and the existential crisis it has created for the indigenous population. When, within a specific geographical boundary and over a certain period of time, the fundamental composition of the population undergoes drastic and abnormal change, it is not merely the official statistics of that region that are altered; rather, the politics, economy, society, and overall cultural environment of the place undergo profound transformation as well. In the case of Assam, this change is neither an accidental calamity nor a miraculous event that occurred overnight; it is the outcome of a long historical and political process that has now reached a terrifying and irreversible turning point. If we continue to be guided solely by emotion—taking to the streets in protest or venting anger on social media—we will fail to penetrate the depths of the problem. To truly understand how demographic change will determine the future of the Assamese people, it is essential to analyse, with utmost rigour and dispassionate realism, the equations involving numbers, economic forces, land ownership, and political power.

Assam’s fertile land and abundant natural resources have attracted people across the ages, yet in recent decades the character, intensity, and scale of this migration have assumed an abnormal form, giving rise to a deep and rational apprehension in the minds of the indigenous people regarding their future. This fear is not merely about identity; it is the fear of becoming strangers in one’s own home. If we realistically analyse the primary causes behind this rapid demographic transformation in Assam, we find that it is inseparably linked to our economic weakness, our tendency towards laziness, and our complete lack of control over the labour market. This process, which began during British rule, later acquired a terrifying dimension due to political patronage extended for vote-bank interests and the continuous influx of people from across the border, resembling a flood of rising water. However, blaming only the government or politicians will not reveal the true depth of the problem. The agricultural economy, which once formed the backbone of Assamese society, gradually developed cracks when we began to forget the dignity of physical labour and started looking down upon hard work. As indigenous people abandoned the fields, left the muddy waters behind, and turned towards urban life or chased government jobs, the vast vacuum created in the rural economy was naturally filled by a cheaper and more hard-working class of labourers from outside. There is a simple and ruthless law of economics: where there is demand, supply will inevitably follow. Just as nature abhors a vacuum, so does the economy. The people who arrived to fill the shortage of labour in Assam’s agriculture, construction, and small business sectors did not remain mere labourers; gradually, through the earnings from their labour, they began to establish ownership over land. On the fertile sar (riverine) lands or on plots abandoned by indigenous people, these hard-working individuals produced crops at a rate that the accustomed-to-comfort indigenous farmers could not match. As a result, in economic competition, the lagging indigenous population began to contemplate selling their land and seeking shelter in rented urban accommodations or elsewhere. Thus, with the transfer of land ownership from one community to another, demographic change acquired a permanent character. A close and honest examination of Assam’s present market system and economic scenario reveals a deeply disappointing picture. From vegetable and fish-meat markets to masonry, carpentry, salons, garages, and even small roadside shops—almost every sector is now dominated by a particular community. This is not a conspiracy; it is the reality of market economics. The community that can provide labour and conduct business at lower margins naturally captures the market. Yet the long-term consequence falls upon demography. When economic power concentrates in the hands of a particular group, their social expansion grows alongside their population increase. When an indigenous Assamese youth sleeps until ten in the morning or hesitates to undertake even slightly strenuous work, people from outside rise at four in the morning, work hard,

and build their future. With this economic strength, they not only sustain their own families but also enable ten others from their community to settle here. In this manner, a network is formed that accelerates demographic change. Today, purchasing even a small plot of land or building a house in a city like Guwahati has become a distant dream for an average middle-class indigenous Assamese, whereas many individuals rising from the labouring class have easily acquired such assets.

A community that becomes economically marginalised can never preserve its language or culture through mere emotional nationalism. Without money in the pocket and without ownership over the land that feeds the stomach, emotional patriotism cannot provide protection for long. In a democratic system, numbers constitute the greatest and most decisive force. Demographic change in Assam is steadily and surely removing the key to political power from the hands of the indigenous people. An analysis of election results and voting trends shows that in many constituencies of Assam, decisive roles are now played by people whose ancestors may have arrived in this land only a few decades ago. When the majority of voters in a constituency belong to a particular community or religion, political parties—even those claiming to be nationalist—are compelled to protect the interests of that community and appease them. As a consequence, issues concerning the indigenous population, the protection of language and culture, and the preservation of heritage become secondary. Although efforts have been made through the recent delimitation process to safeguard the political rights of the indigenous people, there remains serious doubt about how effective such administrative measures will prove in the long term. This is because the difference in population growth rates is glaringly obvious. If one community’s population grows geometrically while another’s remains stagnant or declines, then within ten or twenty years the electoral map will inevitably change again. At that point, no legal safeguard or delimitation exercise may be able to provide political security to the indigenous population. The example of Tripura stands vividly

before our eyes, where demographic change reduced the indigenous tribal communities to a minority in their own land and pushed them far away from political power. If a similar situation arises in Assam, there can be no doubt that the future of the Assamese language and culture will become bleak. Politics is a game of probabilities, and probability always favours the majority. The relationship between Assam’s land problem and demographic change is extremely intimate, complex, and painful. The loss of land ownership from the hands of the indigenous people means the removal of the very ground beneath the feet of the community. The problem is not limited to encroachments on reserved forests, xatra (monastic) lands, or government khas (government-owned) land; the problem runs much deeper. The real issue is the growing tendency among indigenous people to voluntarily sell their ancestral property to outsiders. Driven by the hope of immediate financial gain, inability to cultivate, or inability to meet medical expenses, many Assamese have sold their land. Who purchases it? Those who have accumulated money through relentless hard work. Today, in many villages and regions of Assam where only indigenous people once resided, the demographic composition has changed. Observing who owns flats and land in major cities, including Guwahati, provides a clear indication of the future. Land is not merely a place to stay; it is the primary source of economic production. When a community loses control over the sources of production, it becomes dependent. This dependency renders the community spineless. The reluctance of Assamese youth to adopt co-operative farming or modern agricultural practices in rural areas, along with their waning attachment to land, is accelerating demographic change. If we truly wish to halt demographic transformation today, merely enacting laws to protect land will not suffice. Transactions continue to evade legal restrictions. What is required is to enhance the economic capacity of the Assamese people so that they do not fall into situations where they are forced to sell land. The future of language and culture is directly connected to demographic change, because for a language to survive,

the number of its speakers and its economic prestige must remain strong. Recent census data have already shown that the percentage of Assamese speakers in Assam is steadily and alarmingly declining, while the proportion of Bengali and other language speakers is rapidly increasing. As demographics change, in many parts of Assam the Assamese language is now reduced from being a language of communication to merely an official or community-specific language. Especially in Lower and Central Assam, the use of Assamese has diminished significantly in markets, roadsides, and places of public gathering. More seriously, when Assamese people become a minority in an area, they are compelled—either by social pressure or business necessity—to adopt another language. This linguistic aggression does not merely alter words or grammar; it engulfs the thought patterns and cultural identity of an entire people. Xatriya culture, Bihu, and other indigenous traditions will remain secure only when those who practise them constitute the majority. Demographic change has indeed given birth to a mixed or hybrid culture, but how strong the main current of Assamese identity will remain within that mixture is a major question. If we remain merely emotional and speak only of the glory of the language without increasing its practical utility, it cannot be denied that under demographic pressure the Assamese language may gradually become nearly extinct. What the future Assamese society will look like depends entirely upon the resolute steps we take today. If the current pace of demographic change continues unchecked, there is a strong possibility that within the next two decades the Assamese people will become completely insignificant in their own land. It may still be possible for an Assamese individual to become Chief Minister, but that person may not be in a political position to protect indigenous interests. Participation of indigenous people in government jobs and business may become merely nominal. But is there a way to escape this dark future? Slogans, emotional speeches, street protests, and burning tyres will not stop this statistical storm. What is needed is a well-considered, scientific, and rigorously

realistic course of action. First, the Assamese people must abandon the lure of a luxurious lifestyle and cultivate a culture of hard work. As long as we remain dependent on outsiders for household work, farming, or small businesses, their advance will continue. Self-reliance is not merely the name of a government scheme; it must become the only mantra for a people’s survival.

Second, the government must adopt strict population control policies while simultaneously creating awareness among the public. Through improvements in education and health, population growth rates can be reduced—as has been proven in many countries around the world. Unless the light of education reaches those regions of Assam experiencing population explosion, the problem cannot be solved. In conclusion, demographic change in Assam cannot be denied; it is a harsh and merciless reality. It has brought an existential crisis to the Assamese people—a crisis that no external force will resolve. Yet despair or purely emotional reactions will not provide a solution. We must understand that in the modern world, neither past glory nor tales of heroism can sustain a people. Any community that fails to strengthen itself economically and intellectually over time is destined to be swept away by the current of history. If the Assamese people wish to survive in the future, they must re-establish their authority over their land, language, and economy. This will require a collective awakening—not merely political, but economic and cultural as well. If we stop selling our land, if we retain control over our markets, and if we develop our new generation into skilled human resources, then even if we lag in numbers, we may still maintain our dominance through quality and economic strength. History bears witness that numbers alone do not determine everything; small nations like Israel and small communities like the Parsis have secured their place in the world through intelligence, hard work, and unity. The time has now come for introspection and for silently yet firmly strengthening our foundations. Whether the future of the Assamese people will be dark or bright will be determined by our actions today, our sacrifices, and our foresight.

Sanjaya Baru writes: Carney’s manifesto for our times

In a different era, an Indian Prime Minister would have delivered this speech. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney’s address to the annual meeting of the Davos World Economic Forum is a manifesto for global solidarity against Big Power hegemonism. Carney very modestly calls it a guidance for “middle powers”. It is more than that. It is a call to arms against the reassertion of imperial interests. Canada too was once a colony but very easily became part of the so-called “West”, enjoying the benefits of membership of the Group of Seven (G7), the boardroom of global capitalism.

There was a time when “Third World” leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Sukarno and Gamel Abdel Nasser came together, after the end of the Second World War, to challenge a global order being erected by the victors of that war. Anti-colonialism and hegemonism defined their collective movement and gave space to a large number of smaller powers, not just middle powers, in global governance. Carney spoke well when he said, “We knew the story of the international rules-based order was partially false, that the strongest would exempt themselves when convenient, that trade rules were enforced asymmetrically, and we knew that international law applied with varied rigor, depending on the identity of

the accused or the victim. This fiction was useful, and American hegemony in particular helped provide public goods, open sea lanes, a stable financial system, collective security, and support for frameworks for resolving disputes.” This fiction was then followed by the ideology of the so-called “Washington Consensus” that all nations, including Communist China, embraced enthusiastically because that too was defined in the language of rules and not of power. Unlike the Soviet Union, China made good use of that system and rose rapidly to be able to challenge it. The ideology that shaped Donald Trump’s “America First” and “Make America Great Again” was a response to this change. Lest other nations, in Europe and Asia, imagine that they can unite to create a “multipolar” power balance, that does not yield to the assertion of Big Power hegemony, Trump has opted to deploy hard power and arm twisting as a warning to nations that, he believes, are mere pretenders to power. In a different era, Trumpism and the re-assertion of American hegemonism would have been challenged by leaders of post-colonial nations, most certainly India. It is just as well that rather than a victim of Big Power hegemonism and western imperialism, it was left to a member of the western alliance to challenge Trumpism. Canada,

after all, is not just a G7 nation but a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and has, on occasion, partnered with the West in opposing, for example, India’s nuclear ambitions. Even today, countries like Germany, France, Italy and Japan, nations once occupied by the US, are trying to find ways to appease Trump.

They have not had the courage, as Carney put it, to pull down the signboard in Vaclav Havel’s green grocer’s shop. In quoting from Havel’s The Power of the Powerless, Carney draws attention to what is possible today in dealing with the powerful. Many today misread and misinterpret a wrong version of post-Cold War strategic thinking in India. India’s decision in the 1990s to befriend the United States was not aimed at becoming an American ally. In a moment of excessive enthusiasm, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee referred to the US as a “natural ally”. The term was dropped quickly and never repeated by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Both Vajpayee and Singh were seeking ways and means to fortify India’s nuclear power and capability to be able to assert strategic autonomy. Some in India promoted the misplaced ambition of India becoming a part of the western alliance, joining hands with the West against the rising power of China. It is



now clear to Indian leadership that such a policy does not serve Indian national interests. Thanks to Donald Trump, sense has dawned on New Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has refused to kowtow to President Trump. But, while India is not kneeling, it often bends to please. New Delhi has not regained its confidence of the post-colonial era to be able to articulate the views that Prime Minister Carney did this week. We are satisfied with admonishing Poland for befriend

ing Pakistan. The tragedy is that the Bharatiya Janata Party, under Modi’s leadership, has defined Indian nationalism in the contemporary era within a narrow framework of Hindutva, challenging Hinduphobia in the western world, without challenging the neo-imperialism of the West. We seek friendship with Trump, and are delighted when he celebrates Deepavali in the White House but find it difficult to call him out for his bullying. Indian policymakers understand very well Carney’s

message that, “A country that cannot feed itself, fuel itself, or defend itself has few options. When the rules no longer protect you, you must protect yourself.” That is the essence of “strategic autonomy”. Thanks to the Green Revolution of the 1960s India can feed itself. However, it continues to depend on the world to fuel and defend itself. The Modi government’s policy of “Atmanirbharta” in these areas—promoting non-renewables and industrialisation of arms manufacture, has to deliver more. Indian leadership must recognise that US leadership has been trying hard to reduce India’s market access and capabilities in these fields. By sanctioning India against import of oil from Iran, Russia and Venezuela (till now), the US has systematically curbed India’s options. By pushing arms sales and making this a test of friendship, it does the same. Prime Minister Carney has called for “principled pragmatism”. A call that must find an echo in New Delhi where often pragmatism over shadows principles. But, as Carney has warned, an assertion of national interest and strategic autonomy requires a nation to pay a price. There was once an India that was willing to pay that price. One often wonders whether the nationalism of today’s Indian elite and the “aspirational middle class” extends to a willingness to pay that price.

Shadowfax Technologies IPO: Check day 2 subscription stauts at GMP crashes sharply

New Delhi: The initial public offering (IPO) of Shadowfax Technologies continued to see a muted bidding from the investors on the second day of the bidding process, mostly led by retail investors. The issue, which kicked off on Tuesday, January 20, was overall booked nearly half on the first day of the bidding. Shadowfax Technologies is selling its shares in the price band of Rs 118-124 apiece. Investors can apply for a minimum of 120 shares and its multiples thereafter. It is looking to raise Rs 1,907 crore via IPO, which includes a fresh share sale of Rs 1,000 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of up to 7.31 crore equity shares worth Rs 907 crore "At around a 2.8 times P/Sales, the IPO valuation is relatively high compared with peers such as Delhivery, making it a pricier play in the logistics space. as small players have a lot of growth space in industry hence long term can be promising. Shadowfax's business is also highly customer-concentrated," it added with a 'subscribe for long-term' rating. "The company has a proven business model, with focus on profitability, while delivering healthy growth along with an experienced management team supported by entrepreneurial founders. Hence, we recommend 'long term subscribe' to the issue," it added

Shadowfax Technologies has reserved 75 per cent for the issue for the qualified institutional bidders (QIBs), while 15 per cent shares are reserved for non-institutional investors (NIIs). Retail investors have only 10 per cent of shares allocated towards them. At the current valuations, Shadowfax shall command a market capitalization close to Rs 7,170 crore.Last heard, Shadowfax was commanding no grey market premium, suggesting a muted listing for investors. ICICI Securities, Morgan Stanley India Company and JM Financial are the book running lead managers for the IPO and Kfin Technologies is the registrar of the issue. Shares of the company shall be listed on both BSE and NSE on Wednesday, January 28.

The company is set to list at a P/E of approximately 407 times, whereas its peers namely Blue Dart Express Ltd and Delhivery Ltd are trading at P/E ratio of 48x times and 218 times, said Marwadi Financial Services. "We assign an 'avoid' rating to this IPO as the valuations are expensive and not in favor of investors," it add-



ed.Ahead of its IPO, Shadowfax Technologies raised Rs 856.02 crore from 39 anchor investors as it allocated 6.90 crore equity shares at Rs 124 apiece. It reported a net profit at Rs 21.04 crore with a revenue of Rs 1,819.80 crore for the six months ended on September 30, 2025. It clocked a net profit of Rs 6.06 crore with a revenue of Rs 2,514.66 crore for the financial year 2024-25.

Shadowfax is bringing the issue at P/B multiple of 3.5 times on post issue basis. The company is an agile and customisable logistics services that enable faster go-to-market for clients. Also, company has largest last-mile gig-based delivery partner infrastructure along with extensive nationwide network & proprietary and agile technology capabilities, said Hem Securities.According to the data, the investors made bids for 5,01,23,640 equity shares, or 56 per cent, compared to the 8,90,88,807 equity shares offered for the subscription by 1.20 pm on Wednesday, January 21, 2026. The bidding for the issue shall continue for three trading days and close for bidding on Thursday, January 22.The allocation for retail investors was subscribed 1.50 times, while the portion reserved for non-institutional investors (NIIs) saw a subscription of 29 per cent. Employ-

ees quota was booked 1.34 times. The portion reserved for qualified institutional bidders (QIBs) was booked 38 per cent as of the same time. Incorporated in 2016, Bengaluru-based Shadowfax Technologies is a logistics solution provider company in India. It offers e-commerce express parcel delivery and a suite of value-added offerings. Its service offerings include e-commerce and D2C delivery, hyperlocal & quick commerce within hours or same day, and SMS & personal courier services through its flash app. Brokerage firms have mixed views on the issue as they see strong growth track record, rising e-commerce trends, experienced promoters as the major positives for the issue. However, rich valuations and loss-making track record of the company continue to weigh on its sentiments. Shadowfax is the fastest growing 3PL company of scale in India as of March 31, 2025, expanding its e-commerce shipment market share to 23 per cent in the six months ended September 30, 2025. Within the express service line, they are market leaders in reverse pickup shipments, in terms of order volume for FY2025 and the six months ended September 30, 202, said KC Securities.

Eternal Q3 results Zoma to Blinkit estimates

New Delhi: Eternal Ltd (erstwhile Zomato) is expected to report over 40 per cent year-on-year (YoY) surge in net profit for the December quarter on 200 per cent surge in sales. All eyes would be on any commentary on competition intensity, Blinkit, food delivery gross order value (GOV) growth, and margins. Kotak Institutional Equities sees Eternal reporting 46 per cent YoY jump in Q3 profit at Rs 86.30 crore on 214 per cent YoY rise in net sales at Rs 16,970 crore. It expects Eternal to post 18 per cent YoY growth in food delivery (Zomato) gross merchandise value (GMV), 71 per cent YoY growth in Hyperpure revenues and solid 123 per cent YoY growth in Blinkit's net merchandis

value (NMV). "The strong 123 per cent YoY NMV growth in Blinkit will be driven by rapid store additions. The NMV growth is impacted by 3-4 per cent due to the GST rate revisions implemented in September 2025. Blinkit's revenues will not be comparable YoY due to the shift to the 1P model Q1FY26 onwards," Kotak said. MOFSL sees net profit rising 42.60 per cent to Rs 84.10 crore and sales (net of delivery) 181 per cent YoY to Rs 15,189 crore. MOFSL said net order value (NOV) for the food delivery and quick commerce businesses are likely to grow at 12 per



cent YoY and 122 per cent YoY, respectively. It sees food delivery take rates of 21.5 per cent and quick commerce gross profit of 26.5 per cent. JM Financial sees Q3 profit at Rs 97.90 crore, up 65.80 per cent YoY.

It sees sales at Rs 15,887 crore, up 194 per cent. Elara Securities sess Eternal Q3 profit at Rs 120 crore and sales at Rs 15,760 crore. ICICI Securities expects Eternal to report profit at Rs 99.30 crore in the December quarter. It sees adjusted revenue at Rs 17,700 crore. "We estimate Zomato's GOV to grow 2.7 per cent QoQ/19 per cent YoY, with adjusted Ebitda at

Rs 530 crore and adjusted Ebitda margin (percentage of GOV) of 4.5 per cent in Q3FY26E. Blinkit's GOV could grow 15.4 per cent QoQ/127.4 per cent YoY, with adjusted Ebitda loss reducing from Rs 160 crore to Rs 94 crore and adjusted Ebitda margin (percentage of GOV) of minus 0.5 per cent (up 49bps QoQ)," it said.

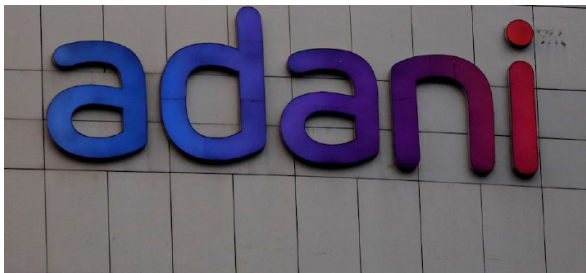
"Food Delivery adjusted Ebitda as percentage of NOV margin may rise 20 bps QoQ to 5.5 per cent. Blinkit is likely to post a contribution margin of 4.7 per cent and adjusted Ebitda margin as percentage of NOV at minus 1.3 per cent in Q3," MOFSL said.

Urban infra, data centre parks Adani plan for Maharashtra at WEF 2026

New Delhi: The Adani Group announced a \$66 billion investment plan for Maharashtra at the 56th World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos, covering sectors such as aviation, clean energy, urban infrastructure, digital platforms, and advanced manufacturing. It aims to support the state's infrastructure-led growth agenda.The investment focuses on large-scale urban transformation and next-generation infrastructure projects. One key proposal is the redevelopment of Dharavi, to convert Asia's largest informal settlement into a planned and economically vibrant district. The group is betting on Navi Mumbai as a growth hub, led by the Navi Mumbai International Airport, which was inaugurated on December 25. It is among India's largest greenfield airports and is expected to increase aviation capacity for the Mumbai metropolitan region while boosting logistics, hospitality, and

commercial development.Other projects include green, integrated data centre parks with a total capacity of 3,000 MW, an integrated arena district near the airport, coal gasification facilities, and pumped-storage hydropower projects with a combined capacity of 8,700 MW.

The plan also proposes semiconductor and display fabrication units, supporting government efforts to encourage private participation in advanced manufacturing under a changing policy framework.The Adani Group described the investments as a strategic shift from asset creation to ecosystem building. The company aims to create integrated and future-ready platforms to support Maharashtra's economic growth and India's global economic goals. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said, "We will welcome any investor, whether it is the Adani



Group or others, who brings investment to Maharashtra, because without investment, jobs will not be created for our youth." Pranav Adani, Director of Adani Enterprises, said the planned investment will be made over the next seven to ten years.

Closing the Distance: Why a Big-Cap Fund Right Now

New Delhi: Speaking at the unitholders' meeting in November 2025, the Chairman & CEO of the fund house, Neil Parikh, when outlining the plan to launch a large-cap fund, had stated this new fund will be launched only when "there is a general investor need", and if they "bring in some differentiation."It appears the fund house found a gap to fill. And in some measure, it has been helped by the overall sluggish market sentiment.The trailing PE of the Nifty 100 (which represents large caps) is now at 21.9, below the 5-year median of 22.6 (as of 19 January 2026).It is at this opportune time that Parag Parikh Mutual Fund has launched its new fund – the Parag Parikh Large Cap Fund.Parag Parikh Large Cap Fund, an open-ended equity scheme, is designed to behave like an index fund, but with an active twist.

In other words, it will be actively managed to an extent while investing in largecap companies.Thus, it will be cost-efficient, like an index fund, with a broad largecap exposure with implementation designed to manage trading and impact costs. The aim is to closely track the index over time, using efficient instruments and maintaining a small active share.It may also use equity derivatives for hedging (up to 100%) and non-hedging purposes (up to 50%). For diversification, the fund would also invest up to 10% of the total assets in units of REITs and InvITs.Further, for liquidity purposes, the fund holds the mandate to invest up to 20% in debt & money market instruments (including securitised debt as well as participate in fixed-income derivatives for non-hedging purposes). However, the fund will not invest in AT1 and AT2 bonds (which are tier 1 and tier 2

perpetual, high-risk debt instruments issued by banks to boost their core capital, crucial for meeting Basel III regulations).The objective of the fund is to generate long term capital appreciation and income distribution to investors by predominantly investing in equity and equity-related instruments of largecap companies.Parag Parikh Large Cap Fund to achieve its stated objective will be actively managed. While aiming to maximise long term total return by investing predominantly in equity and equity-related securities of largecap companies, it does not keep any sector bias.The fund seeks to take exposure to the Nifty 100 TRI constituents in terms of market capitalisation. It does not intend to buy/sell stocks based on their valuation or fundamentals.When a company in an Index is merging with another firm, the fund may buy the stock, which is at a discount to the announced merger ratio up to permissible limits.Similarly, when.

Nifty 100 constituents change, the fund may rebalance gradually rather than on the exact index date to seek better execution. Large-cap funds are currently considered a crucial component of investment portfolios due to their ability to provide stability, relative safety, and reasonable growth in a volatile market environment. As of early 2026, shifting towards large-cap funds is being driven by a combination of high valuations in mid-and small-cap segments, global economic uncertainty, and the need for portfolio stability. Large-cap stocks, representing the top 100 established companies, currently offer better relative valuation, downside protection, and consistent dividends, making them a preferred choice for navigating current market volatility.

Realme's Francis Wong says Indian buyers want all-day power, not faster charging

New Delhi: Realme is betting that Indian smartphone buyers want endurance over speed.The Chinese handset maker is preparing to launch the Realme P4 Power in India on January 29, 2026. With a massive 10,001mAh battery, more than double the capacity that has become standard in the mass market, as it pivots toward what it sees as a clear shift in consumer priorities. In an interview with Business Today, Francis Wong, Chief Marketing Officer of Realme India, said customers are moving away from an obsession with ultra-fast charging and instead want phones that can last an entire day on a single charge. "The real pain point isn't charging speed, it's battery size. Consumers don't want to charge frequently, no matter how fast it is. They want to charge once at night and have a full day of power," Wong told Business Today.A power-first smartphone

The P4 Power is positioned as a power beast in a market where 5,000mAh batteries have long been the norm. Realme says the phone will still retain a slim, single-digit thickness profile, despite packing one of the largest batteries ever seen in a mainstream smartphone. Wong said the biggest engineering hurdle was managing the size of such a large battery without making the device bulky."The biggest challenge was battery thickness."To solve that problem, Realme turned to next-generation silicon-carbon battery technology."We relied on next-generation silicon-carbon battery technology, which improves energy density and reduces battery size," he added.

Despite the focus on capacity, Realme has not abandoned fast charging. The P4 Power supports 80W fast charging, which the company says can top up the battery to 50% in around 36 minutes, while a full charge takes about 85 minutes.For a phone with a 10,001mAh battery, Wong described that as "quite decent."Targeting heavy users and studentsRealme is pitching the P4 Power squarely at heavy users, particularly students who spend long hours on their phones for entertainment, gaming and online learning. "The phone is for heavy users, especially students who spend a lot of time on their phones," Wong said.The company also plans to expand the line-up with more large-battery phones in the coming months."We will be launching more 8,000mAh and 9,000mAh phones, providing users with greater options across segments," he added.Battery health as a selling pointBeyond sheer size, Realme is also trying to address concerns around battery longevity, a key issue for Indian buyers who often hold on to phones for several years.Wong said the P4 Power will come with a battery healthguarantee."We also offer a battery health guarantee. If battery health drops below 80% within four years, we provide a free battery replacement. We're confident because this battery is designed to last up to 1,600 charge cycles," Wong told Business Today.According to Wong, the larger battery



itself helps improve long-term health."Because it's a 10,000mAh battery, users charge it less frequently. That's how it maintains long-term health." The P4 Power will be "positioned as a value-for-money line" and will be an "online-focused series," Wong said, adding that this approach helps Realme keep pricing aggressive. While the company has not yet disclosed the final price, Wong indicated that Realme intends to keep the phone accessible to its core audience.

INTERNATIONAL

Zelensky declares energy emergency as biting cold persists

Dubai: Ukraine has declared a state of emergency in the country's energy sector, with a particular focus on Kyiv, as ongoing Russian strikes continue to leave thousands of residents without power. President Volodymyr Zelensky accused Moscow of deliberately exploiting the harsh winter conditions as part of its war strategy, with overnight temperatures in Kyiv recently dropping to around -20C. The declaration comes as Zelensky's US counterpart Donald Trump said he was holding up efforts to secure a peace deal to end nearly four years of war with Russia. He told the Reuters news agency on Wednesday that Ukraine "is less ready to make a deal" than Russian president Vladimir Putin. When asked why peace talks have not yet resolved the conflict, Trump responded: "Zelensky". Trump's assessment drew approval from the Kremlin on Thursday, with spokesman Dmitry Peskov telling reporters: "President Putin and the Russian side remain open [to talks]." The American and Ukrainian leaders are both expected to attend the World Economic Forum in Switzerland next week, although Trump suggested no formal plans were arranged for them to meet. In recent weeks, Russian attacks on Kyiv have left thousands of homes without regular power, heating or running water. After one particularly heavy night of missile and drone attacks last week, 70% of the capital was left without power for several hours. Following a special cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Zelensky said a round-the-clock

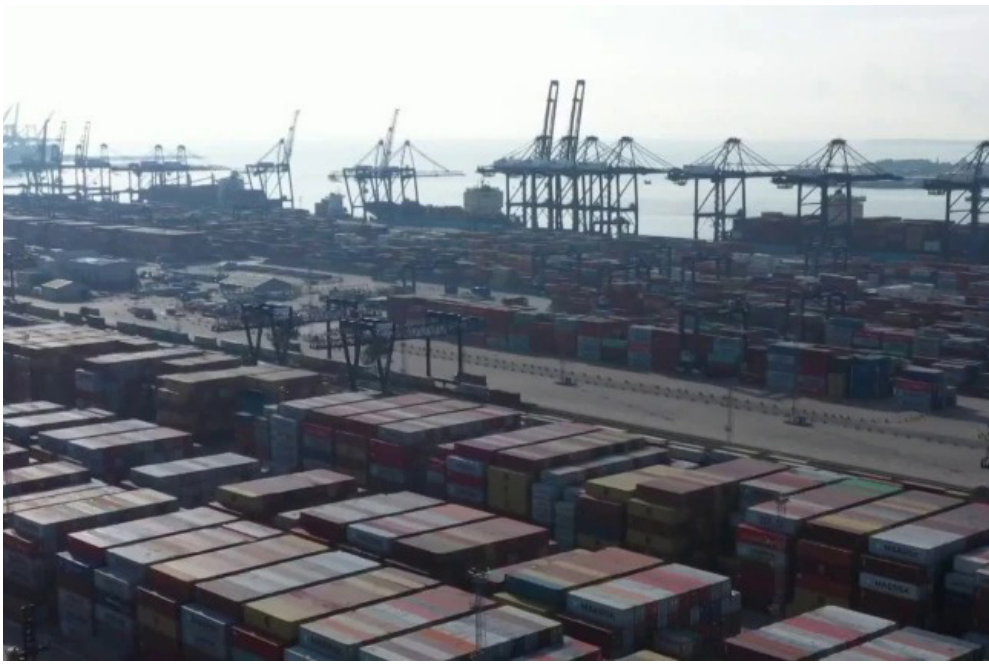
task force would be set up to fix damage caused by Russian strikes and worsening weather conditions. He said the new measures would include procuring vital energy equipment and resources from abroad to replace damaged installations. "The First Deputy Prime Minister – Minister of Energy of Ukraine has been assigned to oversee work supporting people and communities under these conditions," he wrote on X.

He also ordered an increase in the number of emergency help points around Kyiv to provide heat and power for residents, a move which could see a relaxing of current midnight curfew in the capital. Russian attacks on energy infrastructure have not been limited to the capital. Last week, Ukrainian officials said that more than one million people in south-eastern Ukraine spent hours without heating and water supplies as a result of Russian air strikes. DTEK, Ukraine's biggest private energy provider, is living in permanent crisis mode because of Russian attacks on the grid, its CEO, Maxim Timchenko, told the BBC last month. As the fourth anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion approaches, Timchenko said Russia had repeatedly targeted DTEK's energy grid with "waves of drones, cruise and ballistic missiles" and the company had found it difficult to cope. He added that the intensity of strikes had been so frequent "we just don't have time to recover". DTEK currently provides power for 5.6 million Ukrainians.

European stocks open lower as trade war fears send jitters through markets

Dubai: European stocks opened broadly lower on Wednesday, as concerns about transatlantic trade weighs on sentiment in the region. By 8:30 a.m. in London (3:30 a.m. ET), the pan-European Stoxx 600 was almost 0.2% lower, with most major regional bourses in negative territory. On Tuesday, U.S. President Donald Trump declined to detail what lengths he will go to in order to achieve his aim of making Greenland part of the U.S., telling a reporter, "You'll find out." Trump has not ruled out military action to seize Greenland, and recently threatened new tariffs on a raft of European countries if they block his takeover bid. His ramped-up rhetoric on the U.S. needing to bring Greenland, a semi-autonomous Danish territory, under Washington's control — and the subsequent tariff threats — sparked a sell-off of global assets on Tuesday and raised questions about the resurgence of the so-called sell America trade that first appeared following Trump's "liberation day" announcements last year. Trump is due to address the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, at 1.30 p.m. London time and, separately, CNBC's Joe Kernens is due to interview the president on the sidelines of the event.

Speaking at the WEF on Tuesday, European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen labeled Trump's new tariff proposals a "mistake" that would plunge both Europe and the U.S. into "a dangerous downward spiral." "Our response will be unflinching, united and proportional," she said, while reiterating that the EU stood in "full solidarity" with Greenland and Denmark. Bernd Lange, who chairs the European Parliament's international trade committee, will



hold a press conference in Strasbourg, France, later on Wednesday. The BBC, citing unnamed sources, reported that he will announce a suspension of the U.S.-Europe trade deal finalized over the summer. French President Emmanuel Macron said a potential response to new U.S. tariffs was to use the EU's Anti-Coercion Instrument, which would restrict U.S. businesses' access to Europe's single market. Triggering the ACI could exclude American suppliers from participation in EU public tenders, place export and import restrictions on goods and services and put limits on foreign direct investment.

CNBC will be interviewing a wide range of CEOs, officials, and business figures, including JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon and Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang, as well as political leaders, including Polish President Karol Nawrocki. Check out all our Davos coverage here. Elsewhere, data published Wednesday showed the U.K. inflation rate rose to 3.4% in December, above forecasts of 3.3% from economists polled by Reuters. The U.K.'s benchmark 10-year gilt yield fell by around 3 basis points in morning trade, while the British pound was flat against the U.S. dollar and 0.2% higher versus the euro

Israel's Netanyahu agrees to join Trump's Board of Peace



Dubai: Italian fashion designer Valentino Garavani, known as Valentino, has died at the age of 93. One of the giants of 20th Century fashion, Valentino's creations were worn by celebrities and well-known figures including Elizabeth Taylor, Nancy Reagan, Sharon Stone, Julia Roberts and Gwyneth Paltrow.

He co-founded the Valentino fashion house in 1960 and ranked alongside Giorgio Armani and Karl Lagerfeld at the top of the profession.

In a statement posted on Instagram, the Valentino Garavani and Giancarlo Giammetti Foundation said: "He passed away peacefully in his Roman home, surrounded by the love of his family." The foundation said Valentino will be lying in state at Rome's Piazza Mignanelli between 21 and 22 January.

Valentino's funeral service will be held the following day at the Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels and Martyrs, the foundation said.

Born in Lombardy in May 1932, Valentino was known for his collections that displayed luxury, wealth and opulence. He moved to Paris to study at the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne when he was just 17, and went on to work with designers Jacques Fath, Balenciaga, Jean Dessès and Guy Laroche. His adoption of his signature colour "Valentino red", inspired by a trip to Spain, helped elevate the brand to global fame with the debut of the iconic fiesta dress. It became so meaningful for the house that for Valentino's last collection in 2008 all the models wore red dresses for the finale.

Valentino designed the wedding dress of Princess Madeleine of Sweden when she married British-American financier Christopher O'Neill in June 2013. In December 2023, he was honoured with the outstanding achievement award at the British Fashion Awards which were held at London's Royal Albert Hall. Alexandra Shulman, the former editor-in-chief of British Vogue, told BBC Radio 4's PM programme that every aspect of Valentino "epitomised glamour and luxury". "It is very sad news because he was one of the last of the great designers of the modern day and I think his main contribution will be that he was what people wanted a fashion designer to be," Shulman said. "He really didn't care that much that he wasn't the most fashionable, the most cutting-edge designer, he just wanted to produce clothes that were beautiful - and they were." He also kept his celebrity customers for a long time, he started off with people like Jacqueline Kennedy who wore Valentino when she was in mourning. "Shulman listed a number of Hollywood stars who have been big supporters of Valentino's designs over the last 15 years - including Paltrow, Nicole Kidman and Jennifer Lopez. "He was helped in later years by the red carpet [becoming] such a thing, because that's what his clothes were about," Shulman added. "They weren't something you slipped on to go to the office - they were really fabulous gowns." Valentino was an only child, born into a well-to-do family in Voghera, south of Milan, where his father ran an electrical supplies company. Having started drawing and appreciating high-end clothes from a young age, he studied couture in Milan and Paris, where he then worked as an apprentice for designer Jean Dessès. He returned home in 1960, opening his own fashion house in the heart of Rome.

Locals and foreigners divided on issues of jobs, helps bridge differences: IPS study

Dubai: A pilot study released by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) on Tuesday (Jan 20) found that while Singaporeans and foreigners have little common ground on issues such as jobs, education and multiculturalism, structured discussions helped reduce some of these differences. In collaboration with government feedback unit REACH, IPS conducted a pilot consensus conference on local-foreign integration in Changi Simei and East Coast GRC last year. Twenty-four residents of various residency statuses – 16 Singapore citizens, three permanent residents and five non-resident foreigners – participated in four full-day sessions to discuss contested issues such as employment, education and community. According to IPS, the residents exchanged views and worked towards shared positions during the sessions. IPS policy lab research fellow Nicholas Thomas said the pilot drew on a 2024 survey where 37.5 per cent of respondents expected anger towards certain communities if immigration issues were poorly handled, while 35.5 per cent foresaw a weakened sense of identity. "These were really the anchors for why we wanted to do (this) and bring people, based on those surveys, into the room to see if we can actually find consensus," he said. In a related study, IPS' Social Lab surveyed 3,713 people from October to November 2025 on the diversity of their friendships. Respondents were asked to describe up to five of their close or online friends by gender, ethnicity, age, nationality, education level and housing type. The results showed that individuals with more diverse social networks reported higher trust in neighbours and other Singaporeans, said Dr Mathew Mathews, who heads the lab. For example, individuals with more diverse friendships were more likely to feel accepted by oth-

ers. They were also more likely to report stronger emotional attachment to Singapore, said Dr Mathews.

While acknowledging that the correlation does not prove causation, Dr Mathews said: "It could be that because you felt very strongly entrenched in this space, you're more likely to want to build that kind of friendship." "But I think theoretically it's the other way very often because of certain kinds of interactions and that willingness to build, there is an ultimate result in that." Those from minority groups tended to have more diverse friends: 88.7 per cent of Chinese respondents said all their close friends were of the same ethnicity, compared with 62.6 per cent of Malays and 50.8 per cent of Indians. This reflects a majority-minority dynamic, said Dr Mathews. "It does seem to be intuitive that if you are a minority individual, you have more opportunities or more reasons you are in situations where you do have other people of different backgrounds." Diverse networks were also associated with a stronger sense of belonging, civic participation and social cohesion. Citing research on social capital, Mr Thomas noted that government policy can address resource allocation concerns related to immigration, but it cannot manufacture mutual understanding and trust. IPS reported that 95.8 per cent of participants described the experience as positive, 91.6 per cent found it meaningful and 87.5 per cent said it was empowering. A NEED FOR CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE

IPS researchers noted that while Singapore has long invested in infrastructure to foster cohesion among its founding communities – Chinese, Malay, Indian, Eurasian and others – the local-foreign dimension now warrants similar attention. This could involve expanding the role of current institutions or establishing new civic



bodies to address identity questions that cannot be resolved by policy adjustments alone. On public messaging, researchers said better communication could affirm citizens as stakeholders and ensure that relevant information is easily accessible on official platforms. They added that the pilot showed how structured deliberation can surface shared concerns and generate collaborative action, and recommended extending the approach to other constituencies and polarising issues.

These require a different kind of intervention where people have to listen to one another, reason together and see if they can find common ground. From the pilot, researchers recommended recognising local-foreign integration as a distinct pillar of Singapore's multiculturalism and expanding the initiative to other constituencies and contested issues. They also called for stronger public communications. Participants felt that official messaging tends to highlight foreigners' contributions – such as skills

and investments – while overlooking citizens' roles, including tax payments and National Service.

Statements that did not reach consensus included tighter caps on local and private education providers, and a proposal to lower the school fee gap for PRs to retain talent. As for multiculturalism, participants came to a consensus on only one statement: "Singapore residents should accept and understand people of different nationalities without losing who we are, and foreigners must respect the host country." Statements such as "Singapore must remain open with evolving criteria to immigration to continue its economic growth" and "Singapore is a multicultural nation and we are learning to welcome all without fear or prejudice" did not find common ground.

Following the sessions, participants co-authored a residents' report. A voluntary working group of seven Singaporeans and three foreigners was formed to develop a community integration initiative.

He writes to prison inmates every day

Singapore: Every morning, Roger Tan opens his laptop, brews a cup of tea and begins sending out emails. But these messages are not for colleagues, friends or family, let alone people he has met. They are for prison inmates.

"I'm writing to about 25 inmates right now," he shares. "It could take an hour to even three hours each time." For those who are cut off from the outside world, there is no shortage of things to write about. The former bank risk manager fills his letters with snippets about everyday life, from how to use banking app PayNow — introduced in 2017 — to reviews of films inmates only get to watch about two years after they were first screened. "The letters could be educational, ... informational (or) just for entertainment," the 49-year-old says. "I'm writing) to help them stay in touch with society, so that they don't feel left out. ... And it'll be easier for them to reintegrate (later)." He has kept up this daily routine since June 2022. In that time, he has written more than 28,000 letters to inmates, mainly from Changi's maximum-security prison and some from the Tanah Merah Prison School. Behind the prison walls, his efforts have not gone unnoticed. What began with one or two pen pals grew, at its peak, to nearly 100 of them as more and more inmates asked to be included in his "mailing list". He is among several individuals featured on the On The Red Dot series, Hidden Heroes, which sheds light on ordinary Singaporeans who step up when no one is watching, often at personal cost. Tan shares why he writes, how he navigates the emotions inmates sometimes share and what keeps him going on his mission to offer comfort and hope, especially while living with terminal cancer. Out of 67 statements generated during the pilot, the group reached unanimous consensus on 23. Statements on community life saw the highest agreement, with participants agreeing with 77.8 per cent of statements on norms of mutual respect and reciprocal Tan's journey with inmates began in 2018, when he started volunteering as a para-counselor in a Buddhist charity. The role did not require him to be a fully certified counsellor but involved offering emotional support and, importantly, a listening ear. He met them in groups of about 30 to 50 in monthly sessions and gradually built trust and rapport. But those sessions came to a halt in 2020, when the pandemic hit and in-person counselling was suspended. So he emailed them instead. His decision to write every day, he says, was inspired by an inmate who shared that his friend had loved ones, such as parents, siblings and girlfriend, who took turns writing him an email daily. "He wished something like that could be done for him. So I thought, 'Eh, that's a good idea. Why don't I do that for them instead?'" Tan recalls.

Why Everyday Food Habits Matter More Than Perfect Diets

“Done is better than perfect,” says Priyasha Saluja, Founder, The Cinnamon Kitchen, Hormone Health Coach and Plant-Based Chef. “It’s a line we often use in work and life and it applies just as much to food.”

For years, eating well has been positioned as something that needs to be done perfectly. The right diet. The right rules. The right time to start. But people don’t stop eating well because they don’t care. They stop because perfect food plans don’t work in real life.“Most food plans are designed for ideal days,” Saluja explains. “And most of us don’t live ideal days.”On a regular week-day, meetings run late. Lunch gets delayed. By evening, energy is low and cooking feels like too much effort. In moments like this, strict food rules tend to break down not because of poor discipline, but because the plan simply doesn’t fit the day. The same thing happens around workouts. “People plan to eat before exercising,” Saluja says. “Then work runs over, traffic builds up, or energy drops. The choice becomes simple, go to the gym without eating or skip the gym altogether.” According to her, this isn’t a willpower issue. It’s a practicality issue. This is why everyday food habits matter more than perfect diets.“The habits that last are small, repeatable, and realistic,” Saluja notes. Eating something before stepping out. Keeping familiar food at your desk. Choosing meals that are easy to eat when you’re tired. These habits may not



look impressive, but they work because they fit into real life.Over time, Saluja has observed that consistency improves when food doesn’t require constant planning or decision-making. “When eating feels manageable,” she says, “it happens more often.”
Based on her personal experience working with clients, these are the food principles she believes help people stay consistent:
Set realistic expectations
“Don’t commit to extreme routines,” Saluja advises. “Choose goals you can actually maintain.” Fewer workouts done consistently are far more effective than ambitious plans that fall apart after a few weeks.
Choose movement you enjoy
“If you hate a workout, you’ll avoid it,” she says. Picking activities like badminton or tennis things you

genuinely enjoy makes movement easier and more sustainable.
Track briefly, not obsessively
Short-term tracking can be useful. “It helps you understand what you’re actually eating and highlights gaps in protein or fibre,” Saluja explains. Once awareness is built, occasional tracking is enough.
Keep two meals consistent
Fixing two meals around protein and fibre every day reduces daily decision-making. “It keeps eating balanced without feeling restrictive,” she adds. The third meal can remain flexible.
Don’t eliminate snacks or desserts
“Total restriction doesn’t last,” Saluja says. Planning small portions of snacks or desserts helps with portion control and makes eating feel realistic rather than punitive.

This philosophy also shapes how food is designed at The Cinnamon Kitchen. “Instead of creating products for ideal routines, I focus on how food fits into real moments,” Saluja explains. The Almond Flour Cacao Cookie, for instance, works as a practical pre-workout option on rushed mornings. Methi Millet Crackers quietly replace habitual tea-time snacks without demanding a lifestyle overhaul. “People are tired of rigid food rules,” Saluja notes. Good days. Bad days. Cheat meals. Constant restarts. There is a clear shift toward a calmer relationship with food, one where eating doesn’t feel like a test you have to pass. Perfect diets may look good on paper. Everyday food habits work in real life.“And that’s why they matter more,” Saluja concludes. “Not because they’re perfect but because they actually last.”

Made With Fresh Ingredients To Becoming Part Of The Culture, Here’s 5 Ways Pan-Asian Cuisine is Evolving in India

Indians love their ‘Indo-Chinese’ food. The spicy Schezwan chutney, the piping hot manchow soup, Chicken 65, and gobi manchurian are just a few of the classic dishes almost all generations of Indians have grown up eating. These dishes have become so popular that they’ve even found favourites in the West, beyond the migrant Indian communities. With the inclusion of Pan-Asian food like ramen, baos, sushi, and more, the Indian palate for South Asian food is expanding, while their food is also being adapted to Indian standards as well. Nowadays, Pan-Asian food in India has travelled beyond the bowl of slurpy noodles and sushi, though. Today, diners are more curious about new dishes and ingredients, better informed about traditional dishes, and open to having flavour-forward and authentic experiences. We speak to Chef Tenzin Khetsok, from YAZU Goa, on how pan Asian food is changing the food map of India:

Flavour-forward dining

Earlier, Pan-Asian food in India was tweaked to suit local preferences. No longer. Today, diners are comfortable with stronger flavours and textures. Complex taste notes are now accepted, even enjoyed widely, from fermented notes, umami-rich sauces, and sharper seasoning. Ingredients like gochujang, miso, fish sauce, and

chilli oils have found a bigger audience, opening the canvas for traditional dishes.

Pan-Asian Is A Culture

There is a clearer understanding that Pan-Asian is not a single cuisine. Japanese, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, and Chinese flavours are being treated more distinctly. Dining outlets are paying closer attention to regional nuances, focusing on authentic flavour, even while adapting to the local palate.

Fresh Ingredients Over Complexity

There is a growing inclination to cleaner cooking. Diners are paying attention to freshness, especially when it comes to seafood, vegetables, and rice. Simple dishes that rely on good ingredients and proper technique are being preferred

over overworked plates. This has pushed kitchens to source better and cook more thoughtfully.

Pan-Asian Food Is Becoming More Social

Sharing-style dining has become important. Small plates, dim sums, sushi rolls, and grills are designed to be ordered together and enjoyed as a group. This fits well with how people like to eat today, especially in relaxed settings like beach destinations and casual premium restaurants.

Locale Shaping Menus

What works in a business district may not work in a coastal destination. In places like Goa, for example, menus lean towards lighter flavours, fresh seafood, and dishes that pair well with drinks and long meals.



What’s New In Mumbai: From All-Day Dining Menus To Weekend Music, Brunches And Bar Takeovers

As Mumbai’s dining and social landscape continues to evolve, the city is embracing experiences that flow effortlessly through the day and into the night. Today’s urban audience seeks more than just good food or well-crafted drinks—they look for spaces that understand timing, mood, and the rhythm of modern living. From relaxed mornings and indulgent brunches to spirited evenings filled with music, cocktails, and conversation, hospitality is becoming increasingly experience-led. There is also a growing emphasis on versatility. Menus are being designed to adapt seamlessly across hours, atmospheres are becoming more intuitive, and venues are crafting moments that invite repeat visits rather than one-time occasions. Whether it’s a quiet coffee ritual, an immersive dining journey, or a high-energy nightlife experience, the city’s hospitality scene is responding with creativity and intent. This shift reflects a deeper desire for balance, where indulgence meets comfort, innovation respects familiarity, and every hour of the day has something distinctive to offer.

1. Juliette Café & Bar Rolls Out a New Menu Rooted in Its AM–PM Philosophy

There’s a certain ease to places that understand timing, and Juliette Café & Bar gets it just right. The fluid café-to-bar destination has introduced a thoughtfully curated new all-day menu that mirrors the way the city moves today. Formerly known as Juliette Ristorante & Bar, the space has evolved with a lighter touch and a sharper point of view. Backed by the creative vision of Ranbir Nagpal and Atul Chopra of Yazu Hospitality, Juliette blends comfort,

craft, and character into a space designed for repeat visits. At the heart of the café’s identity is its AM–PM culinary philosophy—versatile, intuitive, and built around repeat cravings. Helmed by Executive Chef Rohan Taru, the multi-cuisine menu balances familiarity with refinement, blending global influences with comfort-driven dishes designed for all-day dining. From light café-style plates to hearty mains and shareable offerings, the menu evolves naturally as the day progresses. Signature highlights include Broccoli Velouté, Arabic Mezze, Baked Sri Lankan Sea Bass with Parmesan Leek Tart, Golden Crisp Cottage Cheese Sizzler with Roast Sauce, and Za’atar-Spiced Chicken—each crafted to feel equally suited to a relaxed lunch or an evening gathering. The all-day offering also spans soups, salads, Indian dishes, burgers, wraps, pizzas, pastas, and sizzlers, and more, ensuring something comforting yet distinctive at every hour. The beverage programme follows the same intuitive flow. Daytime offerings spotlight a collaboration with Nandan Coffee alongside specialty brews, boba teas, cold coffees, milkshakes, iced teas, and matcha-based creations, as well as inventive non-alcoholic drinks. As evening approaches, the bar takes centre stage with a cocktail menu curated by mixologist Kaustubh Sawardekar. Standout creations include Bombay High, First Light, Rush Hour, Goan Chorizo, and Jack & Roots each

reinterpreting familiar Indian flavours through modern mixology. Adding to the experience are time-led rituals such as Bottomless Coffee and Unlimited Matcha from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm, Happy Hours till 7:00 pm, and bakery offerings at 50% off from 7:30 pm onwards. Every element is designed to encourage guests to return at different hours, for different moods.

2. Weekend Spotlight: JIA Reopens in Colaba with a Fresh New Look and Flavours

JIA: The Oriental Kitchen returns to Colaba with a



porary innovation.

Dishes like Hamachi Carpaccio with jalapeño and ponzu, Sake Salmon Carpaccio, and Avocado Carpaccio with crab ceviche arrive as refined, flavour-forward plates. Nigiri and sashimi selections highlight craftsmanship, with options such as Hamachi Yellowtail, Sake Salmon, and Maguro Tuna Akami. Vegetarian offerings are equally thoughtful, featuring Avocado Nigiri, Shiitake Mushroom Nigiri, Bell Pepper Nigiri, Five Spice

refreshed space that immediately feels calm yet alive. Soft light filters through polished wood, brushed brass, and subtle oriental details, creating an atmosphere of understated luxury. The redesigned interiors invite diners to slow down, offering an escape that balances serenity with energy. The new menu brings together authentic Asian flavours and contemporary



Beetroot Carpaccio, and Heirloom Tomato Carpaccio. Together, these dishes reflect JIA’s evolving philosophy, elegant, precise, and far from predictable.

3. Fresh Cookies, Warm Chocolate and a New Éntisi Experience at Jio World Drive

Éntisi Chocolatier has opened its newest boutique at Jio World Drive, Bandra Kurla Complex, marking its sixth destination across India. Designed as a full sensory experience, the space blends artisanal craftsmanship with modern innovation. For the first time, Éntisi introduces freshly baked, small-batch cookies prepared in-store, alongside its Chocolate Raclette experience, where warm liquid chocolate is scraped over cookies to create a visually immersive indulgence. Another first for Mumbai is the DIY dragees chocolate dispensers, allowing guests to customise flavours and quantities. The boutique continues to offer Éntisi’s signature bonbons,

barks, bars, slims, and seasonal creations. Spanning 550 square feet, the store features a Grand Chocolate Counter and an open-kitchen format where baking and chocolate-making unfold in full view.

4. Sing the Night Away Every Saturday at Toast Bistro & Bar with Half Fry Karaoke

Toast – Bistro & Bar at T24 Residency transforms into a lively sing-along destination every Saturday night with karaoke sessions hosted by Half Fry Karaoke. From throwback anthems to guilty-pleasure favourites, the evenings promise spontaneous duets and high-energy performances. The relaxed bistro setting welcomes families, travellers, and solo performers alike. Guests can enjoy a wide-ranging menu featuring Cheese Stuffed Tandoori Mushroom, Veg Nachos Loaded, Rajdhani Tikki, Paneer Chilly, Banjara Kebab, Pesto Pan Chicken, and indulgent bar bites like Popcorn Shrimp and Crispy

Chicken Soya Basil. A Buy 2 Get 1 Free offer on select drinks adds to the cheer.

5. BlueBop Café Sets the Mood with a Spirited Classic Rock & Blues Night

BlueBop Café in Khar hosts a Classic Rock & Blues Night, bringing together powerful guitar riffs, soulful melodies, and an electric live performance. The jazz-inspired interiors and cosy yet buzzing ambience set the stage for an immersive evening. Guests can enjoy favourites such as Truffle Burrata Pizza, Farmer’s Delight Burger, Mushroom Risotto, and indulgent desserts like Pull Me Up Hazelnut and Chocolate Pistachio Kanafeh, alongside curated cocktails and fresh bakes.

6. Begin Your Day with Comfort at Blend Kitchen & Bar by T24 Retro

Blend Kitchen & Bar by T24 Retro introduces a refreshed breakfast menu designed around warmth and familiarity. From Irani Masala Omelettes and Mumbai-style Bhurji to pancakes, dosas, ut-

tapams, parathas, idlis, poha, and upma, the menu offers a comforting start to the day. A wide beverage selection includes hot and iced coffees, traditional chai options, and classic teas, catering to every morning mood.

7. Republic Day Celebrations at Pokiddo Junior

Pokiddo Junior celebrates Republic Day with interactive workshops, themed activities, and a tri-coloured food and beverage selection. Children dressed as national heroes enjoy special offers, while creative workshops allow them to take home personalised creations.

8. Mercii Launches a New Sunday Brunch by Chef Beena Norohna

Mercii introduces a new Sunday Brunch curated by Chef Beena Norohna, blending Nikkei and European influences. The menu features small plates, refined pastas, sushi-style rolls, and tableside-finished dishes, followed by an indulgent spread.

9. Solaire Launches ‘The Golden Hour’ Food and Bar Menu

Solaire introduces The Golden Hour, an evening ritual from 5 pm to 8 pm featuring globally inspired small plates and signature cocktails. From vegetarian delights to indulgent non-veg platters and an extensive bar selection, the experience is designed for relaxed sophistication.

10. Boilermaker Goa Takes Over Yazu Lower Parel

Boilermaker Goa, ranked among Asia’s 50 Best Bars, takes over Yazu Lower Parel for a one-night-only cocktail experience. Featuring signature pours and immersive serves, the takeover marks a major moment in Mumbai’s evolving nightlife culture.

An old video of Vidya Balan claiming that India is “getting polarized” has gone viral



Mumbai: Vidya Balan thinks social media has a crucial role in dividing people’s opinions at a time when it has become an essential tool for performers to develop their personalities outside of the screen. A video from her previous chat with YouTuber Sandish Bhatia has gone viral on X, sparking a range of reactions.Vidya discussed how people are frantically searching for an identity on social media in the interview from last year.With politics aside, Vidya Balan was asked if she thought religious division in her city or nation was becoming more pronounced. Vidya decided to respond to the question even though the interviewer offered her the choice to ignore it. “I

just think that polarization has increased. I believe that we previously lacked a religious identity as a country. But now I’m not sure why—it’s social media as well as politics. We are searching for an identity that we do not naturally possess since we are lost in this world. We are searching for things to cling to. I really feel that way,” Vidya Balan remarked.”You don’t know who you are since everything is changing, including religion and this ‘wokeness’. Vidya explained people’s fixation on social media by saying, “That’s why you are looking for these things.””I don’t believe they are discovering that. “They all require a feeling of community,” Vidya Balan said with ease. ”I believe that we are more alone than ever in this world because of the widespread use of social media. Therefore, we are superficially connecting ourselves to ideas and concepts in order to feel connected to other people. It’s practical. I frequently witness people holding opinions about topics they are ignorant of. How is that even possible? Vidya asked.On X, Vidya’s remarks sparked a flurry of reactions. While some people criticized her as a “mere entertainer,” many others praised her bravery and lucidity.”Vidya Balan’s bravery and clar-

ity are very admirable. One person wrote, “Voices like hers inspire hope for unity and understanding, and speaking up with honesty takes real strength.” ”Another day” was another statement. One another “rare actor with spine.” These “rare” performers with “spine” include Ali Fazal, Pratik Gandhi, John Abraham, Prakash Raj, Kriti Sanon, and Vidya Balan.”I share Vidya Balan’s opinion. An X user said, “It takes courage to speak on difficult issues, and her perspective is a valuable one in these times.”There were also some critics.”Vidya Balan is free to express herself as she pleases. She doesn’t need to be taken so seriously. Another person replied, “Stop giving entertainers influence.” ”What a foolish Moorkh! Dharma and a single, unifying culture have always bound Bharat together! It was never forced to fit everyone into one way; instead, it was always incredibly welcoming and open! “There’s a difference!” another person wrote.In movies like Kahaani, Shakuntala Devi, Sherni, and Jalsa, Vidya Balan is renowned for playing strong-willed female roles. Her most recent appearance was with Madhuri Dixit and Kartik Aaryan in the 2024 movie Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3.

The Delhi High Court Notified Salman Khan in a Personality Rights Case

Mumbai: Bollywood star Salman Khan received a notification from the Delhi High Court. The notification was given in response to a petition submitted by an AI voice-generation platform located in China. Within four weeks, the High Court has requested a response to the notice. The case’s next hearing is scheduled for February 27. The petition aims to overturn the High Court’s temporary ruling defending Salman Khan’s personality rights. The petition aims to reverse the December 11 interim order issued by the High Court.Salman Khan’s voice and identity had been restricted by the High Court. The petitioner is an AI voice-generation platform situated in China. The creation of voice models is the platform’s primary activity. Salman Khan filed a request for protection of



his publicity and personality rights with the Delhi High Court. The Court ordered social media companies to respond to his petition within three days on December 11.Judge Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora said that if any defendants were discovered utilizing Khan’s name, images, or

other personal characteristics to market commercial goods, she would personally issue stay orders.In accordance with the Intermediaries Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, the Court also instructed social media intermediaries to handle

Khan’s case as an official complaint.Salman requested that the Court prohibit the use of his name, appearance, voice, likeness, conversation, mannerisms, and any other aspect of his public persona by a number of defendants, both named and anonymous (John Doe).

Zakir Khan said he will not be performing live until 2030 because of health issues

Mumbai: During his performance in Hyderabad, stand-up comedian Zakir Khan announced a lengthy hiatus from live performances.Zakir Khan’s staff reports that the comedian has chosen to take a long break from live performances, possibly until 2030, due to personal and health concerns.On Tuesday afternoon, Zakir hinted at the split in a tale posted on his Instagram account. He confirmed that the choice was definite after posting another update after reaching Dubai.”Every show is a celebration until June 20,” he added. This season, I won’t be able to visit many cities, so please do your hardest to attend the shows. I appreciate all



of your love. Zakir Khan, meantime, created history last year when he became the first Indian comedian to perform in Hindi at Madison Square Garden in New York City.Zakir, who is adored throughout India for his “sakht launda” demeanor and accessible humor, shared the poignant occa-

sion with his Instagram followers. He described it as a “big day” and talked about how intimidating it was to do Hindi humor for 6,000 people.He described the performance as a unique turning point in his career and continued to thank his friends and colleagues for their support. Celebrity chef Vikas Khanna and actor Kal Penn were among those supporting him, adding to the evening’s memorability. After winning Comedy Central’s India’s Best Stand-Up competition in 2012, Zakir Khan initially became well-known. With stand-up specials like Haq Se Single, Kaksha Gyarvi, and others, he has since amassed a sizable fan base in India and outside.

Nora Fatehi criticizes “diabolical” behavior and supports Morocco

Mumbai: In the wake of the tumultuous AFCON final, actor-dancer Nora Fatehi has expressed her support for Morocco while criticizing the incidents she saw during the game. According to her, the behavior displayed would go down in history as one of the tournament’s most immoral, disappointing, and evil incidents.Following the contentious conclusion of the AFCON final on Tuesday, Nora wrote a message on Instagram supporting Morocco. The Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in Rabat,

Morocco, hosted the championship game.Morocco’s defeat in the AFCON 2025 final caused chaos. Senegal prevailed 1-0 on Sunday in a contentious match. A contentious penalty ruling against Senegal during the game prompted some Senegalese players to leave the field in protest. Senegalese supporters attempted to storm the pitch as well.”It took me a while to comprehend what transpired during the finals! This will be remembered as one of the most heinous, disappointing, and unethical acts

in history! Nora remarked, “This taught us that Morocco maintains class, prestige, and an exemplary attitude in all circumstances.””I want to take this time to appreciate the experience I had here at AFCON and in Morocco,” she went on. I commend the nation and its citizens for their progress, elevation, and kindness! Morocco is expanding quickly and will continue to be the leading nation in Africa, as this experience has demonstrated. Nobody can alter the fact that we are proud Africans.

Priyanka Chopra describes 2016 as the year that “everything happened all at once”

Mumbai: Priyanka Chopra has joined the 2016 Instagram trend by showcasing a number of old photos to her followers. According to Priyanka Chopra, 2016 was a year in which “everything happened all at once.”Priyanka Chopra highlighted significant events from 2016 in her post. One of the pictures was from her first Oscars appearance, which signaled the beginning of her increasing international prominence. She was seen in another picture accepting one of India’s highest civilian awards, the Padma Shri.A photo from a meal she attended with former US President Barack Obama and former First Lady Michelle Obama, another significant event from that year, was also included in the collection. Glimpses of Chopra’s work on both domestic and



foreign projects were featured in her post. PeeCee

highlighted how hectic and eventful 2016 had been for her by sharing two photos of herself as Bajirao Mastani’s Kashi and one with the Dil Dhadakne Do cast. She also included images from her Hollywood endeavors Quantico and Baywatch. She also included some of her own photos. These gave fans a glimpse into the emotional side of a pivotal year and included pictures from Holi celebrations, the day she acquired her puppy, and a heartfelt moment with her late grandma. Regarding her career, Priyanka’s upcoming role is in the pirate action movie The Bluff. The film, in which she plays Bloody Mary, will be available for streaming on Prime Video starting on February 25. She will also appear as Mandakini in SS Rajamouli’s masterpiece Varanasi.

Actor Rimi Sen of Dhoom is currently a real estate agent in Dubai

Mumbai: Thanks to her advertisement with Aamir Khan and her frequent appearances in movies like Hungama, Dhoom, Golmaal, Phir Hera Pheri, Johnny Gaddar, and many more, Rimi Sen rose to fame in the early 2000s. Rimi’s on-screen presence progressively declined, much like that of many other actors in the Hindi cinema business. She eventually moved out of the spotlight. After shifting her job to the real estate industry in Dubai, she is once again in the news.In a recent interview, Rimi Sen talked about how Dubai has been friendly and how she has established herself in the competitive real estate industry. “Dubai is very welcoming, which is why 95% of the population consists of expatriates, while the rest are Emiratis,” she stated in a conversation. Everyone has been made to feel welcome in Dubai, which has both temples and mosques. Everyone is taken into consideration, and improving, simplifying, and improving people’s lives is the city’s main priority. We don’t actually see this in our nation because the government frequently modifies laws overnight, making life more challenging for citizens. It is

no longer a business-friendly country with thousands of taxes and countless obstacles.”The real estate market here operates smoothly because there is discipline,” Rimi continued. You are limited to working with agencies and agents. Agencies fulfill their responsibilities, developers complete their work, and a suitable system is in place. She also talked about how perceptions of agents differ between Dubai and India. According to her, agents in Dubai receive the same treatment as financial consultants. “In India, if you ask for two months’ brokerage, people look at you as if you have committed a crime,” Rimi stated.Due to her unfamiliar appearance in Instagram photos, Rimi Sen gained attention on social media two years ago. Rimi said, “If people feel that I have had plastic surgery, and if they feel that in a good way, then it’s very good for me,” in response to the internet’s first assumption that she had undergone surgery. People continue to converse without even undergoing plastic surgery. I have only undergone PRP therapy, Botox, and fillers.”Maybe people saw my latest pictures and felt that my skin looked good,” Rimi said in response to haters. With these



therapies and self-control, anyone can look good. However, if you believe that what I have done is wrong, please let me know how to make it right so that I can point out my doctors’ mistakes.”Rimi last appeared in a movie in 2011 in the action movie Shagird, directed by Tigmanshu Dhulia.

Major Hoshiyar Dahiya’s son praises Varun Dhawan despite trolling for his performance in Border 2

Mumbai: The Braves of the Soil - Tribute trailer, featuring the song Mitti Ke Bete, was released by the Border 2 producers before to the movie’s premiere. Varun Dhawan and Ahan Shetty attended a lavish ceremony in Mumbai where the trailer was unveiled. Varun, who has been the target of trolls for his performance, was praised for his depiction of Major Hoshiyar Singh Dahiya during the occasion. Colonel Sushil Kumar Dahiya, the son of Major Hoshiyar Singh Dahiya, was asked by Varun to speak about the Braves of the Soil: Tribute trailer during the event. ”Thank you, Varun,” said Colonel Dahiya. Ghar Lautke Naa Aaye is an homage to troops’ families and their emotions, which has been clearly



depicted, and Mitti Ke Bete is an inspiration in a true sense for every soldier, especially after we all wit-

nessed this song physically.””And secondly, the character that Varun is playing is that of my father and

the way he has portrayed it on the silver screen, mind-blowing,” he continued, praising Varun’s performance in the movie. The actor has been the target of trolling, with many accusing him of “overacting” and criticizing his facial expressions. The 1971 India-Pakistan war serves as the backdrop for this film, which is directed by Anurag Singh and produced by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, J. P. Dutta, and Nidhi Dutta under the brands of T-Series Films and J. P. Films. Sunny Deol, Varun Dhawan, Diljit Dosanjh, and Ahan Shetty play major roles in the movie, while Mona Singh, Anya Singh, Medha Rana, and Sonam Bajwa play supporting parts. The movie is slated to hit theaters on January 23.

In Dhurandhar, Sara Arjun speaks out about her 20-year age difference with Ranveer Singh

Mumbai: The casting of Ranveer Singh and Sara Arjun as the main couple in Dhurandhar sparked a wave of social media responses, much of which focused on the two actors’ 20-year age difference. Sara has now responded to the talk by stating that she appreciates other points of view and that everyone is free to hold their own opinions. Sara, who costarred with Ranveer Singh in the movie, talked about the controversy around the age difference in the movie during an interview. She defended the casting, claiming that she always knew it was appropriate given the plot. Prior to the movie’s premiere, Sara revealed that she had entirely cut herself off from social media, thus

the online discussions around her and Ranveer’s age difference never truly affected her. She continued by saying that avoiding social media helped her focus and block out the “noise” around her.”Social media is where all the hubbub is? I also don’t do much. I wasn’t very involved in it. Everyone, in my perspective, has an opinion. “Live and let live” is something I firmly believe in. It’s their view... It has no effect on my way of thinking, Sara stated, “I knew the story and I knew it was justified, and that’s all.” The actor complimented Ranveer, stating that he was the best co-star she could have asked for in Dhurandhar.”Ranveer has set the standard so high that I don’t think

anyone can surpass him, no matter who I work with in the future. He is very dedicated to his work as an actor, but he also looks after the entire set. He views filmmaking as a collaborative endeavor. He is just as invested in what you are doing as he is in what the guy on set was designing and what the set is doing. Therefore, such factors are quite important. “He carries us all together,” she continued. Since its December 5 premiere in theaters last year, Dhurandhar has been a box office success. Aditya Dhar’s action spy thriller made over ₹1300 crore globally, making it the highest-grossing movie of 2025.Ranveer plays an Indian spy infiltrat-



ing the Lyari-based terror networks in the spy thriller, which is set in Pakistan. In important roles, Akshaye Khanna, Sanjay Dutt, Arjun Rampal, and R Madhavan are also included. March 2026 will see the theatrical premiere of the second installment.

Congress demonstrates after Madhya Pradesh is chastised by the court for shielding a minister



New Delhi, Jan 21: In order to increase pressure on the Madhya Pradesh government to take action against state minister Kunwar Vijay Shah for his disparaging statements on Colonel Sofiya Qureshi of the Indian Army, the Congress organized a theatrical protest in Bhopal. The demonstration came after the Supreme Court made harsh remarks and instructed the Mohan Yadav administration to decide whether to approve Shah's prosecution within two weeks. Party activists brought a man wearing a mask of Shah, shackled him, and paraded him outside the state Congress office under the leadership of Congress state general secretary Amit Sharma. After that, the demonstrators

marched to a local police station and, in a symbolic gesture, "handed over" the masked guy to the officers, calling for swift action against Shah. Amit Sharma told the reporters that Shah had insulted Colonel Qureshi. "She is a national daughter who has brought honor to her country. A minister who insulted a female Indian Army officer is being shielded by the administration. "Vijay Shah needs to be fired from his position right away," he declared. Shah's disparaging and discriminating comments toward Colonel Qureshi made news in May. Later, he claimed to have made a "linguistic mistake" and declared that he was prepared to apologize ten times. The state government

has not yet approved any punishment against Shah despite a panel formed by the Supreme Court looking into his remarks and submitting its findings. According to Congressman Sharma, the Supreme Court's ruling represents a political and moral setback for the state government. "The Supreme Court has ruled in favor of truth. He said, "The court has mandated that a case be filed against the minister that the government continued to shield." Workers from the Youth Congress staged a protest outside the minister's Bhopal house, painting the nameplate black and shouting anti-ministerial chants. Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Umang Singhar responded by writing on social media that the problem was not a statement but rather a "insensitive and hateful mindset flourishing under the protection of power." "The BJP administration ignored the SIT findings for months despite an attack on the honor of the nation, an army commander, and a national daughter. The honor

of the nation's women and troops cannot be compromised. Everyone must be treated equally under the law, including ministers. Shah was speaking at a public gathering in Indore on May 11 of last year. He made the following statement regarding Operation Sindoor: "They stripped and killed our Hindus, and Modi ji sent their sister to their house to teach them a lesson." There was a great deal of indignation at the comment, and Colonel Qureshi was accused of being disrespected. Senior attorney Maninder Singh, representing Vijay Shah, stated during the top court hearing that the minister had submitted an apology and was assisting with the probe. However, the apology was rejected by the bench. Surya Kant, Chief Justice of India, stated that the court has already commented on the content of the apology and that it was insufficient and delayed. The Supreme Court's order has not yet received a formal response from Chief Minister Yadav or the BJP.

A PhD candidate from IIT Kanpur leaps off a building while depressed

New Delhi, Jan 21: On Tuesday, a 25-year-old PhD student at IIT Kanpur committed himself by jumping off the sixth storey of a residential building on campus. Born in the Churu area of Rajasthan, Swaroop Ishwaram worked as a research scholar at the Department of Earth Sciences. He lived on campus with his wife, Manju, and their two-year-old kid, according to the police. Ishwaram has been experiencing anxiety and despair for a long time, according to Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) SM Qasim Abidi. Ishwaram had also had counseling on several occasions. On Tuesday afternoon, he was taken to a private hospital, where he subsequently passed away from his wounds. Ishwaram's wife informed the police that his mental illness had been causing him a lot of worry lately. In addition to gathering evidence from the suicide scene, police and forensic specialists sent the research scholar's body for a post-mortem examination. According to the DCP, Manju is being questioned as part of the inquiry, and additional legal actions are being taken. At the scene, no suicide



note was discovered. Manindra Agarwal, the director of IIT Kanpur, expressed her condolences on Ishwaram's passing and told news agency PTI that the university has lost a bright researcher. "The institute condoles his demise and prays for strength to the bereaved family," he said. In less than a month, there have been two suicides at IIT Kanpur. Another student, who was also from Rajasthan, was discovered dead in his dorm room

on December 29 with a suicide note that said, "Sorry everyone." At least nine student suicides have occurred at the premier institute in the last three years, and over twelve have occurred in the last five. The majority of these, according to officials, lacked a recovered suicide note. According to the most recent information, the institute will address the suicides in a response to the Human Rights Commission on January 22.

Rohit Sharma Warns Suryakumar Yadav About Poor Form



New Delhi: Team India is concerned about Suryakumar Yadav's batting form going into the 2026 home T20 World Cup. In 2025, Suryakumar, who had been the world's top T20I batter for almost two years, had trouble scoring runs in international cricket. Suryakumar Yadav's poor form might affect the entire batting order, according to India's T20 World Cup 2024-winning captain

Rohit Sharma, but he also emphasized that each batter must perform to prevent the unit from suffering. "The captain's form is not the main concern. If a player isn't performing well. We are losing one of our seven or eight batters. Following Rohit's resignation from the format, Suryakumar was appointed captain of the Indian T20I team. "I think Surya has a lot of understanding regarding

the game and the players who are playing with him, how to get the best out of them," Rohit stated. Prior to the five-match India vs. New Zealand T20I series, which is scheduled to start on Wednesday at Nagpur, Mitchell Santner, captain of the New Zealand T20I side, stated that the team has an advantage over the hosts due to recent victories against India in a variety of forms. Following

an outstanding 2-1 series victory over the Shubman Gill-led Team India in the three-match ODI series, New Zealand will be entering the T20I series. ODI titans Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli returned to the Indian lineup, but New Zealand, led by Michael Bracewell, put up a unique fight to win the series. Despite losing important New Zealand players including Matt Henry, Tom Latham, and Kane Williamson, the Kiwis won their first-ever ODI series in India. Notably, in 2024, New Zealand swept India 3-0 in a historic Test series. "Obviously, that provides us an advantage. We enjoy playing both in India and in India. In a variety of formats, we have recently defeated India. The series is something we are excited about. The primary goal is undoubtedly to win the series, but it's also important to have adequate preparation for the 2026 T20 World Cup. It's about playing a fantastic team in circumstances similar to what we will encounter in the World Cup. It's going to be a fantastic series, according to Santner's preparations.

In an effort to strengthen bilateral ties, Spain refers to India as a "reliable global pillar"

New Delhi, Jan 21: While both sides pushed to strengthen bilateral ties and accelerate cooperation ahead of the crucial India-European Union summit later this month, Spain on Wednesday sent a strong political and economic signal in support of India's growing global role. Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares described India as a "reliable country" that believes in international law, multilateralism, and the principles of the United Nations Charter. Speaking to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in New Delhi, Albares emphasized that amid "very complicated times in the world," Spain believes it is crucial to strengthen its relationship with India, which he described as a reliable and stable international player. Days before the India-EU summit on January 27, where a long-awaited Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is anticipated to be a major emphasis and may finally be signed, his comments come at a politically critical time. Albares stated that it is "the right time" for such a move and that Spain "would very much love to see" the final agreement of the India-EU free trade pact being reached. He highlighted the economic impetus on both sides, pointing out that enterprises in both Spain and India are already reaping the benefits of their economies, which are among the fastest-growing. He emphasized that the next stage should concentrate



on strengthening trade ties, growing the presence of Spanish businesses in India and Indian businesses in Spain, and promoting more joint ventures. Albares stated that such partnerships are "the real example of what we have to foster and what we have to be achieving" in bilateral economic ties, citing the partnership between India's Tata Group and Spain's Herbas as an example. In terms of manufacturing, infrastructure, mobility, and industrial cooperation, his remarks reaffirmed the growing convergence between Madrid and New Delhi. Spain's plan to upgrade its relationship with India to a "strategic association," the highest level of partnership Madrid accords to close partners, was a significant political takeaway from the visit. Albares stated that he had brought a formal letter to express this goal, indicating Spain's desire to place India at the center of its foreign policy, both directly and through the European Union. In

keeping with the recent momentum of high-level exchanges, the Spanish minister also declared that Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez will soon travel to India and expressed hope that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to Spain in return. The pace of senior-level contact should continue, he said, thanking Jaishankar for being a special invitee to Spain's Ambassadors' Conference last year. Beyond diplomacy and economics, people-to-people relationships and culture also played a significant role. The logo for the "Dual Year" in 2026, which will commemorate 70 years of diplomatic ties and concentrate on culture, tourism, and artificial intelligence, was jointly introduced by both ministers. According to Albares, the logo, which was chosen through a crowdsourcing process, represented the partnership's future goals and commended the public's involvement in the project's development.

Sunita Williams Visits Delhi and Meets the Mother and Sister of Kalpana Chawla

New Delhi, Jan 21: Veteran astronaut Sunita Williams and the late Kalpana Chawla's 90-year-old mother met on Tuesday in Delhi with a warm embrace and a hint of nostalgia. American astronaut Chawla, who was born in India, was among the seven crew members who perished in the Space Shuttle Columbia accident in February 2003 when the ship broke apart during its re-entry into Earth's atmosphere. She was the first Indian woman to travel to space, therefore her passing was also greatly mourned in India. Williams, 60, participated in the interactive "Eyes on the Stars, Feet on the Ground" session on Tuesday at the American Center in this city. As the nearly hour-long event came to an end, the astronaut—dressed in his signature deep blue space overalls and space-themed canvas shoes—stepped off the dais and extended a warm embrace to Sanyogita Chawla, Chawla's mother, who was seated in the front row of the auditorium. Before leaving, Williams said she wanted to keep in touch because their meeting brought back emotions of the past. She also got to know Deepa, Kalpana Chawla's sister, who went to the ceremony



with her mother. The organizers announced in late December that Williams, who is now in India, will take part in the ninth Kerala Literature Festival (KLF) beginning on January 22. Williams, a former captain in the US Navy, was born in Euclid, Ohio, on September 19, 1965, to a Slovenian mother named Ursuline Bonnie Pandya and a Gujarati father named Deepak Pandya, who was from Jhulasan in the Mehsana region. Her father was born in India, so returning there felt like a homecoming,

she added in her succinct introductory words. "She (Williams) is like a family member," Chawla's mother later said to PTI while interacting with them outside the ceremony. The 90-year-old claimed that "she used to come to our home for three months" following the Columbia tragedy, consistently staying from dawn until night and providing consolation to "our family in grief." She recalled how Williams and Chawla used to support one another as astronauts to advance in their same career.

A small aircraft in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, crashes into a pond

New Delhi, Jan 21: Today in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, a little plane crashed into a pond. Panic was sparked when the aircraft, which was apparently an air force plane, crashed in a pond behind KP College in the city. Rescue crews and fire trucks were dispatched to the scene after locals promptly alerted the police. The location has been secured and blocked off by the administration. The number of individuals on board the airplane, their condition, and the reason for the disaster are currently unclear. The rescue effort is in progress. A private airline's small plane crashed ten kilometers before Rourkela earlier this month while it was flying from Bhubaneswar to Rourkela. Following minor injuries, all six individuals on board—four passengers and two staff members—were said to be safe. "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.

PCB informs ICC that it supports Bangladesh's decision

New Delhi: In a letter to the ICC, the Pakistan Cricket Board reportedly supported Bangladesh's position that it would not play its Twenty20 World Cup matches in India because of "security concerns". The ultimate decision about Bangladesh's participation in the T20 World Cup, including whether the team will go to India for the competition beginning on February 7, will be made by the ICC Board on Wednesday. All four of Bangladesh's group-stage games will take place in India: the first three will take place in Kolkata, and the final game will take place in Mumbai. Nonetheless, the government-backed Bangladesh Cricket Board has persisted in demanding that its games be moved to co-hosts Sri Lanka. According to "ESPNcricinfo," the PCB wrote to the international organization on the eve of the ICC conference, expressing that it agrees with the BCB's position and noting political unrest in the area. The message was copied to every member of the ICC Board. Despite numerous meetings on



the matter, including one last weekend in Dhaka, neither the ICC nor the BCB have modified their stance. The BCB has maintained that it is unable to send a squad to India, despite the ICC's insistence that the competition take place on time. Although Board sources claim that the Bangladeshi government had sought Pakistan for support at the ICC, the PCB has not publicly commented on the issue. Under a hybrid model deal with the

BCCI and ICC, Pakistan will play all of their games in Sri Lanka till 2027. The Bangladeshi problem started when the BCCI ordered the Kolkata Knight Riders to release bowler Mustafizur Rahman, citing "recent developments all around." The Bangladeshi government then outlawed IPL broadcasting, and the BCB formally notified the ICC that it would not be hosting World Cup matches in India.

Manjrekar defends Gill, Gambhir; emphasizes only World Cup truly defines ODI relevance

New Delhi: Former India cricketer-turned-commentator Sanjay Manjrekar has come out in defence of Shubman Gill and Co. following their series loss against New Zealand on home soil. India suffered their maiden ODI series defeat against the Kiwis at home after 37 years, going down 1-2 in the series. Following the loss, Manjrekar urged fans not to go overboard with criticism of the team, stating that bilateral series hardly matter in this day and age. He asked fans to look at the bigger picture, asserting that only the World Cup truly matters in world cricket, and not even the Champions Trophy. “Honestly, in 50-over cricket today, what really matters are the World Cups and not even the Champions Trophy. If you try and remember the last three Champions Trophy winners, you’ll struggle to recall those. But the 50-over World Cup, you’ll remember each winner from the time the World Cup started,” said Manjrekar in a video shared on his Instagram account.

Manjrekar added that setbacks in smaller series should not cause panic. In fact, he believes such losses can sometimes help teams reset and improve ahead of bigger events. “So, yes, if you want to have your setbacks and poor performances, get them out of the system now, in time for the next World Cup. These bilateral series are scheduled, but they are mostly warm-up games and one shouldn’t read too much into them. In fact, the importance of these bilateral series has become such that, two weeks later, no cricket fan even remembers the result of what happened in that bilateral ODI series,” he added. Ever since India’s dream run in the ODI World Cup 2023, which was brought to an end by a crushing defeat to Australia in the final, India’s performance in the 50-over format



has been on a downward curve. In the 26 matches played since then, India have won 12, lost 12, tied one, while two have ended with no result. Since 2024, the Men in Blue have lost series against Sri Lanka, Australia and New Zealand. India are scheduled to play their next ODI series in July against England. It remains to be seen whether the New Zealand loss will trigger any radical changes to the squad or the team management. Sanjay Manjrekar said that in modern 50-over cricket, only the World Cup truly matters, emphasizing its significance over other tournaments such as the Champions Trophy or bilateral series. He explained that fans are more likely to remember World Cup winners, while results from smaller series are quickly forgotten and should not be overanalyzed.

Manjrekar highlighted that setbacks in less important series can actually be helpful, allowing teams like Indiato reset before major tournaments like the World Cup. He encouraged fans and cricket followers not to panic after series losses, suggesting these matches serve more as preparation in the bigger picture of international cricket success. Manjrekar advised prioritizing the team’s performance in the upcoming World Cup instead of reacting strongly to minor defeats. Virat Kohli excelled in the IND vs NZ ODI series, delivering several standout performances and solidifying his reputation as one of the game’s greats. Across the three-match series, Kohli amassed 240 runs, including 93 in the first ODI and a century in the third, becoming the batter with the most ODI hundreds against New Zealand and surpassing milestones Such as 28,000 international runs.

Padma’s trailblazing journey: from speed skating to historic Asian hockey bronze



Ladakh: Before becoming a well-known name in Indian women’s ice hockey, Padma Chorol’s sporting journey began on the speed skating tracks of Ladakh. In a region where opportunities for girls were limited and facilities almost non-existent, Padma became trailblazer in course of her decade-old career on ice. Padma is a current India international and the assistant captain of the UT Ladakh women’s ice hockey team.

Padma hails from a family of sports persons where her brothers -- Nawang Stupdan and Tainang Dorge (an Army ice skating player) have played a decisive role in her journey, which began when she was just 10 years old. Their constant encouragement pushed Padma towards competitive ice hockey, at a time when girls were rarely seen competing on such a surface. “They always motivated me to come into ice hockey. They persuaded me to train more,

to compete, and to believe in myself. They wanted me to make a name for myself in this sport,” Padma told SAI Media recalling her early days. Padma started with speed skating, which helped her develop balance, endurance and control. Every winter, when Ladakh’s lakes froze, she gradually moved towards ice hockey. With very few girls playing the sport, Padma trained and competed alongside the boys. “That is when my game truly improved,” she said. “Playing with boys made me faster, stronger and mentally tougher. What began as a compulsion, became my greatest strength. It sharpened my physical ability and my understanding of the game.”

In 2016, when the Indian women’s national ice hockey team was formed, Padma was among its first members. “We didn’t know what international ice hockey really demanded. Just being selected for the national team felt like a huge achievement,” she said. “The ice was much faster and far more slippery. Even controlling the puck became a challenge,” Padma recalls. India’s breakthrough came in 2019, when the women’s team won the bronze medal at the IIHF Women’s Challenge Cup of Asia Division I -- a moment that Validated years of unseen Struggle and

hard work. Then came the pandemic. COVID-19 brought competitions and training to a halt, keeping players away from international ice for nearly three years. It was a very difficult time mentally, but we never lost belief,” Padma said. That belief bore fruit in 2025, when India returned to the international stage at the IIHF Women’s Asia Cup in the United Arab Emirates. Despite numerous challenges, the team secured a historic bronze medal -- India’s second Asian podium finish. “That medal was extremely emotional. It made us realise where we started-from frozen lakes and borrowed equipment-and where we had reached,” Padma said. She credited Khelo India Winter Games for changing the face of ice hockey in the country. “Khelo India has completely changed the ecosystem,” Padma said. “It is nurturing young talent and providing regular competitive platforms. Earlier, ice hockey was seen as only Ladakh’s sport. Now players from other states are gaining exposure, experience and confidence through Khelo India.” She credited Khelo India Winter Games for changing the face of ice hockey in the country. “Khelo India has completely changed the ecosystem,” Padma said. When the Indian she said.

Virat Kohli scores, returns London; former batter says domestic cricket unnecessary

Kaif praises Kohli’s hunger, form despite skipping domestics

New Delhi: Former India cricketer turned commentator Mohammad Kaif has said that Virat Kohli no longer needs to play domestic cricket, as his hunger and passion to represent the country remain unmatched. Kohli continued his rich vein of form in the recent three-match series against New Zealand, scoring 240 runs from three innings. He played a splendid knock of 124 off 108 balls, laced with ten fours and three sixes, during the third ODI, albeit in a losing cause as India fell short of the 337-run target. Following yet another prolific series, Mohammad Kaif praised the batting stalwart for maintaining remarkable consistency despite not playing regularly.

“Virat has become that player who is seen once in a while now. But he comes, scores runs, and then goes back to London. It has become like that. He comes, scores, and goes. It is not easy to score so consistently when you are not playing regularly. But it is his passion, his fitness, his pride in



playing for the country, his knowledge of the game, and his own preparation. He has Proved it,” Kaif said on his YouTube channel. Kaif also mentioned that there is no need for Kohli to play domestic cricket anymore, as players can get match practice elsewhere, but the passion to play for the country at the highest level is truly unmatched. “There is no need for him to play domestic cricket now. Anyone can get match practice, but the passion he has is not available in any market. Where will you get that from? Even in the last game, he was the hope. Virat will single-handedly win against 10 players

standing in front of him too,” he added. Kohli has been in tremendous form ever since the third ODI against Australia in Sydney in 2025. He has accumulated 616 runs from his last seven innings At an average of 123.2 and a strike rate of 108.64, with three centuries and as many fifties to his name. Courtesy of his sensational form, he has climbed back to the top of the ICC ODI rankings after four years. Meanwhile, Kohli will next be seen in action in July, as India take on England in a three-match ODI series. Virat Kohli scored a total of 240 runs in the recent ODI series against New Zealand. He was in ex-

cellent form throughout the three-match series, with a standout performance of 124 runs in the third ODI, cementing his consistent role as a top batter for India.

According to former cricketer Mohammad Kaif, Kohli’s remarkable run tally of 240 runs from three innings highlighted his ongoing hunger and passion for international cricket, despite not participating in domestic matches Virat Kohli. Kohli’s 124 in the final match was lauded as a splendid knock, even though it came in a losing cause for India. Kaif also emphasized that Kohli’s preparation and fitness are key to his sustained consistency at the highest level. In addition to his century, Kohli’s performances in the series were pivotal and further reinforced his position atop the ICC ODI rankings.

Virat Kohli scored 124 runs in the third ODI against New Zealand. Despite his In This performance months. It was no different on Tuesday as the West Indian and her opening partner Sajeevan Sajana fell cheaply total.

Vinicius shines with goal and three assists as Real Madrid crush Monaco 6-1, delighting fans

Vinicius celebrates with teammates, salutes Arbeloa

Madrid: With three assists and a goal, Vinicius Júnior quieted the fans who had booed him again at the start of Real Madrid’s 6-1 rout over Monaco in the Champions League on Tuesday. Part of Santiago Bernabeu Stadium crowd jeered the Brazil forward nearly every time he touched the ball early on in the league-phase game in Madrid, but the boos dissipated as the match went on and were virtually gone by the time Vinicius scored his first Champions League goal of the season in the 63rd minute. “The last few days had been very tough, not only for me but for my teammates as well,” Vinicius said. “It was especially complicated for me because of the boos, because of what was being said about me. I’m always under the spotlight and I don’t want to be under the spotlight for what happens off the field, only for the things that I do on the field and for everything I’ve done for this club.”

Vinicius said the “demand



is always high” at Real Madrid. “Not always I’ll be at my best technically, but I try to give my all for this jersey and for this club that has given me so much,” he said. “When we play at home we need the support of the fans so everything can go back to normal. We want to win and the fans also want to win, and if we are together we will win great things this season.” The early boos were not nearly as loud as they were Saturday in Madrid’s 2-0 win over Levante in the Spanish league. Both times fans jeered when Vinicius’ name was announced in the

starting lineup, but this time the game ended with fans on Vinicius’ side as he was chosen the man of the match. Vinicius has been having a lackluster season and some fans viewed him as one of the reasons why coach Xabi Alonso was replaced last week. Vinicius had spat with Alonso, a former Madrid and Spain great as a player who was replaced as a coach following a tumultuous eight-month stint. Vinicius was reportedly the main player not backing Alonso in the locker room.

Vinicius scored his goal on Tuesday with a well-placed

strike after getting past a couple of defenders and hitting the upper corner. He did not go toward the fans to celebrate, and instead hugged his teammates near midfield and then ran toward the sideline to salute and hug new Madrid coach Álvaro Arbeloa. “More than hugging me, he was hugging the Madrid fans,” Arbeloa said. “We are all very happy with this reconciliation between Vini and the fans. It’s what we wanted. He needs the Bernabeu and the Bernabeu enjoyed Vini and will keep enjoying him.” Vinicius has assists in goals by Kylian Mbappé in the 26th and Franco Mastantuono in the 51st. The Brazilian also assisted with a cross that led to an own-goal by Monaco defender Thilo Kehrer in the 55th. “Vini, we are behind you,” read a banner held by a fan at the Bernabeu. Mbappé scored in the fifth minute to put the hosts ahead. He hugged Vinicius after his second goal later in the first half — and again following the final whistle.

Sinner sparks Australian Open buzz

Melbourne: Jannik Sinner did not command much attention as the 2026 season’s first Grand Slam stop arrived in Melbourne. Carlos Alcaraz’s bid for a career Grand Slam without Juan Carlos Ferrero, Novak Djokovic’s ninth attempt at a historic 25th major, and Roger Federer’s farewell exhibition drew far more traction ahead of the Australian Open. By the end of the opening round on Tuesday, however, Sinner had firmly stormed into the conversation, not just for his return to winning ways at Rod Laver Arena, but also for already having Melbourne buzzing with “finalist” talk. Slotted into the bottom-most section of the draw, the two-time defending champion was the last of the top seeds to take the court in the opening round of the year’s first Grand Slam. He kick-started his bid for a historic Australian Open three-peat with.

Jemimah’s composed fifty powers Delhi Capitals to tense Mumbai win

Vadodara: Jemimah Rodrigues led from the front to anchor Delhi Capitals’ tense run-chase with a gritty fifty, guiding her team to a much-needed seven-wicket win over Mumbai Indians in the Women’s Premier League here on Tuesday. Put in to bat on a slow surface, Mumbai Indians’ struggles in the powerplay continued before Nat Sciver-Brunt played another blinder (66 not out off 45) to take her team to 154 for five. After a rather productive start provided by Lizelle Lee (46 off 28) and Shafali Verma (29 off 24), Delhi Capitals lost their way in the middle overs before Jemimah (51 not out off 37) calmed nerves in the dressing room by completing the chase in 19 overs. Veteran Marizanne Kapp (10 not out off 6) provided the support that Jemimah needed at the other end and closed out the match with a six. It was Delhi Capitals’ second win in five games,



while Mumbai Indians suffered their fourth loss in six matches. “We really need to push when we are batting and bowling in the powerplay,” said Mumbai Indians captain Harmanpreet Kaur after the loss. In the powerplay, Shafali missed connecting with a flatter delivery down the leg side from left-arm spinner Vaishnavi Sharma to see her stumps rattled.

South African Lee, who is in red-hot form thus far, was disappointed after being adjudged stumped off Amanjot Kaur in the 11th over. The umpire took time in making

the call after Lee slightly lost her balance off another delivery down the leg side.

Despite Hayley Matthews’ return from injury, Mumbai Indians have not been able to get going in the powerplay. It was no different on Tuesday as the West Indian and her opening partner Sajeevan Sajana fell cheaply, both seeing their stumps disturbed. For Delhi Capitals, Marizanne Kapp was accurate as ever and ended up conceding just eight runs in four overs, besides casting Matthews. The onus was Harmanpreet Kaur the team to a competitive total.

Gabriel Jesus returns to lineup, Arsenal make history with Champions League win at Inter



Milan: Gabriel Jesus returns to lineup, Arsenal make history with Champions League win at Inter The Arsenal forward was given only his third start this season and he scored twice in a dynamic first half to set his side on the way to a 3-1 victory at Inter Milan in the Champions League on Tuesday. Jesus, who was named player of the match at San Siro, was out for almost a year after tearing his ACL last January. It’s a dream night. I always dreamed of being a footballer,” Jesus told Amazon Prime. “I watched when I was a kid, I watched a lot of Serie A, so to be here in this stadium and score here is tears in my eyes because I always dreamed of being here. There is always a reason that things happen even whether it’s good things or difficult things. I learned that during my 11 months out of the field.” Jesus returned in December but has made mainly substitute appearances since then, with his only starts prior to Tuesday coming in domestic cup competitions. However, Arsenal coach Mikel Arteta named the Brazilian in the starting lineup at San Siro in place of

Viktor Gyökeres, who has struggled to adapt since his big-money move from Sporting Lisbon in the summer.

Everyone wants to start,” Jesus added. “I am a very respectful guy. I am not a kid anymore, I am 28, so I understand football. I am very happy Vik came on and scored a goal. I am so happy I scored and Vik scored.” Jesus fired Arsenal in front in the 10th minute with an instinctive finish to stretch out his leg and get on the end of a scuffed Jurrien Timber shot. It was his first Champions League goal in more than two years, since netting in a group match against Lens in November 2023. Inter leveled eight minutes later through Petar Susic, but Jesus was again in the right place at the right time to again put Arsenal in front in the 31st minute. Bukayo Saka swung in a corner from the right to the far post, where Leandro Trossard nodded it back across for Jesus to head home. Gyökeres came on for Jesus in the 75th and scored Arsenal’s third, nine minutes later. This is great, we’ve been missing Gabby a lot,” Arteta said. “It’s going to raise his confident level, that of the team’s because we have now different profiles in that position. And the fact that those players are playing at that level — Victor comes in, he had a great impact as well in the game — it only makes us better and that’s what we’re seeking.” The victory assured table-topping Arsenal of a spot in the knockout stage of the Champions League and also saw it win seven

European games in a row for the first time in its history. Arsenal has never won the Champions League, although it reached the final in 2006 — losing to Barcelona.

Arteta’s side also tops the Premier League, with a seven-point advantage, and hosts Manchester United on Sunday. Liverpool snatched a 1-0 win away to Inter Milan in the Champions League on Tuesday without unsettled star Mohamed Salah, while Chelsea slipped to defeat against Atalanta and Barcelona overcame Eintracht Frankfurt. Dominik Szoboszlai scored a late penalty as Liverpool snapped Inter’s 18-game unbeaten home run in Europe despite the absence of Salah, who was left out of the squad after his extraordinary public criticism of manager Arne Slot.

Szoboszlai drilled his spot-kick past Yann Sommer two minutes from time at the San Siro after Alessandro Bastoni was punished for tugging the shirt of substitute Florian Wirtz, clinching a much-needed win for the troubled Premier League champions. “It’s a dream night. I always dreamed of being a footballer,” Jesus told Amazon Prime. “I watched when I was a kid, I watched a lot of Serie A, so to be here in this stadium and score here is tears in my eyes because I always dreamed of being here. There is always a reason that things happen even whether it’s good things or difficult things. I learned that during my 11 months out of the field.