

Arunachal Pradesh flags key infrastructure needs at Centre’s pre-budget consultation

Itanagar, Jan 12: Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein on January 10 sought strong support from the Centre for the state’s major infrastructure requirements during the pre-budget consultation meeting for the Union Budget 2026–27. The meeting was chaired by Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The consultation brought together governors, chief ministers, deputy chief ministers and finance ministers from various states and Union Territories, along with senior officials from the Ministry of Finance. The discussions focused on fiscal challenges, development priorities and policy suggestions ahead of the presentation of the next Union Budget. Speaking at the meeting, Mein said that Arunachal Pradesh, despite its difficult terrain, remoteness and long-standing development challenges, has made steady progress over the years. He stressed that the state government has maintained strict financial discipline



and has followed the provisions of the Arunachal Pradesh Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2006. The deputy chief minister informed the Centre that Arunachal Pradesh has been meeting all its committed liabilities on time. He said the state has taken careful steps to ensure that spending remains within limits and that financial management remains transparent and responsible. Placing the state’s demands before the Centre, Mein highlighted several

key infrastructure projects that require central assistance. He said there is an urgent need to improve water supply and drainage systems in Itanagar and other growing urban areas of the state. According to him, better urban infrastructure is essential to address public health concerns and improve the quality of life for residents. A major point raised by the deputy chief minister was the importance of the strategic Rupai–Wakro–Parashuram Kund railway line. He said the

project would play a crucial role in improving connectivity in eastern Arunachal Pradesh. Mein pointed out that the railway line would not only strengthen border infrastructure but also help boost religious tourism, especially to Parashuram Kund, which attracts a large number of devotees every year. He added that the project has already received clearance from the Ministry of Defence, underlining its strategic importance. Mein also drew attention to the lim-

Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, during a pre-budget consultation meeting on January 10, called for strong Centre support for the state’s infrastructure needs ahead of the Union Budget 2026–27.

ited access Arunachal Pradesh has to externally aided projects. He said that due to its geographical and logistical challenges, the state often faces difficulties in mobilising additional resources. In this context, he urged the Centre to continue providing support to help bridge resource gaps and maintain the current pace of development. Reiterating the state government’s approach, the deputy chief minister said Arunachal Pradesh remains committed to fiscal prudence and close coordination with the Centre. He emphasised that sustained cooperation between the state and central governments is essential to ensure inclusive and balanced development across all regions of the state.

In Brief

Seismic Safety Conclave Held at NEDFi, Guwahati

Guwahati: A seismic safety awareness event organized by NeFocus and RVC at NEDFi Auditorium highlighted the need for collective efforts to manage earthquake risks in Northeast India. Attended by geoscientists, experts, and over 200 participants including students and government officials, the event featured discussions led by Gaikungam Rongmei on the region’s seismic vulnerability and collaborative strategies. Insights were shared on earthquake-resistant construction, and a mock drill demonstrated preparedness measures. This gathering reflects a growing awareness of seismic safety in the area.

Mizoram Assembly Budget Session to begin on February 17

Aizawl: The Budget Session of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly is set to begin on February 17, focusing on financial planning and key legislative matters. The full schedule, including the presentation date for the 2026–27 budget, is yet to be finalized by the Business Advisory Committee (BAC). The BAC, chaired by Speaker Lalbiakzama, will determine the session’s duration based on the legislative agenda. This sixth session of the ninth Assembly, led by Chief Minister Lalduhoma of the Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM), will address governance, development, and public welfare alongside budget discussions, emphasizing the government’s financial and policy priorities for the upcoming year.

Three arrested with Yaba tablets

Imphal: Security forces in Manipur’s Tengenoupal district arrested three suspected drug smugglers and seized approximately 5.89 kilograms of yaba tablets, valued over ₹1 crore, during a checkpoint operation on January 12. The operation was based on specific intelligence regarding narcotics movement. The individuals arrested—James Baite (28), Hatneikim Baite (50), and David T Mate (41)—were taken into custody for further questioning. Yaba, a form of methamphetamine known for its stimulant effects, poses significant public health risks, particularly among the youth.

Gaurav Gogoi slams Assam CM

Guwahati: The Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) held a mass induction program in Guwahati, welcoming notable leaders from rival parties ahead of the Assembly elections. APCC president Gaurav Gogoi criticized Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for misleading the public and failing to uphold democratic institutions. New members included former BJP leaders and community representatives. Gogoi emphasized the need for justice, unity, and protection of rights in Assam, claiming the BJP was manipulating electoral processes and targeting specific voter demographics. He promised that the Congress would ensure equitable voter rights and protect community interests.

AIIMS Guwahati Observes 6th Institute Day

Guwahati: The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Guwahati celebrated its 6th Institute Day with participation from students, faculty, and dignitaries. Prof. Ashok Puranik reflected on the Institute’s growth from its temporary campus to its current location, highlighting achievements in medical education, patient care, and research.

Major fire hits Diphu Market, significant property loss

Diphu, Oct 22: Early on October 21, a huge fire at Diphu Market destroyed three stores and seriously damaged a lot of other property. A hardware store, a paan shop, and a biscuit bakery are among the businesses impacted. Before firefighters arrived, local people and traders raced to the site and tried to contain the fire. They tried, but the fire spread quickly and destroyed all three stores. Later, firefighters were able to contain the fire and stop it from spreading to other homes and stalls. The losses are valued at several lakh rupees, according to the authorities. Thankfully, there have been no reports of casualties or injuries. According to preliminary indications, an electrical short circuit may have started the incident, however authorities have launched.

Purbi dairy celebrates footprint expansion with pre-magh Bihu event

Guwahati, Jan 12: Northeast India’s largest dairy cooperative, Purabi Dairy, celebrated pre-Magh Bihu at its dairy processing plant in Guwahati on Monday, marking a year of strong growth, wider farmer participation and expanding presence across Assam’s dairy landscape.

Addressing mediapersons during the event, officials of the West Assam Milk Producers’ Cooperative Union Ltd (WAMUL) highlighted that Purabi Dairy has grown from strength to strength over the past year, registering significant increase in milk production and procurement, along with steady expansion of its cooperative network.

The number of Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCS) under Purabi has increased during the year, while the cooperative dairy system has also strengthened considerably in Upper Assam, bringing more farmers into the organised dairy fold and ensuring stable income opportunities at the grassroots level. “Purabi Dairy’s focus has always been



farmer-first growth. By strengthening procurement systems, expanding our co-operative base and improving market access, we are ensuring that dairy farming becomes a more reliable and sustainable livelihood for thousands of rural families across Assam,” WAMUL Managing Director Sameer Kumar Parida said.

During the year, Purabi Dairy also expanded its product portfolio with the launch of Purabi Traditional Indian Sweets, receiving encouraging response from consumers. Value-added products such as flavoured milk and ice cream

continue to witness strong demand, while longer shelf-life products like UHT milk have enabled Purabi to reach newer and more distant markets.

With a stronger distribution network, Purabi products are now available across a wider geography, ensuring consistent supply and improved consumer access.

In Guwahati, several new Purabi Milk Booths were opened during the year under partnership initiatives with Assam State Transport Corporation (ASTC) and Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA), further

strengthening last-mile delivery and local entrepreneurship.

Officials reiterated that while consumer outreach has expanded, Purabi’s core mission remains strengthening the rural economy. Continuous capacity building, assured procurement, timely payments and technical support are helping farmers improve productivity and income stability.

Looking ahead, Purabi Dairy is preparing for the next phase of infrastructure expansion with new milk processing plants coming up in Silchar, Jorhat and Dibrugarh, which will further boost local procurement, reduce transportation costs and support region-specific dairy development in Barak Valley and Upper Assam.

The pre-Magh Bihu celebration on Monday featured traditional Assamese food items prepared using Purabi dairy products, along with cultural performances, creating a festive atmosphere reflecting the harvest spirit of the season.

Seismic Safety Conclave Held at NEDFi, Guwahati

Guwahati, Jan 12: A seismic safety awareness event organized by NeFocus in collaboration with RVC at NEDFi Auditorium on Saturday emphasized the importance of collective efforts in mitigating earthquake risks in Northeast India. The event brought together geoscientists, experts, students, researchers, and government officials to discuss strategies for earthquake management. Gaikungam Rongmei, Director of the Earthquake Division, Geographical Survey of India, highlighted the region’s seismic vulnerability and stressed the need for collaborative approaches.

Anand Kanu, UNICEF Coordinator, and geologist Hemanta Borgohain also shared insights on earthquake-resistant construction and awareness. A mock drill demon-



stration was conducted to showcase preparedness measures.

The event saw participation from over 200 students, senior citizens,

volunteers, and Media personnel, underscoring the growing awareness about Seismic safety in the region.

Three arrested with Yaba tablets worth over Rs 1 crore in Manipur’s Tengenoupal

Imphal, Jan 12: Security forces have arrested three suspected drug smugglers and seized a large quantity of yaba tablets during a checkpoint operation in Manipur’s Tengenoupal district, police said on Monday, January 12. According to police officials, the operation was carried out in the jurisdiction of Tengenoupal district following specific intelligence inputs about the movement of narcotics through the area. Acting on the information, security personnel set up a checkpoint and stopped a vehicle for checking. During a thorough search of the vehicle, a large consignment of yaba tablets was recovered.

The seized drugs weighed around 5.89 kilograms. Police said the consignment is estimated to be worth more than ₹1 crore in the illegal market, making it a significant haul. The recovery points to a serious attempt to smuggle narcotics through the border district, which has remained under close watch due to repeated incidents of drug trafficking. The three arrested persons have been identified as James Baite (28), Hatneikim Baite (50), and David T Mate (41). All three were taken into custody on the spot and later brought to the police station for further questioning. A case has been registered under relevant sections of the law.



Yaba, which is also known as “crazy medicine,” is a tablet form of methamphetamine and is considered a highly dangerous and addictive drug.

Officials said the drug has a strong stimulant effect and poses a serious threat to public health, especially to young people.



sented, has not yet been finalised. The detailed programme will be decided by the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) of the Assembly in its upcoming meeting. Additional Secretary of the Assembly Secretariat, Lalthangmawia, said the BAC, which is chaired by Speaker Lalbiakzama, is yet to sit and prepare the roadmap for the session. He added that the committee will also decide how long the session will continue, depending on the amount of official business to be taken up during the sitting.

ment (ZPM) government came to power. The ZPM government, led by Chief Minister Lalduhoma, assumed office in December 2023 after winning the Assembly elections. The Budget Session is considered one of the most important sittings of the Assembly, as it lays out the government’s financial priorities and policy direction for the coming year. During the session, members of the Assembly are expected to debate budget proposals, raise questions on public spending and discuss development works across the state.

Newborn's body found abandoned in Assam's Dhubri, sparks public outcry

Guwahati, Jan 12: A tragic discovery at Jogamaya Ghat in Assam's Dhubri town triggered shock and outrage on Saturday, January 10 evening after the body of a newborn girl was found abandoned at the riverside, prompting police action and renewed concerns over child welfare and accountability. According to local sources, the infant, with a navel clip still attached to the umbilical cord stump, was found dead shortly after a marine engine boat, reportedly bound for Salmara, departed from the ghat. Moments later, residents noticed the newborn lying abandoned at the site, sending shockwaves through the locality and drawing a large crowd to the area. The discovery led to a tense and chaotic situation as distraught locals gathered at the ghat, expressing anguish and anger over the incident. Citizens immediately informed the authorities, following which Dhubri Sadar Police swung into action.

Officer-in-Charge of Dhubri Sadar Police Station, Pritam Das, arrived at the spot along with a police team. The area was secured, and the body of the newborn was taken into custody and sent to Dhubri Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) for post-mortem examination to ascertain the exact cause of death. Police have launched an investigation into the incident and are examining all possible angles, including the timing and passenger details of the Salmara-bound boat, to determine whether there is any link between the vessel's departure and the abandonment of the infant.



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Indian Army launches pilot home delivery of medicines for veterans in Sikkim

Sikkim, Jan 12: Significant step towards strengthening veteran welfare, the Indian Army's Trishakti Corps has launched a pilot initiative for home delivery of essential medicines to entitled veterans in Sikkim. The service is being implemented through the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) Polyclinic in Gangtok, in collaboration with the Department of Posts and CSC e-Governance Services India Limited. The initiative aims to ensure safe, timely and hassle-free delivery of medicines, particularly benefiting veterans living in remote and hard-to-reach areas of the state.

During the initial phase, the ECHS Polyclinic, Gangtok identified around 58 long-distance beneficiaries residing in South, North and West Sikkim. Many of these veterans face significant challenges in collecting medicines in person due to difficult terrain, long travel distances and mobility issues, especially among elderly and physically vulnerable beneficiaries. Officials said that based on the results of the pilot project, the polyclinic plans to expand the home delivery service to all identified beneficiaries in the next phase. The proposed expansion is expected to improve access to healthcare, ensure



continuity of treatment and substantially reduce the travel burden on senior citizens and physically challenged veterans.

The initiative is part of a pan-India programme of the Central Organisation Ex-Servicemen Health

Scheme (ECHS) under the Adjutant General's Branch. It underscores the Indian Army's continued commitment to the welfare of veterans and its efforts to make their lives safer, healthier and more dignified.

Peace meet held in Tura Rajabala incident admin appeals for calm, warns against rumours

Shillong, Jan 12: A peace meeting in connection with the recent Rajabala incident was held today at 11 am, January 10, at the Conference Hall of the Tura Circuit House to reinforce peace and communal harmony in West Garo Hills district. The meeting was convened by the Deputy Commissioner of West Garo Hills, Tura, and chaired by Vibhor Aggarwal, Deputy Commissioner. It was attended by the Superintendent of Police, West Garo Hills, along with prominent religious leaders and representatives of various organisations, including the Central Puja Committee, Tura Mosque, Senior Citizens Forum, Tura Mother's Union, and several social and youth organisations from across the Tura region. Senior district officials were also present to ensure coordination and follow-up action. During the meeting, all stakeholders were urged to maintain peace and communal harmony and to refrain from spreading or supporting rumours that could disturb public order. The district administration reiterated that law and order remain under control and assured participants of strict action against any attempt to incite unrest. The meeting aimed to promote dialogue, mutual understanding, and collective responsibility in the wake of the Rajabala incident, while reassuring the public of the administration's commitment to maintaining peace and stability across the district.



Shutdown in Kokrajhar over rape of mentally-challenged woman

Shillong, Jan 12: Normal life was disrupted on Sunday in Assam's Kokrajhar district, where a bandh was called to protest the alleged rape of a mentally-challenged woman. Markets and business establishments remained shut, and public transport stayed off the roads as a result of the bandh called by the World Hindu Federation. Prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita were imposed to prevent any deterioration of the law and order situation, officials said. The incident of rape happened in the Patharghat area of the district on Saturday. The accused, who hailed from Dhubri district, has been apprehended, they said. Additional forces were deployed at sensitive locations to maintain peace, they said. The administration urged the people not to be swayed by rumours, and warned of strict legal action against those indulging in rumour-mongering. People were asked to report misleading information to the district control room. District Commissioner Pankaj Chakravarty and Senior Superintendent of Police Akshat Garg held a peace meeting with representatives of political parties, social organisations, student bodies, and noted citizens to ensure that the situation does not escalate. Chakravarty said the district administration was closely monitoring the situation and had taken necessary measures to ensure public peace and tranquillity.

Scientists discover two new frog species in Arunachal

Itanagar, Jan 12: Scientists have discovered two new frog species in Arunachal Pradesh. The newly identified species – Leptobrachium somani (Soman's Slender Armed frog) and Leptobrachium mechuka (Mechuka Slender Armed Frog), belong to the slender armed frog genus Leptobrachium. The discovery was announced in a research paper published in the international scientific journal PeerJ on January 9. Globally, 39 species of this genus are known, of which only four had earlier been reported from India. The study was authored by A N Dikshit, Akalabya Sarmah, Sonali Garg, Tage Tajo, Radhakrishna Upadhyaya K, James Hanken and S D Biju. The researchers are from the Systematics Lab, Department of Environmental Studies, University of Delhi, and the Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology and the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University. The study notes that both species belong to the Leptobrachium bompu species group and show clear genetic differences, confirming them as distinct species. Samples of the frogs were collected from the Lower Dibang Valley and Shi Yomi districts of Arunachal Pradesh, regions known for their dense forests and river systems. Leptobrachium mechuka has been named after the town of Mechuka in Shi-Yomi district, while Leptobrachium somani honours veteran journalist E Somanath, a former senior special correspondent of the Malayala Manorama.

SKOCH Awards: Meghalaya wins one Gold, two silvers



Shillong, Jan 12: Meghalaya has won one gold and two silver honours at the SKOCH Awards, showcasing excellence in innovation and inclusive development, Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma said on Sunday.

Meghalaya won Gold Award on Mushroom Development Centre at Upper Shillong for its work as a Shitake Production and Training Centre, which has helped promote skill development, value addition and income generation among farmers.

The state also secured two Silver awards. The Mawlai Community and Rural Development (C&RD) Block was recognised for its community-driven development initiatives, while the Directorate of Tourism's Nongwar Tourism Project was honoured for promoting sustainable, community-based tourism while preserving local culture and natural heritage.

"Meghalaya Shines at the SKOCH Awards

with One Gold and Two Silver Honours, showcasing excellence in innovation and inclusive development.

"The Gold Award was awarded to the Mushroom Development Centre, Upper Shillong, for its outstanding work as a Shitake Production and Training Centre.

The Silver Awards were for the Malai C&RD Block, recognizing its impactful community-driven development initiatives, and for the Tourist Directorate's Nongwar Tourism Project, which highlights the state's efforts to promote sustainable, community-based tourism while preserving local culture and natural heritage," the CM posed on X.

Congratulating the departments, field functionaries and community members involved, the CM said the recognition reflects Meghalaya's focus on people-centric development models.

Tripura's situation is tight following conflicts between two communities

Communal violence in Tripura's Unakoti

Agartala, Jan 12: A day after clashes broke out between two communities over the collection of subscriptions for a local fair, the situation remained tense but calm in the Kumarghat subdivision of Tripura's Unakoti district on Sunday, police said. A senior police official in Agartala said that the police on Saturday detained 10 persons from both communities. The official added that on Sunday, the police arrested seven of the detainees and presented them at a local court, seeking police custody. A huge contingent of Assam Rifles, Tripura State Rifles (TSR), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and state police were deployed in the trouble-torn areas. Ten people were arrested in connection with the communal clashes in Tripura's Unakoti district, police said on Sunday. The violence happened on Saturday in Saidarpar in the Kumarghat sub-division over the collection of 'chanda' or subscription for a local temple, they said. Superintendent of Police Avinash Kumar Rai told PTI that no fresh violence has been reported, with paramilitary forces conducting foot patrolling in the sensitive areas. "Ten people have been arrested for their alleged link to the violence. Prohibitory orders under section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita remain in force in the area, and internet service continues to remain suspended. We will review the situation in due course and decide if the restrictions can be eased, he said. Rai said four police personnel were injured in the clashes, apart from six civilians. Congress legislature party leader Birajit Sinha alleged that he was stopped from visiting the violence-affected area. "We were going to meet the affected villagers at Saidarpar after yesterday's clashes, but were prevented by the police, who cited security reasons. I strongly protest this," he told the reporters. Leader of Opposition Jitendra Chaudhury slammed the BJP-led government, alleging that it failed to protect the lives and

properties of people of the minority community. "When Kumarghat was burning, the chief minister was busy leading a roadshow in Kanchanpur in North Tripura. He has not made any statement against the communal violence," he said. Stat BJP president Rajib Bhattacharjee condemned the violence and lauded the role of the police for taking action against the perpetrators. "The security forces led by senior officials are conducting regular patrolling and closely watching the situation. There has been no fresh incident since Saturday night," Additional Superintendent of Police of Unakoti district Rupam Chakma told the media. He said that if anyone spreads any rumour or fake photos and videos, stern action would be taken against the individual and the group. Another police official said that additional security forces were also deployed in mixed-populated areas and at religious places. Prohibitory orders were also imposed in Kumarghat subdivision of Unakoti district on Saturday after clashes broke out between two communities over the collection of subscriptions for a local fair, leaving at least five to six persons injured and a few houses and properties gutted, officials said. Internet services have also been suspended across the Kumarghat Sub-Division for 48 hours as a precautionary measure. In a letter to the District Magistrate, the Superintendent of Police (SP), Unakoti district, requested the shutdown of all internet services, stating that a sudden and serious law-and-order situation erupted in the Fatikroy police station area following communal violence. "The shutdown of all internet services has been necessitated as a precautionary measure to control the law-and-order situation by restricting the spread of false propaganda and messages," the SP said in the letter. According to police, trouble began on Saturday when a group of youths stopped a timber-laden vehicle at Saidarpar under Fatikroy police station limits and



demanding a subscription for a community fair. Tension escalated after a minority family in the Shimultala area allegedly refused to contribute, following which an unruly mob gathered and set fire to a few houses, vehicles and properties, including a timber shop, and vandalised a place of worship. The situation quickly turned volatile as news of the incident spread across the mixed-population locality. Following incidents of arson, vandalism and damage to properties, including a place of worship, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of Kumarghat imposed Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, to prevent further escalation of tension and maintain law and order. Acting Superintendent of Police Avinash Rai, accompanied by District Magistrate Tamal Majumder and other senior officials, rushed to the affected areas with additional forces and reviewed the security arrangements. On the extent of the damage, the police official said a detailed assessment is being carried out by district administration officials.

Police and central paramilitary forces conducted flag marches even as tension prevailed in some pockets of the area. The situation remains under close surveillance, and authorities have appealed to the public to maintain peace and refrain from

spreading rumours. Meanwhile, state BJP President Rajib Bhattacharjee, state Congress President Ashis Kumar Saha, and Leader of Opposition and CPI(M) state Secretary Jitendra Chaudhury separately condemned the violence and appealed for peace and calm.

Senior Congress leader and former minister Birajit Sinha, along with Unakoti district Congress president Md. Badruzzaman, on Sunday went to visit the incident site to assess the situation.

However, when they attempted to interact with the affected minority families and conduct an on-the-spot inspection, they were allegedly prevented by the police administration, triggering serious allegations. Against this backdrop, the Congress leaders claimed that they were stopped by the authorities when they went to stand in solidarity with the affected families on Sunday. Condemning the incident in strong words, Sinha, also a Congress MLA from the nearby areas, termed it a "violation of democratic rights." "If speaking to ordinary citizens who have fallen victim to violence is treated as a crime, then nothing called democracy remains in the state. The question arises as to whose interests the administration is trying to protect by suppressing the truth," Sinha told the media.

Tripura CM raises border traffic concerns

Agartala, Jan 12: Tripura Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha on Monday announced that he would raise the issue of recurring traffic congestion at Churaibari, located on the Assam-Tripura border, with his Assam counterpart to seek a long-term solution. Addressing reporters after concluding his tour of North Tripura district, Dr. Saha said he personally inspected the Churaibari check post following repeated complaints from locals. He noted that vehicle checks on the Assam side were being carried out in a cramped space, often forcing long queues of trucks and cars to remain stuck for hours. He directed officials to take firm measures after listening to grievances from the public. The chief minister also highlighted environmental concerns in the area. He said a stone crushing unit, which locals

alleged was causing heavy pollution, was found closed during his visit. Such units, he reminded, are required to operate at a prescribed distance from national highways. When asked about clearance, the operators claimed they had applied for environmental approval. Dr. Saha stressed that poor monitoring had worsened the situation and insisted that dust suppression and other safeguards must be enforced. He further pointed out that stones transported for crushing were often carried in overloaded vehicles. While fines were being levied, he said the penalties were too small to deter violations, calling for stricter reforms to curb the practice. During the trip, Dr. Saha also inspected the Indian Oil depot, where he was briefed about an alleged extortion racket targeting drivers. He instructed officials not to directly.

Meghalaya unveils Christmas tourism policy

Shillong, Jan 12: The Meghalaya government is preparing a pioneering ‘Christmas Tourism Policy’ to turn the state’s indigenous festive celebrations into an organised global attraction, with special attention on the Garo Hills. Tourism Minister Timothy D. Shira said on Saturday that the policy aims to leverage the significant tourist influx seen during the Christmas and New Year period, ensuring a more structured approach to festive tourism. According to the minister, last year’s festive season was highly successful, with multiple events held across the state drawing large crowds. With several tourism projects and destinations nearing completion, the government anticipates even higher tourist. The proposed policy is designed to reinforce Meghalaya’s reputation as top destination for periods. holiday periods.

Ten arrested after communal clash in Tripura’s Unakoti, internet services suspended

Agartala, Jan 12: At least ten people have been arrested following communal clashes that broke out in Tripura’s Unakoti district, prompting the administration to impose prohibitory orders and suspend internet services to prevent the situation from worsening. Police officials said the situation is now under control and no fresh incidents of violence have been reported so far. The violence erupted on January 10 at Saidarpar village under the Kumarghat sub-division. According to the police, tensions flared during the collection of ‘chanda’ or voluntary subscription for a local temple, which later escalated into clashes between two groups. The incident quickly led

Assam Govt asks DCs to fix prices of meat, dairy products ahead of Magh Bihu

Guwahati, Jan 12: Ahead of the Uruka feast and Magh Bihu festivities, the Assam government has directed all District Commissioners to fix and enforce prices for meat, eggs, milk and dairy products in their respective districts.

The directive is aimed at preventing artificial price hikes and protecting consumers from exploitation during the festive season.

“All DCs are directed to take urgent action fix the prices of meat, egg, milk and dairy products in their respective districts in the event of the upcoming Magh Bihu in the state,” the order issued by the Assam Veterinary and Ani-

mal Husbandry department, read.

“You are further requested to set up monitoring teams in your respective district to monitor whether vendors are selling meat, eggs, milk and dairy products as per the prices fixed,” the order read.

Assam Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Minister Krishnendu Paul had on Saturday issued a stern warning to traders against any arbitrary hike in fish and meat prices during Uruka (on January 13), the eve of the harvest festival.

The Minister cautioned that any attempt to exploit consumers through artificial price escalation would be followed up with strict punitive action.

Speaking at a programme in Guwahati, Paul asserted that traders must strictly adhere to the rates fixed by the respective DCs. “Fish and meat prices cannot be increased at will during the festive period. Any deviation from the government-approved rates will not be tolerated,” he said.

The Minister also announced the formation of a Special Task Force (STF) jointly by the Fishery Department and the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department. The STF will conduct intensive inspections across fish and meat markets and will remain active throughout Uruka to ensure that consumers are not overcharged.

CJI Surya Kant Lays Foundation Stone for Judicial City in North Guwahati

Guwahati, Jan 12: A modern Judicial City is set to come up at Rangmahal in North Guwahati, with the foundation stone laid on Sunday by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant. The new complex will house the Gauhati High Court, which currently serves as the high court for Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland.

The foundation-laying ceremony was attended by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Union Minister for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal, judges of the Supreme Court and various high courts, along with other dignitaries.

However, the proposed relocation of the high court has triggered sustained opposition from the Gauhati High Court Bar Association, which has been protesting against the move. On Sunday, the association boycotted the foundation ceremony and observed a four-hour hunger strike in protest. Reacting sharply, Chief Minister Sarma and Assam Advocate General Devajit Saikia alleged that the agitation was driven by political interests, accusing the

protesters of having political backing.

Addressing the issue, Sarma said the project was aimed at creating judicial infrastructure for the next generation of Assam. He said the Judicial City would be developed in phases, with an initial investment of around ₹500 crore, followed by an additional ₹1,200 crore in the second and third phases.

The proposed complex will include a new Gauhati High Court building, district courts, an auditorium, and a state-of-the-art legal library, envisaged as a fully integrated and well-planned legal hub.

Responding to concerns raised by lawyers and local residents over connectivity, the Chief Minister said the government was addressing the issue seriously. He pointed out that alternative transport options, including the ropeway, had already eased cross-river travel. He added that the new Brahmaputra bridge, expected to be completed next month, along with a dedicated approach road to the Judicial City, would significantly improve accessibility.

Sarma expressed confidence that up-

coming infrastructure projects — including the Narengi-Kuruwa, North Guwahati, and Palasbari-Sualkuchi bridges — would transform connectivity in the region. “In the next ten years, Guwahati will not remain the same,” he said.

Highlighting North Guwahati’s growing institutional importance, the Chief Minister said the presence of IIT Guwahati and the proposed law university reflected the area’s advantages, including lower congestion and better mobility. He claimed that once the North Guwahati bridge becomes fully operational, travel time from the city would be shorter than commuting within Guwahati itself.

Sarma also said consultations with the Bar Association and High Court authorities had taken place nearly three years ago, and it was decided then that work would begin only after the North Guwahati bridge was ready. Looking ahead, he said that if he remained Chief Minister for another decade, the region would also see metro connectivity and a comprehensive ring road network.

Congress report flags crisis in Assam’s tribal areas

Guwahati, Jan 12: The Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) has said that tribal communities across Assam are facing serious livelihood insecurity and growing economic hardship due to long-standing issues related to land and forest rights.

The party said these concerns will be given priority in its manifesto for the Assam Assembly Elections 2026, expected to be held in March-April next year. The observations were made in a detailed report prepared by the Congress Core Scheduled Tribe (ST) Study Group and submitted to APCC president Gaurav Gogoi, according to a party press release issued on Sunday.

The Study Group was headed by APCC general secretary Nirmal Langthasa and was formed after a consultative meeting held in November last year. The meeting involved leaders from Scheduled Tribes-majority Assembly constituencies such as Dimoria, Boko, Dudhnoi and Goalpara West. The purpose of the exercise, the party said, was to closely examine the problems, demands and aspirations of tribal communities and ensure their inclusion in the Congress’s election agenda. As part of its work, the Study Group carried out field-level visits and interactions in these constituencies.

It held meetings and discussions with tribal organisations, non-governmental groups and individual community representatives. Members of several tribal communities, including Rabha, Garo, Bodo, Hajong, Amri Karbi, Tiwa and Mising groups, shared their concerns during these consultations. One of the most serious issues highlighted in the report was the alleged violation and alienation of tribal land and forest rights.

of the business activities shown in official records. Further physical verification carried out by the CGST team showed that both companies were either not operating or were not found at their registered business addresses. This strengthened the suspicion that the firms existed only on paper and were being used to generate fake invoices for claiming tax benefits. Based on the findings, Barbhuiya was arrested on January 10 under Sections 132(1)(b) and 132(1)(c) of the CGST Act, 2017. These sections deal with issuing invoices without supplying goods and wrongfully availing input tax credit. Officials stated that the offences are cognisable and non-bailable under the law.

Mining firm Director arrested in Nagaland over Rs 53.28 crore GST fraud

Kohima, Jan 12: The director of two mining companies has been arrested in Nagaland for his alleged role in a large Goods and Services Tax (GST) fraud involving more than ₹53 crore, officials said on Sunday. The arrest was made by the Anti-Evasion Unit of the Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) department in Dimapur after a detailed investigation into irregularities found in GST filings of the two firms. The case relates to the alleged wrongful claim of input tax credit (ITC) without any actual supply of goods. The accused has been identified as Atiqur Rahman Barbhuiya, who is the director of Bendangtoshi Mining Pvt Ltd and Kevitho Mining

Pvt Ltd. According to officials, both companies are engaged in the supply of coal and coke. During scrutiny of GST returns, CGST officials found that Bendangtoshi Mining Pvt Ltd had allegedly availed fraudulent ITC amounting to ₹27.52 crore, while Kevitho Mining Pvt Ltd was accused of wrongly claiming ₹25.76 crore. Together, the alleged fraud totalled ₹53.28 crore. Officials said the investigation revealed that invoices were issued and received without any actual movement of goods. The firms reportedly failed to produce required documents such as e-way bills, transport details, and bank transaction records to support the claimed transactions. This raised serious doubts about the authenticity



Akhil Gogoi slams Rezaul Karim Sarkar over ‘Sivasagar to Dhubri’ remark

Sivasagar, Jan 12: Sivasagar MLA Akhil Gogoi on Sunday reacted strongly to a controversial remark allegedly made by Rezaul Karim Sarkar, warning that any deliberate attempt to provoke social or political tension would be firmly opposed. Gogoi’s reaction came after Sarkar, who formally joined the Indian National Congress earlier in the day, was quoted as saying that he would “turn Sivasagar into Dhubri and Dhubri into Sivasagar.” The remark triggered sharp political reactions, particularly in Upper Assam, where Sivasagar holds strong cultural and historical importance. Speaking to the media, Akhil Gogoi said that the nature of the statement needed to be clearly understood. He stated that if the remark was made unintentionally or without any deeper meaning, it could be viewed differently. However, he cautioned that if the comment was deliberate and

aimed at provoking divisions, it would be opposed in the strongest possible terms. “The intention behind such statements matters,” Gogoi said. “If it was a mistake, that is one thing. But if it was said deliberately to create confusion or tension, then it will not be accepted.” The Sivasagar legislator also raised questions about Sarkar’s political associations and influence. Gogoi said that Sarkar must first break what he described as his close links with the Chief Minister. He alleged that during eviction drives in different parts of Assam, whenever questions are raised before the Chief Minister, the response often includes references to consultations with Rezaul Karim Sarkar and the All Assam Minority Students’ Union. According to Gogoi, such references point to a level of influence that needs to be clearly explained to the public.

AIIMS Guwahati Observes 6th Institute Day with Grand Celebrations

Guwahati, Jan 12: The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Guwahati today celebrated its 6th Institute Day on its campus with great enthusiasm. The event witnessed the participation of students, faculty members, officers, staff and nursing officers of AIIMS Guwahati along with eminent dignitaries from various organizations.

Addressing the gathering Prof. Ashok Puranik, Executive Director, AIIMS Guwahati reflected on the Institute’s journey from its initial functioning at the temporary campus in Gauhati Medical College to the present permanent campus at Changsari. He highlighted the significant mile-

stones achieved by the Institute over the past five years in the core areas of quality medical education, patient care and health-oriented research. Emphasising that the Institute Day serves as both a celebration of achievements and a moment of reflection for future vision Prof. Puranik noted the rapid growth of AIIMS Guwahati to proactive governance, timely project implementation and effective coordination under the Prime Minister’s PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) initiative.

Prof BKS. Sanjay, President, AIIMS Guwahati introduced the 7D Strategy-Documents, Display, Demonstrate, Disseminate, Dialogue, Decision and

Delivery-aimed at strengthening effective healthcare delivery. He also highlighted the significance of the Foundation Day observed, which coincides with National Youth Day, commemorating the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. Prof. BKS Sanjay concluded his address on an inspiring note by reciting a short poem, which resonated with the spirit of service, dedication and youthful energy of the Institute.

The Institute Oration Lecture was delivered by Dr. Harsha Bhattacharjee, Founder Medical Director, Sri Sankaradeva Nethralaya, Guwahati. In his address, he underscored the crucial role of medical institutions in

community engagement and stressed the commitment required to reach underserved and unreached populations. The programme was attended by several distinguished dignitaries, including Prof. Prashant Joshi, Executive Director, AIIMS Nagpur; Prof. Arvind Sinha, Executive Director, AIIMS Kalyani; and Dr. Sajal Sen, Chief Operating Officer, Assam Advanced Healthcare Innovation Institute. The dignitaries congratulated the Executive Director and the entire AIIMS Guwahati team on the Institute’s rapid progress and emphasised the importance of integrity, honesty and ethical values in medical practice.

Gaurav Gogoi slams Assam CM

Guwahati, Jan 12: The Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) on Sunday held a major mass induction programme in Guwahati, where several prominent leaders from rival political parties formally joined the Congress, signalling the party’s push to strengthen its organisation ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections. The programme was organised at the Manbendra Sharma Complex and was attended by APCC president Gaurav Gogoi, senior Congress leaders and party workers from different parts of the state. During the event, Gogoi launched a sharp attack on Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, accusing his government of misleading the public, weakening democratic institutions and failing to deliver justice. Several well-known figures joined the Congress on the occasion. Among them were Manoj Kumar Mahanta, who resigned from the BJP along with Rajen Gohain, Rezaul Karim Sarkar, former advisor of AMCHUR, and Babul Saharia, husband of Ward 42 councillor Masuma Begum, who had earlier joined the BJP. Also joining the party was Rukma Medok, a three-time state president of the Mishing Minority Council and a long-time social worker associated with the Mishing community. The Congress also inducted Kaushik Hazarika, former Secretary of the AGP Assam Youth Council, along with former state advisors Azizul Haque, Dilwar Husein Khan, Hasanur Zaman and Chirajul Sarkar. Senior party leaders formally welcomed the new members by presenting them with party insignia, marking their official entry into the Congress. Addressing the gathering, Gaurav Gogoi said Assam was standing at a critical point and claimed that people were looking for an alternative that could ensure justice, unity and protection of rights. He spoke about the Youth Congress’ “Save the Community, Save the Land” campaign and said land rights and community protection had become the most serious issues facing the state. “Assam cannot move forward through hatred and violence. When people stand united, no Chief Minister can rule by fear. The real power lies with the people of Assam,” Gogoi said. He also raised concerns over voter rights, alleging that the ruling BJP was trying to manipulate electoral rolls and deprive certain sections of society of their voting rights. Gogoi said the Congress would ensure that no outsider was included in voter lists and that help desks would be set up at every polling booth to assist voters. He alleged that evictions and voter list exercises were being carried out with political motives. Launching a scathing attack on the Chief Minister, Gogoi accused Himanta Biswa Sarma of repeatedly making false statements and claimed that his credibility had eroded among the people. Referring to the Zubin Garg case, Gogoi alleged that the government had filed a weak chargesheet and had failed to ensure justice. He further accused the BJP of targeting voters from tribal, OBC, SC and minority communities, especially those who had voted against the party in earlier elections.

Digital Fertilizer

Union Minister for Rural Development and Agriculture & Farmers’ Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan addressed a special Gram Sabha at Loni Budruk in Maharashtra’s Ahmednagar district, outlining the provisions of the Viksit Bharat-G Ram G Act, 2025, in what was described as a landmark legislative intervention aimed at strengthening rural employment, livelihood security and local governance, while the programme was webcast nationwide and viewed by over six million people from more than one lakh locations, reflecting the government’s emphasis on transparency, outreach and citizen engagement, as Mr Chouhan stated that the new law provides a legally guaranteed 125 days of employment for rural workers, with mandatory payment of wages within one week of completion of work, and a provision for additional compensation in case of delay beyond fifteen days in the form of 0.05 per cent interest, thereby ensuring accountability and timely financial relief for beneficiaries while addressing longstanding concerns about delays in wage disbursement, and he emphasised that the Act represents a significant step in strengthening the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGN-REGA) framework by making it more effective, transparent, accountable and responsive to local needs, as decision-making authority on works will now rest with the Gram Sabha, empowering communities to prioritise projects according to local requirements and developmental objectives, while also ensuring that planning and execution are rooted in participatory governance, and Mr Chouhan elaborated that the scheme will cover a wide range of activities, including water conservation, development of rural infrastructure, livelihood-related initiatives and disaster mitigation projects, which together aim to enhance resilience, improve productivity, and foster sustainable economic growth in rural areas, with a special focus on social inclusion and gender equity, as the Act mandates that at least thirty three per cent of works are reserved for women, thereby creating significant employment opportunities for rural women while promoting their active participation in local governance and decision-making, while also empowering states to engage workers in agricultural activities for up to sixty days during peak seasons, recognising the seasonal nature of rural livelihoods and the need to provide flexible support for income generation and food security, and Mr Chouhan further highlighted that administrative expenditure under the Act has been increased from six per cent to nine per cent, a measure intended to ensure timely payments, smooth implementation and adequate monitoring of works, which will also facilitate capacity building, training of local functionaries, technological interventions, grievance redressal mechanisms and effective auditing, as the government seeks to modernise the administrative framework of rural employment programmes, while the Minister underscored that the Viksit Bharat-G Ram G Act, 2025, is designed not only as a legal instrument but as a comprehensive developmental tool that strengthens the rural economy, mitigates distress migration, enhances resource management and promotes equitable growth, and that by decentralising decisionmaking, the Act encourages local innovation, fosters accountability, reduces bureaucratic delays, and ensures that works undertaken are aligned with local priorities, environmental sustainability and socio-economic development goals, while also enabling Gram Sabhas to monitor execution, assess progress, and ensure adherence to quality standards, with the Minister pointing out that this participatory approach is expected to enhance citizen trust, transparency and community ownership of public resources, as the scheme covers essential areas such as water harvesting, irrigation infrastructure, rural road construction, creation of public assets, soil conservation, afforestation, flood and drought mitigation, skill development and livelihood promotion, which together provide a holistic framework for rural development and resilience, while also contributing to climate adaptation and environmental sustainability, as Mr Chouhan noted that the integration of livelihood activities with employment guarantees will provide a continuous source of income, strengthen the rural labour market and contribute to overall agricultural productivity, and that women’s participation in at least thirty-three per cent of the works is expected to empower rural women economically, socially and politically, providing them with greater agency in community decision-making and ensuring that their perspectives are incorporated into planning and execution, while the increased administrative expenditure is intended to strengthen institutional capacity, ensure timely wage payments, implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, deploy technology-driven solutions such as digital payments and management information systems, and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme, and the Minister also highlighted that the Act is aligned with the government’s broader vision of Viksit Bharat, which seeks inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth across rural India, with enhanced employment opportunities, strengthened infrastructure, improved livelihoods and resilient communities, while also ensuring that disaster mitigation, environmental conservation and local capacity building are integral components of the rural development agenda, and he further explained that the law institutionalises a structured framework for Gram Sabhas to exercise authority over work selection, prioritisation and supervision, thereby reinforcing participatory democracy, local empowerment and accountable governance, while also ensuring that the rights of workers, women, marginalised communities and vulnerable groups are protected, and that the integration of agricultural work during peak seasons will optimise labour utilisation, enhance productivity, and provide additional income support to rural households.

One Battle After Another and Adolescence dominate 83rd Golden Globes

One Battle After Another and Adolescence have led this year’s Golden Globes with four wins apiece.Paul Thomas Anderson’s counterculture epic took home best comedy or musical film. It also earned him best director and screenplay, marking his first-ever Golden Globe wins. “I love doing what I do so this is just fun,” Anderson said in his second speech before paying tribute to the late Adam Somner, who was an assistant director on the film before his death in November 2024.Teyana Taylor was also named best female supporting actor for her role in the film, beating out Amy Madigan and Ariana Grande. In a tearful speech, she devoted her award “to my brown sisters and little brown girls watching tonight”, adding: “We belong in every room we walk into. Our voices matter and our dreams deserve space.”Smash hit Netflix drama Adolescence continued its awards sweep picking up four Globes, including best limited series. In his acceptance speech, writer Jack Thorne said the show is not meant to criticise young people but rather “the filth and the debris we have laid in their path”.Stephen Graham was named best actor in a limited series winning out against Jude Law and Paul Giamatti, while Owen Cooper followed up his historic Emmy win with another award for supporting actor. He said that standing on the Golden Globes stage “does not feel real whatsoever”. Erin Doherty also won

for supporting female actor. The largely fictionalised Shakespeare drama Hamnet won for best drama film and best lead actress in a drama for Jessie Buckley. Steven Spielberg, who produced the film alongside Sam Mendes, accepted the award and said that Chloé Zhao was the only film-maker who could have made the movie. In her speech, Buckley, whose competition included Julia Roberts and Jennifer Lawrence, said: “This is a real, real honour, I love what I do and I love being a part of this industry.”Ryan Coogler’s period horror blockbuster Sinners won awards for original score and for cinematic and box office achievement. “I just wanna thank the audience for showing up,” Coogler said in his speech.Timothée Chalamet was named best lead male actor in a comedy for ping-pong caper Marty Supreme, beating out Leonardo DiCaprio and George Clooney. It was his first Golden Globe win and he spoke about how losing his previous four awards made this moment “that much sweeter”. He is now the youngest winner in this category.Brazilian period thriller The Secret Agent also took home two awards: for best film not in the English language and for star Wagner Moura who won best lead actor in a drama. Beating Michael B Jordan and Dwayne Johnson, he became the first Brazilian winner in the category. “This is a very important time and moment to be making films,” director Kleber Mendonça

Filho said in his speech.Rose Byrne was named best lead female actor in a comedy for playing a mother spiralling in anxiety-inducing indie If I Had Legs I’d Kick You. She beat out Emma Stone and Cynthia Erivo for the win and thanked voters for rewarding a small film that she joked was made for \$8.50. Stellan Skarsgård beat Jacob Elordi and Benicio del Toro to win male supporting actor for Norwegian family drama Sentimental Value. He joked that he was surprised to win as he’s too old. “Cinema should be seen in cinemas,” he said at the end of a speech about the importance of the theatrical experience.While bigger movie bets like Train Dreams, Frankenstein and Jay Kelly missed out on wins, Netflix picked up two awards for its massively successful summer hit KPop: Demon Hunters. The film, now the most-watched ever on the platform, won for animated feature and original song for Golden. The adventure was originally made by Sony but released on Netflix through a first-look rights deal.It was a big year for new television shows with freshman seasons of The Pitt, The Studio and Pluribus all winning awards.Hospital drama The Pitt was named best drama series, up against Severance, Slow Horses and The Diplomat. Noah Wyle was also named best actor in a drama beating out Gary Oldman and Mark Ruffalo and he used his speech to thank healthcare workers.Apple’s new indus-

try comedy The Studio also won for best comedy series with its star and creator Seth Rogen winning best male actor in a comedy series beating out Martin Short and Steve Martin. Rhea Seehorn won best female actor in a drama series for the first season of Apple’s much-watched hit Pluribus. She thanked show creator Vince Gilligan for “the role of a lifetime”.Jean Smart won best female actor in a musical or comedy TV series for the third time for her performance in HBO hit Hacks. “What can I say, I’m a greedy bitch,” she joked in her speech. She wore a “Be Good” pin on her outfit to show support for an ACLU-endorsed campaign against the use of ICE violence in the US.Mark Ruffalo and Wanda Sykes were also among the names seen with “ICE OUT” pins to protest against the death of Renee Good, an unarmed woman killed in Minneapolis.“The only thing that matters to him is his own morality, but the guy is a convicted felon or convicted rapist,” Ruffalo said of Donald Trump on the red carpet. “He’s a paedophile. He’s the worst human being. If we’re relying on this guy’s morality for the most powerful country in the world, then we’re all in a lot of trouble.”Other winners included Michelle Williams for her role in the limited series Dying for Sex and Ricky Gervais for performance in standup comedy on television. Gervais was not in attendance so host Wanda Sykes jokingly accepted the award and

devoted the win to “God and the trans community” on his behalf. Host Nikki Glaser returned for the second year in a row, jokingly calling the Globes “without a doubt the most important thing that’s happening in the world right now”. With the ceremony airing on CBS, she made jokes about Bari Weiss’s new role at CBS News, calling it “America’s newest place to see BS news”. She also took aim at the lack of film and TV production in Los Angeles, the redaction of the Epstein files, Leonardo DiCaprio’s tendency to date younger women and Sean Penn’s evolution into a “sexy leather handbag”. The night also saw the first-ever Globe for best podcast which was announced after a skit poking fun at podcasts, with Glaser playing Nicole Kidman in the viral AMC advert. The winner was Good Hang with Amy Poehler beating out Call Her Daddy and SmartLess. “I don’t know about award shows but when they get it right,” she joked.Nominated shows and films that left the night empty-handed include Frankenstein, Nobody Wants This, The Diplomat, Wicked: For Good, Jay Kelly, The Bear, Abbott Elementary, Only Murder in the Building and Bugonia.Last year saw major winners including Demi Moore, Adrien Brody, Kieran Culkin, The Brutalist, Emilia Pérez and Shōgun.This year’s Oscar nominations are announced on 22 January with the ceremony scheduled to take place on 15 March.

An outright squandering of taxpayer funds

It is alarming that at least 80 government health facilities in 18 districts have been non-operational for several years, highlighting significant systemic failures in healthcare governance. A recent report outlines that among these facilities, there are 17 hospitals (including four dedicated children’s hospitals), 14 community clinics, and 12 extensions affiliated with existing hospitals, in addition to other structures like accommodations for health workers. These facilities, which incurred substantial public expenditure over time, remain dormant due to various factors including manpower shortages, lack of necessary equipment, and bureaucratic hurdles. Consequently, this situation is disrupting the provision of basic healthcare services in the affected districts. One such facility is

the 20-bed hospital in Gazipur’s Talia village. Built at a cost of around Tk 20 crore in 2020, it remains unutilised to this day. A local family even donated two acres of land in good faith in the hope of ensuring access to medical services that never materialised. Similar situations exist in Rangpur, Madaripur, Savar, and other districts, where completed facilities continue to lie idle. Several trauma centres, meant to respond to the rising incidence of road accidents, remain non-functional, while the children’s hospitals stand empty despite paediatric wards elsewhere struggling under pressure. In some cases, facilities have remained unused for over a decade. Health ministry documents obtained by The Daily Star show that the construction of 41 facilities was completed by 2024, while the rest

were built earlier. The documents cite lack of manpower, equipment, and medicines as the main reasons for their continued non-operation. This raises a fundamental question: why were these structures built without a comprehensive operational plan? Constructing them without ensuring staff recruitment, budgetary allocation, and service readiness reflects a serious disconnect between infrastructure development and healthcare delivery. That some of the facilities were built even without feasibility studies further underscores how poor planning and weak accountability have plagued the sector. The consequences have been undoubtedly severe, as patients in rural and semi-urban areas are forced to travel long distances to already overstretched hospitals, incurring high costs and risking dan-

gerous delays in treatment. Decades of inefficiency, mismanagement, and corruption have thus rendered large parts of our health sector incapable of delivering essential services. Restoring order to this ailing sector requires proper planning, coordination, and accountability at every stage—something that we have, unfortunately, yet to see under the interim administration. We urge the health authorities to urgently audit all idle facilities, fast-track recruitment and staff deployment, and hold those responsible for non-functional projects to account. We also hope the next elected government will prioritise the sector and implement the reform proposals put forward by the Health Sector Reform Commission to build an efficient, accountable, and people-oriented healthcare system.

What can the EU and Nato do to stop Trump from trying to claim Greenland

The Trump administration has said repeatedly that the US needs to gain control of Greenland, justifying its claim from “the standpoint of national security” and warning that it will “do something” about the territory “whether they like it or not”.This puts the EU and Nato in a difficult spot. Greenland, a largely self-governing part of Denmark, is not a member of the bloc but Denmark is; while the Arctic island is covered by the defence alliance’s guarantees through Denmark’s membership.European leaders have strongly defended sovereignty, territorial integrity and the right of Greenland and Denmark to decide on matters concerning them, but there is as yet no clear strategy on how to deter Trump – or respond if he does make a move.Here are some of the options.

The US secretary of state, Marco Rubio, is due to meet the Danish and Greenlandic foreign ministers on Wednesday but Denmark’s ambassador to the US, Jesper Møller Sørensen, and Greenland’s envoy, Jacob Isbosethsen, have already begun lobbying US lawmakers.Diplomatic overtures will aim in part to address US security concerns, first by stressing that an existing US-Danish defence treaty from 1951, updated in 2004, already allows for massive expansion of the American military presence on the island, including new bases.In a message aimed squarely at Republicans beyond Trump’s Magic circle, they will also underline that, as Denmark’s prime minister, Mette Frederiksen, put it, a US attack on Greenland, in effect one member turning against another, would mean “the end of Nato”.More concretely, Nato ambassadors reported-

ly agreed in Brussels last week that the transatlantic alliance should move to boost military spending in the Arctic, deploying more equipment and holding more and bigger exercises to help allay US security concerns.Although Trump’s claims that Greenland “is full of Chinese and Russian ships everywhere” are plainly exaggerated, diplomats believe some kind of concerted western move to strengthen Greenland’s external security could be the least painful way out of the crisis.EU officials have said this could be modelled on Baltic Sentry, a Nato operation launched last year to secure infrastructure in the Baltic Sea, and Eastern Sentry, which expanded the concept to more broadly protect Europe’s eastern flank from drones and other threats.

In theory, the EU – a market of 450 million people – has considerable economic leverage over the US and could threaten retaliatory measures ranging from shutting down US military bases in Europe to banning European purchases of US government bonds.The most widely touted sanction is the EU’s anti-coercion instrument or “trade bazooka”, which gives the European Commission the power to bar US goods and services from the EU market, apply tariffs, strip their intellectual property rights and block their investments.But that would require the bloc’s national governments to agree to use it, which – unwilling to inflict economic harm on the bloc, and eager to keep the US onboard over Ukraine – they have seemed unlikely to do even when faced with Trump’s threatened trade tariffs.Europe relies on US tech companies in all manner of

areas, noted Jean-Marie Guéhenno, a former top UN official: “Whether it is data protection, artificial intelligence or software updates, including for defence, Europe remains at the mercy of American goodwill.”For any threat of economic sanctions to be effective, moreover, Trump would have to believe it was real – which, so far at least, it all too clearly is not. Greenland’s economy relies heavily on annual subsidies from Denmark, totalling about DKK4bn (about €530m) last year, which cover roughly half of the vast territory’s public spending budget and represent about 20% of its GDP.Trump’s promises to “invest billions” could be matched by the EU in an effort to keep the island – which, at some stage in the not too distant future, is thought likely to vote in favour of independence from Denmark – out of the economic clutches of the U.S.A draft Commission proposal from September suggests the EU could double its commitments to Greenland to match the annual Danish grant, while the island could also apply for up to €44m of EU funding for remote EU-associated territories.While Washington may have billions more to offer than Brussels, Greenlanders may, once they have won their independence, be wary of laying themselves open to rapacious US corporations and reluctant to lose their Nordic-style social security system. All the above would take time. Moreover, it is not clear that Trump’s Greenland ambitions would be satisfied by treaties or enhanced Arctic security: US “ownership” of the island was “psychologically needed for success”, the US president told the New York Times.

Persistent gas crisis calls for bold policies

At a time when households are already grappling with high food prices, the persistent gas crisis has added to their hardship. On Saturday, a pipeline leak led to a complete or partial gas shutdown in many Dhaka neighbourhoods, leaving families unable to cook. This comes amid an ongoing LPG shortage driven by flawed policies and a nexus of opportunistic suppliers, dealers, and distributors, which made cylinders unavailable even at prices far above the fixed rate. The gas shortage also forced most autogas stations to shut down, affecting private car owners and ride-sharing drivers. While middle- and upper-income groups managed through electric cookers or takeaways, the poor and marginalised are having to bear the brunt of the crisis, highlighting

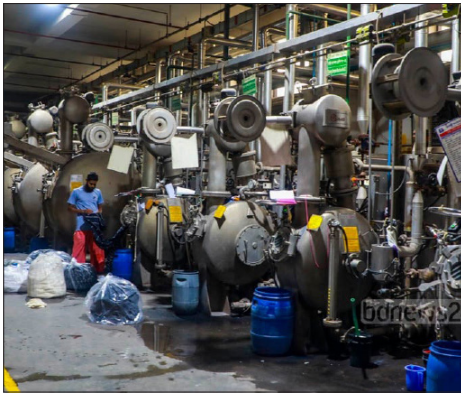
the country’s energy vulnerability. According to media reports, Saturday’s natural gas shortage in Dhaka was caused by a valve explosion on a distribution line near Gono Bhaban. Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution had to shut down several adjacent valves to repair the damage. This came at a time when some neighbourhoods have already been receiving almost no gas supply for a couple of months due to a leaking pipeline under the Turag River. In recent winter sessions, low gas pressure has become a common phenomenon, forcing families to adjust household routines around an erratic supply while continuing to pay full bills. In the last fiscal year, the country experienced a demand-supply deficit of more than 130 crore cubic feet of natural gas. According to

a Bonik Barta report, year-on-year gas supply on January 10 this year was 17.60 crore cubic feet lower. To bridge this gap, the government increased LNG imports, but that too failed to prevent the current crisis.

Meanwhile, a handful of companies controlling LPG imports appear to have created a supply shortage, citing vessel unavailability and high shipping costs. In some cases, they charged inflated wholesale prices, which distributors and retailers passed on to consumers. Distributors have also alleged that refilling empty cylinders has become increasingly difficult. This is partly attributed to the reduced presence of some influential LPG importers who once controlled a large share of the market during the Awami League

government.

While we cannot expect the interim government to initiate long-term solutions with only about five weeks left in its tenure, we must say that it could have done more than conduct ad hoc drives against small retailers to control the LPG market. That said, the government’s recent decision to reduce and exempt VAT at several supply and distribution stages to expedite LPG shipments, directing the central bank to ease the LC opening process and removing LPG import ceiling, is welcome. In the long run, the next government must heed expert opinion and enact bold policies to reduce dependency on energy imports. Investment in natural gas exploration, renewable energy, and the strengthening of public institu-



tions in the energy sector should be among its highest priorities.

Isro’s PSLV-C62 launch puts 16 satellites into orbit

New Delhi: Activity is at a peak at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota as the Indian Space Research Organisation prepares to kick off 2026 with a complex and closely watched launch. Scheduled for lift-off this morning, the PSLV-C62 mission marks Isro’s first orbital outing of the year and underscores the growing ambition behind India’s small-satellite programme. The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, Isro’s proven workhorse, will carry 16 satellites into a Sun-Synchronous Polar Orbit, reinforcing India’s position as a preferred launch partner for domestic and international payloads. The launch is set to take place from the First Launch Pad at 10:17 am IST. Primary payload: EOS-N1 ‘Anvesha’Leading the mission is EOS-N1, an advanced Earth Observation Satellite developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation. Named Anvesha, the satellite is equipped with hyperspectral imaging capability that allows it to capture data across hundreds of narrow light bands for



every pixel. This technology enables detailed analysis of surface materials and conditions, with applications ranging from monitoring crops and soil moisture to identifying mineral resources and mapping urban expansion with high precision. A key experimental payload on PSLV-C62 is AayulSAT, developed by Bengaluru-based startup OrbitAID Aerospace. The satellite will serve as a technology demonstrator for India’s first on-orbit refuelling model. AayulSAT is designed to test a proprietary docking inter-

face along with propellant, power and data transfer in microgravity. If successful, the concept could extend the operational life of satellites by allowing them to be serviced in orbit, reducing the creation of space debris once onboard fuel is exhausted. Another standout payload is MOI-1, a satellite developed by Hyderabad-based startups TakeMe2Space and Eon Space Labs. The mission will debut India’s first orbital AI image laboratory, capable of processing data directly in space using edge computing.

DMart share price: Targets upped for Radhakishan Damani-led

New Delhi: Radhakishan Damani-led Avenue Supermarts delivered a strong beat on December quarter profit, led primarily by gross margin expansion, analysts said. After several quarters of elevated cost of retailing, DMart reported stable cost of retailing per square foot in the quarter, which drove a 50 basis point expansion in Ebitda margin to 8.4 per cent. While some analysts remained concerned about competition from quick commerce players, they raised their target prices on DMart following the company’s December quarter results. “While DMart saw a margin recovery after several quarters, we believe increased pricing competition from QC could prevent margin sustainability and remains a key monitorable in the near term.

We believe DMart value-focused model and superior store economics would ensure its competitiveness and customer relevance over the longer term, despite QC’s convenience-focused model,” MOFSL said. This brokerage upped its target on DMart to Rs 4,600 from Rs 4,300 earlier. Systematix Institutional Equities said DMart is unlikely to compromise on its working capital management. It expects the company to maintain its inventory cycle at 34-35 days and net working capital cycle at 24 days. Capex for FY25 stood at Rs 3,400 crore. Systematix is building in healthy store additions over FY26E-FY28E which would lead to a gradual increase in capex.

Experts seek TDS overhaul and clearer dispute resolution as budget expectations rise

New Delhi: Tax and industry experts are pitching for stability in rates, rationalisation of withholding taxes, streamlined dispute resolution, easier compliance for foreign companies and simplified taxation on employee stock options in the upcoming Union budget. Rationalisation of tax deducted at source (TDS) has emerged as a common ask from various quarters. Under the current system, tax is deducted on specified payments such as salaries, interest, commission, rent and even cryptocurrency transactions above prescribed thresholds, with rates ranging from 0.1 per cent to 30 per cent. This complex structure has resulted in frequent litigation. TDS is not a tax on the deductor’s income. Rather, the deductor acts as an agent of the state, facilitating collection. Yet, the current regime prescribes multiple rates across numerous sections, creating interpretational challenges. Litigation arises around the applicable rate, classification of payments and procedural lapses — often without any underlying revenue loss,” said Dinesh Kanabar, chairman and CEO, Dhruva Advisors. Kanabar said there is a strong case to consolidate TDS into two or three broad buckets — a rate for salary income, another for non-salary payments, and a higher rate for exceptional categories such as lottery or windfall gains — to lower compliance costs and reduce litigation without materially impacting revenue. EY India, in its pre-budget expectations, echoed the demand, pointing out that more than 37 categories of payments currently carry TDS at different rates, making the framework “a fertile ground for disputes”. It suggested that the budget can outline a roadmap with no more than three to four TDS rates. Dispute resolution

As of FY25, 5.39 lakh cases were pending at the first appellate authority and another 63,784 cases before appellate tribunals, high courts and the Supreme Court, involving a cumulative disputed amount of ₹26.30 lakh crore, according to government data. A further ₹1.52 lakh crore remains locked in customs disputes. Analysts are, therefore, calling for a comprehensive dispute resolution mechanism, both for direct taxes and customs. “Estimates suggest that, at the



current pace of disposal, it would take five or six years to clear the existing backlog. Schemes introduced in the past, including those in 2020 and revisited in 2024, witnessed significant participation and resulted in meaningful revenue mobilisation and dispute reduction. There is a strong case of re-imagining a comprehensive dispute resolution framework for both direct and indirect taxes — particularly customs, where litigation has accumulated over decades,” Kanabar said. EY India suggested a one-time settlement under customs law and further simplification of customs tariffs, including sector-wise rationalisation to keep Indian goods competitive amid geopolitical turmoil. The basic customs duty structure was reduced to eight slabs in the previous budget, and industry expects a further consolidation to five or six slabs this year. Personal tax stability With the new Income Tax Act 2025, scheduled to take effect from April 1, 2026, major changes in personal taxation are seen as unlikely, especially as the changes introduced in the previous

budget have made tax liability zero for taxpayers up to ₹12 lakh of nominal income. Kanabar said substantive direct tax proposals would undermine the clean-slate approach of the new law. Analysts also warned that raising surcharges could trigger migration of high-net-worth individuals to lower-tax jurisdictions. “When you start making it prohibitive, you run the risk of high-income earners wanting not to be in India, and that is possible in the world today,” Amit Rana, partner, PwC told PTI. Instead, experts want the tax administration to become more facilitative. “Concerns around indiscriminate issuance of notices, mechanical reopening of assessments and lack of accountability continue to affect taxpayer confidence. While faceless processes have reduced some friction, they have also introduced new challenges relating to responsiveness and application of mind,” Kanabar said. Esop taxation Highlighting a critical pain point for India’s innovation economy, Ajai

Chowdhry, co-founder of HCL and chairman of the EPIC Foundation, said that the current dual taxation model — which levies taxes on Employee Stock Option Plans (ESOPs) both at the time of exercise and again at the point of sale — is creating significant friction for talent retention. “That is actively pushing Indian start-ups and founders toward offshore relocation,” said Chowdhry, urging a relook at the ESOP taxation in the budget. Presumptive option Tax experts further expect the government to examine Niti Aayog’s proposal for an optional presumptive taxation regime for foreign companies in select sectors. The framework is aimed at lowering disputes, providing certainty and simplifying compliance while protecting revenue. The think tank has suggested presumptive rates ranging from 5 per cent to 30 per cent for sectors such as offshore supply, infrastructure, EPC, oilfield services, consulting, management and software services, as well as digital and e-commerce platforms.

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ICICI Lombard investigates earnings leak employee

New Delhi: ICICI Lombard General Insurance, a unit of India’s second-largest private lender, said an employee uploaded undisclosed information about third quarter earnings as a personal WhatsApp status, days ahead of the planned release. The worker, who broadcast the information after market hours on Friday, deleted the “status” within an hour, the ICICI Bank unit said in a filing to bourses. ICICI Lombard said it has started an internal inquiry. It was the latest mishap in India’s \$5.2 trillion stock market, after dairy-product maker Hatsun Agro Product this week flagged a similar case of

an employee accidentally leaking a draft of quarterly results on WhatsApp. Sebi has over the years tightened regulations involving handling of unpublished information by employees, including directing companies to create a framework for tracking ownership of such data. While the incidents have been isolated, they reignite concerns over insider trading and information leaks in the world’s fifth-largest stock market, following a string of alleged leaks of company earnings on WhatsApp groups in 2017 which triggered a Sebi investigation.

Live selfies, geo-tagging a mandatory for users India tightens crypto noose:

New Delhi: In an effort to eliminate illegal activity in the digital asset market, India’s Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) has unveiled stringent new Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Know Your Customer (KYC) protocols for cryptocurrency exchanges, including mandatory liveness detection and geographical tracking during the onboarding process. The updated guidelines, issued on January 8 and accessed by PTI, classify crypto exchanges as Virtual Digital Asset (VDA) service providers who will now have to do more than just allow simple document uploads. Under the new rules, users must take a “live selfie” using software that verifies their presence, typically through eye-blinking or head movement. The measure helps prevent the use of static photos or deepfakes. Exchanges must record the exact latitude and longitude, date, timestamp, and IP address from which a user starts creating an account. The “penny-drop” method, which involves processing a nominal Re 1 transaction to confirm that the bank account is active and belongs to the registrant, is required. In addition to a Permanent Account Number (PAN), users must provide a secondary ID such as a Passport, Aadhaar or a Voter ID, along with an OTP verification for the email



ID and phone number. The FIU, which operates under the Union Finance Ministry, is taking a tough stance against tools meant to conceal the paper trail of crypto wealth. The new guidelines aim to “strongly discourage” Initial Coin Offerings (ICOs) and Initial Token Offerings (ITOs) due to their lack of economic justification and high risk. Act (PMLA). All such exchanges have to register with the FIU as reporting entities and submit regular reports on suspicious transactions and maintain records of their clients (customers) to identify and combat money laundering, terrorist financing and proliferation financing risks associated with crypto assets, which India has not identified as a legal tender but are taxed under the Income-Tax law.

INTERNATIONAL

Son Of Ousted Iran Shah Urges Protesters To ‘Prepare To Seize’ City Centres

Paris: The protests have spread across much of Iran over the last two weeks, beginning in response to soaring inflation but quickly turning political, with protesters calling for clerical rulers to step down.

Iran was gripped overnight by mass protests denouncing the Islamic republic, as the son of the ousted shah urged protesters on Saturday to “prepare” to seize city centres. “Our goal is no longer merely to come to the streets. The goal is to prepare for seizing the centres of cities and holding them,” US-based Reza Pahlavi said. Reza Pahlavi praised the “magnificent” turnout on Friday and urged Iranians to stage more targeted protests this Saturday and Sunday. The Iranian army said on Saturday it would safeguard strategic infrastructure and public property and urged Iranians to thwart “the enemy’s plots”, as the clerical establishment steps up efforts to quell the country’s biggest protests in years. US President Donald Trump said his administration had issued a clear warning to Tehran against killing protesters, signalling potential US action if such actions occurred. “And that doesn’t mean boots on the ground, but it means hitting them very, very hard where it hurts,” he said. Trump said on Thursday he was not inclined to meet Pahlavi, a sign that he was waiting to see how the crisis plays out before backing an opposition leader.

Khamenei, in a defiant speech on Friday, lashed out at “vandals” and vowed the Islamic republic would “not back down”.

The protests that have been ongoing for two weeks have posed one of the biggest challenges to the theocratic authorities who have ruled Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei has slammed the US government



and protesters and said that protesters are “ruining their own streets ... in order to please the president of the United Stat t least 62 people have been killed in the protests over Iran’s ailing economy, which have morphed into the most significant challenge to the government in years.

Iranian Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi warned on Friday that security forces could be preparing to commit a “massacre under the cover of a sweeping communications blackout”.

State media said a municipal building was set on fire in Karaj, west of Tehran, and blamed “rioters”. State TV broadcast footage of funerals of members of the security forces it said were killed in protests in the cities of Shiraz, Qom and Hamedan. Major Iranian cities were gripped overnight by new mass rallies denouncing the Islamic republic, as activists on Saturday (Jan 10) expressed fear authorities were intensifying their suppression of the demonstrations under cover of an internet blackout. The two weeks of protests have posed one of the biggest challenges to the theocratic authorities who have ruled Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution, although supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has expressed defiance and blamed the United States. Following the movement’s largest protests yet on Thursday, new demonstrations took place late on Friday, according to images verified by AFP and other videos published on social media.

This was despite an internet shutdown imposed by the authorities, with monitor Netblocks saying early on Saturday that “metrics show the nationwide internet blackout remains in place at 36 hours”.

The blackout has sparked fears among activists that authorities are now violently cracking down on the protests, with less chance the proof will reach the outside world.

Landfill collapse kills 1 and leaves at least 27 missing, Philippine police say

London: An avalanche of garbage buried workers at a waste segregation facility in a central Philippine city, killing one person, injuring seven and leaving at least 27 others missing, police said Friday. Rescuers retrieved eight people alive and were searching for the missing still trapped after a huge mound of garbage and debris collapsed on them in the village of Binaliw in Cebu city, police said. Those affected included workers at the landfill but it was unclear if non-workers were among the victims. One of those rescued, a female landfill worker, died while being brought to a hospital, regional police director Brig. Gen. Roderick Maranan told The Associated Press, adding the rest survived with injuries. Search and rescue efforts were continuing for the 27 missing, Maranan said, citing an initial police report. Search and rescue efforts were continuing for the 27 missing, Maranan said, citing an initial police report. At the landfill site dozens of rescuers scrambled overnight in search of people trapped.

“The city government assures the public and the families of those affected that all necessary measures are being taken to ensure safety, transpar-



ency, accountability and compassionate assistance as operations continue,” Archival said. Authorities and officials at the waste management facility, which has 110 employees, were to hold an emergency meeting on Friday, Archival said.

One of the low-slung buildings hit by the wall of garbage that cascaded down in the landfill was a warehouse where workers separated recyclable waste and rubbish, Maranan said, adding that it remains unclear if nearby houses were also affected.

Greenlanders fear for future as island embroiled in geopolitical storm

London: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio will meet Danish and Greenlandic officials next week to discuss the fate of Greenland - a semi-autonomous territory of Denmark that President Donald Trump says he needs for national security. The vast island finds itself in the eye of a geopolitical storm with Trump’s name on it and people here are clearly unnerved. Yet when you fly in, it looks so peaceful. Ice and snow-capped mountains stretch as far as the eye can see, interrupted here and there by glittering fjords - all between the Arctic and the Atlantic Oceans. Meanwhile, 20-something pottery-maker Pilu Chemnitz said: “I think we are all very tired of the US president. We have always lived a quiet and peaceful life here.”

Of course, the colonisation by Denmark caused a lot of trauma for many people but we just want to be left alone. “Never mind opposing a takeover by the US, which 85% of Greenlanders say they do, most also say they favour independence from Denmark - although many tell me they appreciate the Danish subsidies that help prop up their welfare state. While rich in untapped natural resources, poverty is a real issue here in Inuit communities. I was there to meet Pipaluk Lyngre-Rasmussen, co-chair of the foreign affairs committee in parliament. She is an MP with the pro-independence Inuit Ataqatigiit party that is part of the coalition government here. “I think it’s very important for us to speak out about what we want as a people,” she told me. “We have always worked towards independence when we got home rule in 1979 and more independence in 2009.” I asked Lyngre-Rasmussen if she felt that big global powers - the US, Denmark, Nato, and the EU - were talking a lot



about Greenland right now, rather than to the islanders about their fate. She nodded vigorously. Surprisingly, perhaps, she blames Denmark more than she blames Trump for overlooking Greenlanders’ wants and needs. Even though Greenland and the Faroe Islands are part of the Kingdom of Denmark, she says, she feels they have always been treated like second-class citizens. But Lyngre-Rasmussen insisted that Greenlanders should not see themselves as victims in the current situation. Instead, she suggests they use the international spotlight now on them to show off their importance and push for their priorities. What of the meeting next week with Rubio, I asked. “I hope the meeting will end with understanding and compromise,” she answered. “Maybe doing business with [the US] from here... maybe co-operating on trade, or mining, having more American [military] bases on Greenland, perhaps?” Under a bilateral agreement with Denmark dating back to 1951

the US may bring as many US troops as it wants to Greenland. This has left European allies wondering out loud why Trump feels the need to “take” the island unilaterally: whether buying it - seemingly Washington’s preferred option, or encouraging Greenlanders to vote in a plebiscite to become part of the US, or taking Greenland by force, something the Trump administration has refused to rule out. It wouldn’t take much flexing of military muscles. Greenland has few trained soldiers and no military bases of its own. Trump and US Vice-President JD Vance justify their need to “take” Greenland because they say Denmark doesn’t do enough to secure the island. Copenhagen disputes this. It’s also worth noting that the US already has a military base on Greenland - and it chose to radically reduce its presence there from about 10,000 personnel during peak Cold War times to some 200 now. Overall, Greenlanders want a bigger, louder say, not only in their domestic policies, but in foreign af-

fairs too. I went to the island’s modest-looking parliament, the body of it built in a Scandinavian style with wooden slats and painted the same burnished red as the Greenlandic flags fluttering by the entrance. No security checks. All pretty relaxed. Except for the roaring polar bear emblem - a symbol of Greenland, etched onto every sliding glass door we pass. It is said to sit on top of the world; much of it above the Arctic Circle. Greenland is nine times the size of the find the biggest cluster of Greenlanders on the south-western coast in the capital, sledges, and students mooched their way in and out of brightly-lit malls. Few wanted to talk to u the ground in emphasis as he told me the US must never plant its flag in Greenland’s capital. A lady who said she was mistrustful of everyone these days, and didn’t give her name, admitted she was “scared to death” about the prospect of Trump taking the island by force after she watched his military intervention in Venezuela.

Iran medics describe overwhelmed hospitals as protests continue

London: As protests in Iran continue and Iranian authorities issued coordinated warnings to protesters, a doctor and medic at two hospitals told the BBC their facilities were overwhelmed with injuries. One doctor said a Tehran eye hospital had gone into crisis mode, while the BBC also obtained a message from a medic in another hospital saying it did not have enough surgeons to cope with the influx of patients.

On Friday, US President Donald Trump said Iran was in “big trouble” and warned “you better not start shooting because we’ll start shooting too”. Iran in a letter to the UN Security Council blamed the US for turning the protests into what it called “violent subversive acts and widespread vandalism”. Meanwhile, international leaders called for the right to peaceful protest to be protected. Anti-government protests, which continued on Friday, have taken place in dozens of cities, with two human rights groups reporting at least 50 protesters have been killed. The BBC and most other international news organisations are barred from reporting inside Iran, and the country has been under a near-total internet blackout since Thursday evening, making obtaining and verifying information difficult. A doctor from Iran, who contacted the BBC via Starlink satellite internet on Friday night, said Farabi Hospital, Tehran’s main eye specialist centre, had gone into crisis mode, with emergency services overwhelmed. Former British ambassador to Iran, Sir Simon Gass, told BBC Radio 4’s Today programme “we really shouldn’t get too ahead of ourselves” when discussing regime change. He said the lack of organised opposition within Iran means that people do not have anyone to coalesce around who presents an alternative to the regime as it stands. He added, however, that these protests are different to previous ones in the country, which are bringing in “a much wider movement of protesters than we’ve tended to see in the past”, triggered by ordinary people finding it “almost impossible to make ends meet because of the disaster to the economy”. At the White House on Friday, Trump said his administration was watching the situation in Iran carefully. “It looks to me that the people are taking over certain cities that nobody thought were really possible just a few weeks ago,” he said

He echoed earlier warnings to Iran’s leadership, saying: “We will be hitting them very hard where it hurts.” He added that any US involvement did not mean “boots on the ground”. On Thursday, Trump said he would “hit them very hard” if they “start killing people”. Later on Friday, the US said Iran’s foreign minister was “delusional” after he accused Israel and Washington of fuelling the protests. “This statement reflects a delusional attempt to deflect from the massive challenges the Iranian regime faces at home,” a US State Department spokesperson said in response to the comments by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

Early on Saturday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio posted on X: “The United States supports the brave people of Iran.” Iranian political activist Taghi Rahmani, who spent 14 years in prison in Iran and whose wife, Nobel Peace Prize winner Narges Mohammadi, was re-arrested in December, told the Today programme he was dubious of American support. “We believe foreign intervention will make the opposition dependent,” he said. “When the opposition is dependent, you have to sacrifice national interests for that government. This will not be acceptable for the Iranian people.” The Iranian security and judicial authorities had issued a series of coordinated warnings to protesters on Friday, hardening their rhet-



oric and echoing an earlier message of “no leniency” by Iran’s top security body, the Supreme National Security Council. Iran’s National Security Council said “decisive and necessary legal action will be taken” against protesters, which it described as “armed vandals” and “disruptors of peace and security”. The intelligence arm of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) said it would not tolerate what it described as “terrorist acts”, asserting that it would continue its operations “until the complete defeat of the enemy’s plan”.

Non-urgent admissions and surgeries were said to have been suspended, and staff called in to deal with emergency cases. The BBC also obtained a video and audio message from a medic in a hospital in the south-west city of Shiraz on Thursday. The medic said large numbers of injured people were being brought in, and the hospital did not have enough surgeons to cope with the influx. He claimed many of the wounded had gunshot injuries to the head and eyes. Since protests began on 28 December, at least 50 protesters and 15 security personnel have been killed, according to the US-based Human Rights Activist News Agency (HRANA). More than 2,311 individuals have also been arrested, the group reported. The Norway-based Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO) said at least 51 protesters, including nine children, had been killed. BBC Persian has spoken to the families of 22 of them and confirmed their identities. United Nations Secretary General spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said the UN was very disturbed by the loss of life. “People anywhere in the world have a right to demonstrate peacefully, and governments have a responsibility to protect that right and to ensure that that right is respected,” he said. French President Emmanuel Macron, UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz released a joint statement that said: “The Iranian authorities have the responsibility to protect their own population and must allow for the freedom of expression and peaceful assembly without fear of reprisal.”

Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei remained defiant in a televised address on Friday, saying: “The Islamic Republic came to power through the blood of several hundred thousand honourable people and it will not back down in the face of those who deny this.” Later, in remarks made to a gathering of supporters and broadcast on state television, Khamenei reiterated the message, saying Iran “will not shirk from dealing with destructive elements”. By contrast, the son of Iran’s last shah, Reza Pahlavi, described the protests on Friday as “magnificent” and urged Iranians to stage further targeted protests over the weekend. “Our goal is no longer just to take to the streets. The goal is to prepare to seize and hold city centres,” Pahlavi, who is based in the US, said in a video message on social media. Pahlavi, one of the most well-known opposition figures, said he was preparing to return to the country.

Brain Fog, Low Mood, And Weight Gain? Signs Your Thyroid May Be To Blame

Feeling constantly tired, emotionally low, or struggling with unexplained weight gain is often brushed off as a consequence of stress, poor lifestyle choices, or declining mental health. In a world that increasingly acknowledges anxiety and depression, physical causes behind these symptoms can sometimes be overlooked. One such commonly missed culprit is thyroid dysfunction, particularly hypothyroidism, which can quietly mimic mental health disorders and delay the right diagnosis. The thyroid gland, though small, plays an outsized role in regulating metabolism, energy levels, body temperature, and cognitive function. When it underperforms, the entire body slows down – physically and mentally – often blurring the line between hormonal imbalance and psychological distress.

How Thyroid Dysfunction Mimics Mental Health Disorders

Dr. Srinivasa Munigoti, Consultant, Endocrinology, Fortis Hospital, Banerghatta Road, Bengaluru, notes that hypothyroidism is frequently mistaken for a mental health condition because of the striking overlap in symptoms. “The thyroid gland plays a vital role in regulating metabolism, energy levels, body temperature, and brain function. In hypothyroidism, the thyroid hormone levels are low, and thus, the body’s systems are slowed down,” he explains. This slowdown can present as persistent fatigue, low mood, irritability, sleep disturbances, poor concentration, memory lapses

or what many describe as brain fog. “This slowdown can very much resemble the symptoms of depression and anxiety,” Dr. Munigoti adds, noting that many patients first consult psychiatrists before undergoing basic thyroid testing.

Why Diagnosis Is Often Delayed

The overlap between thyroid-related symptoms and mental health conditions makes diagnosis particularly challenging. “Tiredness, low mood, irritability, sleep disturbances, memory problems, reduced motivation, and weight gain are common to both conditions,” says Dr. Munigoti. In some cases, patients may also experience anxiety, palpitations, or mood instability. These symptoms further complicate the clinical picture. “As a result, thyroid dysfunction may go unnoticed for months or even years,” he warns. This delay is not just diagnostic, but it can be emotionally exhausting for patients who feel unheard or mislabelled.

Who Is Most At Risk?

Certain groups are disproportionately affected by thyroid disorders. “Women are affected by thyroid disorders much more than men,” Dr. Munigoti explains, especially during periods of hormonal change such as pregnancy, the postpartum phase, and menopause. One commonly overlooked condition is postpartum thyroiditis. “It is usually missed, with its symptoms being incorrectly associated with postnatal depression or the physical exhaustion of new motherhood,” he says. Individuals with a family history of thyroid disease or autoimmune disorders also carry a



higher risk.

The Importance Of Timely Screening

Dr. Munigoti emphasises that thyroid screening should not be an afterthought. “It is very important to have routine thyroid screening done when the symptoms of fatigue, weight gain, or mood changes do not go away even after making lifestyle changes or getting mental health treatment.” A

simple blood test measuring thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) and thyroid hormone levels can provide clarity. Early screening is particularly important before starting long-term psychiatric medications, which may mask underlying hormonal issues.

The Cost Of Missing The Diagnosis

Untreated hypothyroidism doesn’t just affect emotional health. “De-

layed diagnosis can not only cause mental suffering but also eventually lead to physical problems that last for a long time,” says Dr. Munigoti. These include increased cardiovascular risk, infertility, pregnancy complications, and metabolic disorders. Chronic fatigue and cognitive impairment can significantly impact work performance, relationships, and overall quality of life. Thyroid dis-

orders are highly treatable, yet frequently misunderstood. With timely diagnosis and appropriate hormone replacement therapy, patients often experience restored energy, improved mood, sharper cognition, and better overall well-being. The key lies in looking beyond surface symptoms and recognising that not all emotional distress begins in the mind. Sometimes, it starts in the thyroid.

The last von Trapp child is 86 - and is still running their US lodge

In the rolling meadows and snow-dusted peaks of Stowe, Vermont, 86-year-old Johannes von Trapp still helps run the lodge his mother, Maria von Trapp, founded after the family fled Nazi-occupied Salzburg. As his daughter Kristina von Trapp Frame recalls, Maria spotted a dilapidated farmhouse with a “For Sale” sign in 1942. “We can’t replicate the views, but we can fix the house,” Kristina says her grandmother told the family. That view, stretching across Vermont’s Green Mountains, reminded them of the Austrian Alps they’d left behind. In 2025, the von Trapp Family Lodge & Resort celebrated its 75th anniversary – and the last living Von Trapp child still lives part-time on the property. Johannes splits his days between the Green Mountains and his cattle ranch in New Mexico, while Kristina and her husband manage the sprawling 2,600-acre estate. Guests can hike through wildflower fields dotted with Highland cows, sip maple syrup made in the lodge’s sugar shack or sample Austrian-style lagers brewed on site. In winter, skiers glide along the trails of North America’s first commercial cross-country ski centre, which Johannes established in 1968.

A slice of Austria in Vermont
The von Trapps immigrated to the US in 1942 – five years before Maria’s husband Georg passed away – and purchased the Stowe farmhouse with their meagre earnings from their family’s famous singing group, the Trapp Family Singers. By 1950, Maria had converted the farmhouse into a 27-room lodge, which Johannes took over in 1969, expanding the property after a fire in 1983. Maria infused the lodge with *gemütlichkeit* – that uniquely Austrian spirit of warmth, friendliness and good cheer. In fact, the main building, with its steeply pitched roofs, flower-box balconies and endless mountain views, feels more Austrian than New England. Inside, visitors linger over coffee and strudel at the Austrian-themed Kaffeehaus, or settle in at the von Trapp Brewing Bierhall, where sausages and Bavarian pretzels pair with the family’s Jubilee Grüner Veltliner, produced to mark the anniversary.

Despite its fame, little at the resort hints that this family inspired one of the most-watched musicals of all time, based on the 1949 autobiography of Maria von

Trapp. Because Disney holds the rights, no official imagery from The Sound of Music can be found here. Instead, the family honours its real legacy: the story of the Trapp Family Singers, who toured internationally for two decades. “I call the movie my sci-fi parallel universe family,” says Kristina. “It helps people realise how different the movie was from my family’s life. It was filmed in different locations than where my family lived and the children had different names and sang different songs.” Still, she loves meeting nostalgic Sound of Music fans at the Vermont lodge. “Someone once told me how their family member passed away and all they wanted to do was listen to the Sound of Music soundtrack on a loop,” she said. “One woman told me just this week how she had named her three children, and even her dog, after the kids in the movie. Sometimes they just start crying.”

An Alpine-style ski village

It wasn’t by chance that Maria and Georg fell in love with



Stowe’s rolling hills and meandering streams. In this quaint 18th-Century town, often called “The Ski Capital of the East”, Austrian influences run deep.

A few years before the von Trapps arrived, Austrian ski instructor Sepp Ruschp – known for helping develop skiing as a US sport – had become the first director of the ski school at what is now Stowe



en balconies, the Innsbruck Inn at Stowe was originally built by Austrian architect Karl Schwanzner as the Austrian Pavilion at Montreal’s 1967 Expo before it was moved to Stowe. Between the town’s farmhouses are restaurants rooted in Alpine heritage, like the Swiss Fondue Restaurant By Heinz, opened by Swiss hotelier Heinz Remmel; and Edelweiss Mountain Deli, once owned by Austrian ski instructors Aldi and Ingeborg Yoerg, which operates inside what was an 1830s one-room schoolhouse.

A homecoming in Salzburg

In 2025, Kristina returned to her grandmother’s hometown of Salzburg for the 60th anniversary of The Sound of Music, helping with an exhibit at the city’s famous Schloss Leopoldskron hotel, where scenes from the film were shot. Family photos from both Salzburg and Stowe, as well as memorabilia like the green curtains Maria famously sewed into play clothes, will appear in 2026 at Salzburg’s

first museum dedicated to The Sound of Music at Schloss Hellbrunn, now home to the gazebo where Liesl and Rolf sing “Sixteen Going on Seventeen”: “When you’re a kid, the movie is fun. As a teen, you relate to the themes of love, and when you get older you understand the movie is about a country and its values,” Kristina said. “They did a brilliant job and it’s an honour that the Sound of Music is still relevant to people.” During that trip, she met Texan traveller Kathleen Ditter, who fell in love with the Sound of Music as an eight-year-old girl. Salzburg – a city of 157,000 residents – draws more than 300,000 Sound of Music fans each year to film sites like the 1913 Salzburg Marionette Theatre. During a chance encounter on Salzburg streets, standing between buses wrapped in movie posters featuring Julie Andrews (who played Maria von Trapp) and Christopher Plummer (Georg von Trapp), Kristina convinced Ditter to visit the family lodge in Vermont. “While

walking back to our bus [in Salzburg] with our tour guide, we realised we were standing next to a lovely woman dressed in a pretty dirndl,” Ditter recalled. “Our tour guide began talking to her and that’s when the woman introduced herself as Kristina von Trapp.” At the Vermont lodge, Ditter toured the small stone chapel built by Werner von Trapp, the second oldest von Trapp son, after he returned from World War Two, where he and his brother fought as US soldiers in the elite 10th Mountain division. “What they’ve built over the years is amazing,” she says. “I felt like I was in a European Austrian lodge. What a wise visionary Maria von Trapp was.”

The real von Trapp story

The family’s true history is quieter than Hollywood’s version but no less remarkable, starting with the orphaned girl who found comfort with the nuns of Salzburg’s Nonnberg Abbey. On the Trapp Family Lodge & Resort tour, visitors learn that after somewhat reluctantly marrying Georg, Maria and the family fled Villa Trapp in Austria not by foot over the mountains – that would have taken them to Germany, not Switzerland – but by train to Italy (formerly Croatia), where Georg had grown up and earned a military pension. From there they sailed to the US. Guests also discover that Maria was “strict, not as cosy as you see in the movie, but that’s kind of the German and Austrian way – very black and white and right or wrong”, said Kristina. “She was also very gracious and giving. As a kid, my brother and I called her Grandmother with a capital ‘G’.” And, she adds, it was her grandfather Georg who, despite his portrayal in the movie, “was actually really warm and loving”. As for the singing von Trapp children later raised in Stowe – her aunts and uncles – Kristina remembers them as a doctor, a dairy farmer, a music teacher, the owner of Vermont’s von Trapp Farmstead cheese-making business and even a missionary in New Guinea living with no electricity. The youngest, one of three born to Maria and Georg, is her father Johannes, who helps keep their Austrian heritage alive in the hills of Vermont. “We’re excited to go home and watch the entire movie again. It’ll be in a new light after visiting Stowe, I’m sure,” said Ditter. “I bought a copy of Maria’s book.”

Nick Jonas and Priyanka Chopra Corrected the Record at the Golden Globes



Mumbai: When Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas appeared together for the 2026 Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills, they attracted notice. On the red carpet, the couple looked lovely as they posed for photographers. Priyanka and Nick joked about who actually controls the remote and how they choose what to watch at home. Nick complimented the year in movies and television while chatting to Zuri Hall on LIVE from E!: Golden Globes on January 11 at the Beverly Hills Hotel. He also mentioned that the couple doesn't restrict their options when it comes to watching at home. "It's been such a great year in

film and TV," Nick stated. "We don't really have a guilty pleasure thing in our house," he continued. It's all fair game. You are free to watch anything you want. But Priyanka swiftly provided an other viewpoint of the home watching arrangements.

"No, we can watch whatever you like," she said, subtly correcting her husband. I use my iPad to watch mine. Priyanka opted for a tiered navy-blue gown with diamond accents for the occasion. Nick wore a sleek black suit to maintain a classic appearance. One of the highlights of the evening's arrivals was the pair's well-planned arrival. In addition to being

present at the ceremony, Priyanka is scheduled to give an award.

A complete list of presenters was made public by the Golden Globes organizers in the days preceding the event. George Clooney, Julia Roberts, Macaulay Culkin, Charli XCX, Hail-ee Steinfeld, Jennifer Garner, Kevin Bacon, Kevin Hart, Miley Cyrus, Pamela Anderson, and Snoop Dogg are among the well-known figures on the lineup.

This year's presenters include a large number of nominees. George Clooney, Julia Roberts, Miley Cyrus, Ayo Edebiri, Amanda Seyfried, Jason Bateman, Will Arnett, Sean Hayes, and Kevin Hart are a few among them. Other presenters, such as Hail-ee Steinfeld, Colman Domingo, Dakota Fanning, Kathryn Hahn, Lali-sa Manobal, Regina Hall, and Zoe Kravitz, are connected to productions that were nominated. With nine nominations, One Battle After Another is the movie with the most. Sinners got seven nods, followed by Sentimental Value with eight.

Frankenstein and Wicked: For Good each received five nominations, while Hamnet received six. With six nominations, The White Lotus is at the top of the television list. Severance and Only Murders in the Building each received four nominations, while Adolescence received five. In terms of her career, Priyanka will star in the next movie The Bluff, which will debut on Prime Video on February 25, 2026. Varanasi, directed by SS Raj-mouli, will also include her.

In response to criticism of Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai, Rohitashv Gour



Mumbai: For the past ten years, &TV's Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai has delighted fans. Because of its enormous success, a movie has been made based on it. Nonetheless, some viewers have expressed concerns about the show's content in a number of ways. Due to its usage of double-meaning jokes, Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai has frequently been accused of being indecent. Over the years, Angoori Bhabhi's talks have generated controversy on multiple occasions. Actor Rohitashv Gour, who plays Tiwarji on the show, responded to the criticism by addressing the accusations made against it. Rohitashv addressed allegations that the program encourages obscenity in an interview with Digital Commentary. "We did a story that was very well received by a certain segment of the audience," he stated. Simultaneously, a different segment denounced it, asserting that Vibhuti Narayan Mishra was producing a triple-X movie. "If you look at it from a different perspec-

tive, it was very funny," he continued. Nonetheless, a specific section harshly criticized it. We have made significant efforts to reduce it, and we will keep doing so. However, occasionally specific components are included in order to appeal to the present Gen-Z demographic. That is the reality. Rohitashv went on to say, "The movie uses a lot of abusive language, which I heard for the first time on the big screen," using Dhurandhar as an example. Both the industry and society are undergoing significant change. Thus, the market is also being impacted by this. Rohitashv Gour also discussed the forthcoming Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain movie during the conversation. He clarified that the producers had planned the move from the serial to the big screen. According to the actor, there will be a lot of humor in the movie. He also mentioned that the movie, which is slated to hit theaters on February 6, will feature all of the show's well-known characters.

Owen Cooper is the youngest actor to ever win a Golden Globe

Mumbai: Owen Cooper, a sixteen-year-old actor, made history by taking home the Golden Globe for his performance in the Netflix series Adolescence. The Golden Globe Awards are being held at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California, and the actor won Best Supporting Actor in a TV Series. Cooper has created history with this victory. He became the youngest actor to win a Golden Globe in this category at the age of sixteen. Additionally, he is the youngest male actor to win the Critics' Choice Award, an Emmy Award, and a Golden Globe in consecutive years. Cooper received the Critics' Choice Award for Best Supporting Actor in a Limited Series or Film Made for Television for Adolescence earlier this month. Additionally, he became the youngest male performer to win an acting prize at the Emmy Awards last year, making history. Owen portrays 13-year-old schoolboy Jamie Miller, who is detained in connection with a murder case, in the four-episode Netflix series Adolescence. The show examines why Jamie's life took that terrible turn rather than focusing on who

perpetrated the crime. Christine Tremarco plays Jamie's mother, Stephen Graham plays his father, and Amelie Pease plays his sister in the series. During his acceptance speech, Cooper conveyed his appreciation for being chosen for the position. "Wow, standing here with a Golden Globe, it does not feel real whatsoever," he said. "My family and I have experienced an amazing journey. We will always be appreciative of what these individuals have done for my family and me. What I initially thought was, 'I might be okay, I might be awful.' I took a chance and enrolled in acting classes since I never knew." Cooper said, remembering his early years: "I was the only boy there." It was awkward. However, I overcame it, and I'm still very much an apprentice.



Aditya Dhar Celebrates Vicky Kaushal's Seven Years of Uri

Mumbai: On January 11, 2025, Aditya Dhar's 2019 film Uri: The Surgical Strike celebrated its seventh anniversary. To commemorate the milestone, the director, who is now enjoying the enormous success of Dhurandhar, shared a clip from the movie. "After seven years, the josh is still as high," Aditya Dhar wrote. Both on and off screen, Major Vihaan and his crew never stop inspiring. Honoring #7YearsOfUriTheSurgicalStrikeIn a different narrative, he wrote, "January 11, 2019. A day that permanently altered my life. That day, Uri, my debut movie, came out. I had been looking forward to that moment for a long time.

At last, my fantasy came true. From the start, the intention was obvious, to create a daring, audacious movie that might herald a new era in our film industry, to narrate an Indian tale in accordance with global norms." "I constantly remind myself to never forget where it all began," he continued. Beginnings keep you hungry and rooted. Filmmaking is a difficult, merciless process that involves uncertainty and long nights. However, all of your struggles suddenly make sense when your work is embraced by the public. It's all worthwhile because of that feeling. The son of Katrina Kaif and



Vicky Kaushal is called Vihaan. On November 7, the couple welcomed their first child.

Because it alludes to Vicky Kaushal's character in his popular movie Uri: The Surgical Strike, the name went viral on the Internet. In Aditya Dhar's 2019 film, Vicky portrayed Major Vihaan Singh Shergill. In response to the name, director Aditya Dhar sent a heartfelt note in the comments area. Aditya commented, "Huge congratulations," to the new parents.

Life has come full circle, Mere Vi-kuuu, from bringing Major Vihaan

Shergill to life on TV to now cradling little Vihaan in your arms. Blessings and love to all three of you. You two will make fantastic parents. He used Nazar Amulet and love emojis to punctuate the message. Aditya Dhar's film Uri: The Surgical Strike is based on the actual events of the Indian Army's September 2016 surgical strikes against terror launchpads in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Yami Gautam, Paresh Rawal, Kirti Kulhari, and Mohit Raina were among the other actors who starred in the movie. Major Vihaan Singh Shergill was played by Vicky Kaushal.

Jay Bhanushali responds to rumors of ex-wife Mahhi Vij



Mumbai: Actor Jay Bhanushali has finally spoken out about the romance rumors involving Nadim Nadz and his ex-wife, Mahhi Vij. Jay brushed off the rumors, claiming that there isn't a "villain" to blame for the split. After Mahhi shared a birthday message for Nadim on social media on Sunday, there was a lot of talk linking them. Actor and friend Ankita Lokhande chastised people for associating Mahhi with Nadim in the midst of severe trolling. "Today, I want to say something, not as a celebrity, but as a friend," Ankita wrote.

The remarks that people have been making regarding Mahi and Nadeem's relationship have really

disturbed me. I am well familiar with Mahi, Nadeem, and Jai. To be clear, Nadeem has always been a father figure to Tara as well as to Mahi and Jai.

That's all there is to it." As a friend, I can say that this Nadeem is someone who has stood by people, including myself, in difficult times," she continued.

I have the utmost respect for him. You two are doing a fantastic job as parents, Mahi and Jai. God bless you, and please quit spreading negativity. People should be allowed to live their lives. Karma is keeping an eye on you. I adore you, Mahi.

I adore you, Jai. And you really are among the greatest, Nadeem. For

many of us, you are a gift from God! In response, Jay shared Ankita's message on his own Instagram Stories, making it clear that he agreed with all she said. "Thank you Ankita and I agree to everything you said," Jay replied after reposting the article. After 16 years of together, Jay and Mahhi announced their separation earlier this month. In a joint statement, they announced the news and said they will continue to co-parent their children. "Today, we choose to part ways on a journey called life, yet we continue to have each other's back," the statement said. Our guiding principles have always been humanity, kindness, growth, and peace.

Haq is a very empowering movie, according to Karan Johar

Mumbai: Filmmaker Karan Johar has lauded actor Yami Gautam's performance in the recently released movie Haq, which is currently available on Netflix. Johar wrote on social media about how the movie profoundly impacted him and called it incredibly inspirational. According to Johar, he was deeply impacted by the tale of Shazia Bano and her triumph. He said he was moved to tears by the story and regretted not seeing the film in theaters. Johar claims that the experience was so intense that, at the end of the movie, he applauded. Johar stated in his note, "HAQ, I cried uncontrollably at the end of Shazia Bano's tale and victory, clapped loudly for the movie, and regretted not being able to see this incredibly uplifting movie in theaters. Johar continued by praising Yami Gautam's performance. "To say that @yamigautam is brilliant, outstanding, and path-breaking is still not enough. I don't think I have been this moved by a performance in many years." Her final monologue, her silences, her looks, and her posture throughout the movie are all superb examples of skill and conviction.



Rani Mukerji returns to the role of supercop Shivani Shivaji Roy in Mardaani 3

Mumbai: Rani Mukerji celebrated his thirty years in Hindi cinema by posting a heartfelt message on the official social media accounts of Yash Raj Films. When she thought about a career, she remarked that instinct, not ambition, shaped it. According to Mukerji, her journey has been shaped by her love of storytelling, emotional honesty, and resilience, all of which have influenced her decisions throughout the years. Mukerji described the experience as "unreal," stating that because she never thought of acting as a destination, time seemed to have flown by. "I didn't come into films with a master plan," she said, remembering how she discovered movies practically by accident. She said she still carried that early sensitivity and curiosity into every character, from the anxious young girl on her first movie set to one of the most adored female actors in Hindi cinema. Raja Ki Aayegi Baaraat (1997), Mukerji's debut film, is said to have molded her perception of cinema as responsibility rather than glamour. Early in her career, she played a woman battling for dignity, which had a long-lasting effect on the kind of characters she would later like: women who question patriarchy, challenge systems, and don't give up. She remembered the late 1990s as a time of profound emotional and professional change. She claimed that the movies from that era gave her a better understanding of how deeply ingrained Hindi cinema is in people's lives. She remarked,



"Audiences give you your destiny," giving viewers credit for shaping her path. With Saathiya (2002), Mukerji discovered her voice and embraced flawed, impetuous, and emotionally complicated women on screen, marking a turning point in the early 2000s. She was able to explore humor and sensitivity in films like Hum Tum (2004), but Black (2005) turned out to be one of the most challenging experiences of her career. She claimed that working with Amitabh Bachchan and Sanjay Leela Bhansali forced her into uncharted emotional area and taught her the value of stillness and listening as an actress. In movies like Bunty Aur Babli (2005), No One Killed Jessica

(2011), and the Mardaani (2014) series, Mukerji recognized a recurring attraction to strong, resilient people. Shivani Shivaji Roy, according to Mardaani, is a symbol of "quiet strength" as opposed to "loud heroism," which enables her to share stories that may be painful but essential. Mukerji claimed that becoming a mother and getting married did not slow her down but instead made her more focused. She was able to match her decisions with the kind of legacy she wished to leave by becoming more picky about her work. She observed that Hichki (2018) strengthened her comprehension of vulnerability and underlined the significance of empathy and representation in narrative. More recently, Mrs. Chatterjee v. Norway (2023) confirmed her conviction that emotional truth is not limited by words. After experiencing motherhood firsthand, she characterized the National Award she received for the film as a meaningful event. As he humbly accepted the honor, Mukerji thought about fate, time, and his own development as an artist. The 47-year-old summed up her three-decade career by writing that honesty—trusting one's instincts, even when they defy trends—is more important for longevity than relevance. She claimed that moments—such as the rain-soaked shots, the quiet following challenging scenes, and the satisfaction of a performance that resonates—are more important to her than box office receipts or awards.

ICC Will Propose These Two Locations for the Bangladesh T20 World Cup Row



New Delhi: The Bangladesh Cricket Board’s (BCB) request to move the national team’s T20 World Cup 2026 matches from India between Monday and Tuesday of this week will be addressed by the International Cricket Council (ICC). The BCB formally requested that the ICC move its games from India to Sri Lanka, citing “security concerns.”

The request was made following the IPL team Kolkata Knight Riders’ decision to release Bangladeshi fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman at the BCCI’s recommendation. Chennai and Thiruvananthapuram were proposed as possible locations because the ICC is unlikely to grant BCB’s request. Bangladesh’s group stage

matches are presently slated to take place in Mumbai and Kolkata. Aminul Islam, president of the BCB, said that their government might accept Chennai, but Bangladesh had previously rejected it as a possibility.”Since you know that we are not taking decisions alone regarding this World Cup, we will discuss it with the government and we are

still where we stood,” he stated to reporters in Sylhet. Regarding the security concerns surrounding the forthcoming T20 World Cup, the Bangladeshi administration also anticipates direct communication with the Indian government. Sharfuddoula Saikat, a Bangladeshi umpire, officiated Sunday’s opening One-Day International match between India and New Zealand in Vadodara. Saikat and Gazi Sohel are anticipated to serve as match officials for the T20 World Cup. In answer to the “security concerns” section of BCB’s proposal, the ICC is probably going to use Saikat as an example and ask them to fly to India for the T20 World Cup matches. The competition will start in less than four weeks, and the competing teams will arrive for practice during the first week of February. The ICC is therefore eager to resolve the venue dispute that has been making news for the previous few days as quickly as feasible.

After conflict in India, Bangladesh is expected to suffer financial setback

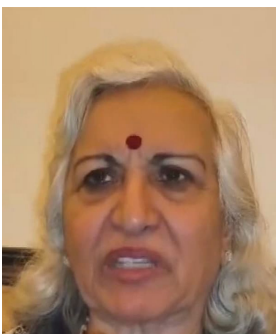


New Delhi: A day after being “digitally arrested” and defrauded of around ₹14 crore, an elderly NRI doctor couple in Delhi said they were forced to transfer their entire life savings, fixed deposits, and mutual funds, confined to their home for 16 days, and subjected to mental anguish. Police claimed they had not yet identified the culprits responsible for the online scam. The two doctors, Om Taneja, 81, and Indira Taneja, 77, had returned to India from the United States in 2015. According to Indira, they have experience in social work and reside in Greater Kailash II in south Delhi. The suspects initially contacted Indira on De-

cember 24, 2025, claiming to be representatives of the Telecom Regulatory Authority, according to authorities. “The renewal of their sponsorship agreements was approaching. According to a source, “that process has been slowed down amid the current heightened political and cricketing tensions between India and Bangladesh.” When unrest started in Bangladesh last year, Sareen Sports Industries (SS), another well-known Indian manufacturer of sporting goods, actually terminated the sponsorship deals of four or five of the country’s best cricket players. However, if the two nations’ ties improve, things might change,” another insider said.

A digital arrest fraud costs an NRI couple in Delhi Rs.14 crore

New Delhi, Jan 12: A day after being “digitally arrested” and defrauded of around ₹14 crore, an elderly NRI doctor couple in Delhi said they were forced to transfer their entire life savings, fixed deposits, and mutual funds, confined to their home for 16 days, and subjected to mental anguish. Police claimed they had not yet identified the culprits responsible for the online scam. The two doctors, Om Taneja, 81, and Indira Taneja, 77, had returned to India from the United States in 2015. According to Indira, they have experience in social work and reside in Greater Kailash II in south Delhi. The suspects initially contacted Indira on December 24, 2025, claiming to be representatives of the Telecom Regulatory Authority, according to authorities. They informed Indira that her phone number had been the subject of several complaints. According to police on Saturday, an elderly doctor couple from Greater Kailash in south Delhi was allegedly defrauded of around Rs 14 crore after being kept under “digital arrest” by cybercriminals for



more than two weeks. The accused allegedly pretended to be law enforcement officers and forced the elderly couple to transfer money to many bank accounts during the fraud, which allegedly occurred between December 24 and January 9. The Delhi Police’s cybercrime unit opened an investigation after an e-FIR was filed on Saturday. The authorities claim that the medical couple moved to Greater Kailash in 2016 after returning from the United States. Their kids have made their home overseas. According to authorities, the pair was forced to stay on constant phone and video chats because the accused reportedly took advantage of their loneliness by threatening them with arrest and legal action.

Nandani Sharma, a pacer for the Delhi Capitals

New Delhi: On Sunday, Nandani Sharma made history by being the first bowler from India to get a hat-trick in the Women’s Premier League (WPL). During Sunday’s game against Gujarat Giants in Navi Mumbai, the 24-year-old Delhi Capitals star accomplished the amazing feat. Nandani joined the select group of bowlers with WPL hat-tricks, including Issy Wong (Mumbai Indians), Grace Harris (UP Warriorz), and Deepti Sharma (UP Warriorz), after finishing with outstanding scores of 5 for 33. Nandani removed Kanika Ahuja, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, and Renuka Singh in the twentieth over of the innings. Nandani is a gifted cricket player from

Chandigarh who has established herself in domestic T20 cricket. She is well-known for her fast bowling. She was born in 2001, competed domestically for Chandigarh, and excelled as a member of the North Zone Women in inter-zonal events. In the WPL 2026 auction, Delhi Capitals purchased her for Rs 20 lakh. The child thanked teammate Shafali Verma and captain Jemimah Rodrigues for their unwavering support. She said that she went on to capture a five-wicket haul, including the hat-trick, and that changing her line and length after her first over proved to be a crucial choice. “All I could think about was bowling at my objective. Before every ball, Shafali and Jemimah spoke to me, and the strategy was straightforward: attack the stumps. Nandani remarked, “The team kept telling me that wickets would come, but I didn’t expect a hat-trick.” “I opted to employ my variations after realizing the batters were picking my stock ball well after my first over, and happily it worked. The rest of my family is watching from home, but my mother, brother, and a close friend are here on the ground. They’ve all been so helpful,” she continued.



Lyon’s French Cup record is opened by Endrick



New Delhi: In a snow-delayed round of 32 French Cup match on Sunday, Ligue 1 leaders Lens defeated third-tier Sochaux 3-0, while Real Madrid loanee Endrick scored his first goal for Lyon against Lille. Lens, who have never won the French Cup, rested just experienced midfielder Florian Thauvin against opponents who have won the championship twice in a match that was postponed from Saturday night due to a blizzard. Lens took a 22nd-minute lead thanks to Odsonne Edouard, but the visitors only secured their ninth straight win in all competitions with goals from Matthieu Udol in the 87th and Abdallah Sima in the 89th.

Endrick, a 19-year-old Brazilian, scored a superb poacher’s finish in the north of France

to give Lyon a 2-1 victory over Lille in his debut. 49 seconds after the referee had signaled the start of the game, Afonso Moreira flicked a long punt forward past Lille goalkeeper Arnaud Bodart to propel Lyon into the lead. Two minutes before the half-hour mark, Nathan Ngoy tied the score for the home team after Hakon Haraldsson teed up the defender after Lyon failed to clear the danger. Endrick demonstrated why Spanish powerhouse Real Madrid reportedly paid 47.5 million euros (\$55.9 million) for his services in 2024 by ghosting in at the back post to expertly slot home a Corentin Tolisso flick-on and secure Lyon’s spot in the round of sixteen against the flow of play going into halftime.

Virat Kohli explains why he sent all of his trophies to his mother in Gurgaon

New Delhi: Virat Kohli, a batting mainstay for India, stated on Sunday that his incredible journey thus far has been nothing short of a dream come true because he is able to “give so much happiness and smile to so many people” through his sport. During the first ODI against New Zealand, the 37-year-old Kohli achieved yet another milestone: he became the second most prolific scorer behind Sachin Tendulkar and the fastest player to reach 28,000 runs across formats in international cricket. By striking a four off New Zealand leg-spinner Adithya Ashok in his 624th innings, Kohli reached the milestone. Only the third member of the 28000-run club, Sri Lankan legend Kumar Sangakkara, achieved the milestone in his 666th innings, while Tendulkar did so in his 644th.” To be honest, my entire trip has been nothing short of a dream come true. Although I’ve always been aware of my ability, I had to put in a lot more effort to get to where I am now.” I have far too many blessings from God to be able to complain about anything. So all I can feel is thankfulness. I always have a lot of grace and thankfulness in my



heart when I reflect on my entire path, and I feel proud of it.” Everywhere he plays, cricket fans adore Kohli, who was awarded player of the match for the 45th time in his career. “I am appreciative that I was placed in this role. To be honest, it’s a blessing. Playing the sport you’ve always liked as a child is something you can do to make a lot of people happy. I’m genuinely fulfilling my goal, making people happy, and seeing smiling faces—what more could I want for? When asked about the 91-ball 93 innings on Sunday that helped India win, Kohli responded, “If I’m being brutally hon-

est, the way I’m playing right now, I’m not thinking about the milestones at all.” To be honest, I would have probably batted harder today if we were batting first. I had to sort of hunker down and play the scenario since there was a total on the board. I felt like I wanted to push myself further.” The basic idea is I batted at number three, so if the situation is a bit tricky, I backed myself to counter-attack now rather than just trying to play the situation in.” Kohli said when asked if he was becoming more aggressive early in his innings lately compared to previously in his career.

As the cold wave gets stronger, Delhi freezes at 2.9 degrees Celsius

New Delhi, Jan 12: According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), New Delhi had a severe cold spell as temperatures dropped precipitously throughout the nation’s capital, with Ayanagar recorded the lowest minimum temperature at 2.9 degrees Celsius. Sunday night saw cold wave conditions in some areas of the city, with minimum temperatures dropping to nearly three degrees. The lowest temperature Palam has seen in a number of years was 3.0 degrees Celsius. According to IMD statistics, comparable chilly conditions are probably going to last throughout day. The lowest temperature at Safdarjung on Sunday night was 4.8 degrees Celsius, and tomorrow it is predicted to drop even lower to about 3 degrees. A minimum temperature of 3.7 degrees Celsius and a high temperature of 18.8 degrees Celsius were recorded at the Ridge station. Moreover, air pollution levels continued to be an issue. As of 7 a.m. on Monday, Delhi’s overall Air Quality Index (AQI) was 293, placing it in the “poor” category, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). Compared to the AQI level of 291 on Saturday, this was a minor increase. A reading between 0 and 50 is classified



as “good,” 51 to 100 as “satisfactory,” 101 to 200 as “moderate,” 201 to 300 as “poor,” 301 to 400 as “very poor,” and 401 to 500 as “severe” according to the AQI. Early in the morning, places like Sarai Kale Khan and Dhaura Kuan were covered in a thin layer of fog. In the meantime, it has been frigid for the past few days. Sunday morning in the capital was windy and cold, with early-morning temperatures of about 6.6 degrees Celsius. Residents’ discomfort was increased

by a thin layer of haze that made it difficult to see in a number of places. Rainfall was observed in certain areas of the city on Saturday, when the minimum temperature dropped to 5.4 degrees Celsius. The capital was still experiencing frigid weather on Friday, with minimum temperatures hovering around 5 degrees Celsius. In the meantime, despite the severe winter weather, preparations for the 77th Republic Day parade are in progress on Kartavya Path.

Was PSLV-C62 a success? Unconfirmed satellite deployment, according to ISRO

New Delhi, Jan 12: A disruption in the rocket’s third stage caused ISRO’s PSLV-C62 mission to deviate from its intended flight path on Monday, resulting in an unconfirmed satellite deployment. The EOS-N1 (Anvesha) Earth observation satellite and four-teen co-passenger satellites were carried by the PSLV-C62 rocket as it took out from the Satish Dhawan Space Center’s First Launch Pad. ISRO subsequently stated that the mission experienced an anomaly and that it was examining flight data and telemetry to ascertain the result. We attempted the PSLV-C62 launch mission today. In a succinct response, ISRO added, “We are analyzing the data and will get back to you.” According to ISRO chief V Narayanan, PSLV-C62 veered off course when a disruption was found in the rocket’s third stage. A thorough analysis of the mission was in progress, he continued. ISRO has not yet verified whether EOS-N1 and the 14 co-passenger spacecraft were successfully launched into their designated polar sun-synchronous orbit because of the anomaly. The vehicle’s telemetry data is being analyzed to determine



the spacecraft and payload status. The PSLV-C62 mission was supposed to be the 64th Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle flight and India’s first space launch of 2026. Monday’s effort is particularly important for ISRO because it came after the final PSLV mission in 2025, which was canceled due to a technical observation. The rocket was supposed to launch the Earth observation

satellite first, then 14 local and foreign co-passenger satellites arranged by ISRO’s commercial subsidiary, NewSpace India Ltd. A small re-entry capsule from a Spanish company was also scheduled to be demonstrated in orbit as part of the mission. Once the continuing study of the anomaly and telemetry data is finished, ISRO promised to provide a thorough update.

Ranchi Royals secure first HIL 2025-26 victory with stunning 4-1 comeback over Bengal Tigers



Ranchi: Ranchi Royals secured their first win of the Men’s Hockey India League (HIL) 2025-26 season in spectacular fashion, defeating defending champions Shrachi Bengal Tigers 4-1. Playing in front of a passionate home crowd, the Royals staged a massive late-game comeback, scoring four times in the final six minutes to snatch all three points, as per a release. The match started with the Bengal Tigers showing exactly why they are the defending champions. They used a high-press strategy to keep Ranchi under pressure and won their first penalty corner in just the 2nd minute, though they failed to convert. Ranchi’s Sam Lane looked sharp early on, creating a chance in the 5th minute that resulted in a penalty corner, but his shot was blocked. Both goalkeepers were tested early, with Ranchi’s Suraj Karkera making a vital save in the 9th minute. Despite a flurry of attacks from both sides, the first quarter ended in a scoreless deadlock. The intensity remained high in the second quarter. In the 25th minute, the Tigers finally broke through, despite being a man down due to a green card. Abhishek fired a powerful ball toward the goal, which was expertly deflected into the net by Ketan Kushwaha--the youngest player in the HIL. Ranchi pushed hard for an immediate equaliser, and captain Tom Boon nearly found one in the final seconds of the half, but Tigers’ goalkeeper James Carr pulled off a brilliant save to keep the visitors 1-0 up at the break. In the third quarter, the Tigers shifted to a

more defensive five-man backline to protect their lead. Ranchi tried to play wide to create space, but the Bengal defence remained organized and stubborn. The Tigers had several opportunities to extend their lead through penalty corners, but Ranchi’s defensive unit, led by Manpreet and Yashdeep, kept them at bay. By the end of the third period, the Tigers still held their 1-0 advantage, and it looked like they might see out a narrow victory. However, the final quarter belonged entirely to the home team. The momentum shifted in the 54th minute when captain Tom Boon dispossessed a Tigers player, played a quick one-two, and fired a clinical reverse hit into the net to level the score at 1-1. The equaliser breathed new life into the Royals. Just two minutes later, veteran Mandeep Singh (56’) found the back of the net to give Ranchi their first lead of the game. The collapse of the Tigers’ defence continued as Ranchi stayed on the attack. In the 58th minute, Lachlan Sharp scored to make it 3-1, effectively sealing the match. With the Tigers reeling, Tom Boon added his second goal of the night in the final minute, completing a dominant 4-1 turnaround. Sam Lane was named Player of the Match for his tireless work in the midfield and his role in sparking the Royals’ offense. The victory marks a significant turning point for Ranchi Royals as they look to build momentum in the 2025-26 season. (ANI)

(This content is sourced from a syndicated feed and is published as received. The Tribune assumes no responsibility or liability for its accuracy, completeness, or content.) Ranchi Royals stunned defending champions Shrachi Bengal Tigers with a dramatic 4-1 comeback in the Men’s Hockey India League (HIL) 2025-26, securing their first win of the season in front of a passionate home crowd in Ranchi. Four goals in the final six minutes turned the match on its head, giving the Royals all three points. The match began with the Bengal Tigers showing their champion pedigree, pressing high and earning a penalty corner in the 2nd minute. Ranchi’s goalkeeper Suraj Karkera made crucial early saves to keep the score level. Despite both sides creating chances, the first quarter ended goalless. - The Tigers eventually broke through, taking a 1-0 lead and looked set to control the game.

Mbappe refuses Barcelona guard of honour, pulls Real Madrid teammates away in dramatic show of defiance

Mbappe denies guard, sparks Madrid controversy

Jeddah: Kylian Mbappe was at the centre of post-match controversy after a viral video appeared to show the Real Madrid forward pulling his teammates away and refusing to give a guard of honour to FC Barcelona following their Spanish Super Cup triumph on Sunday. Barcelona edged Real Madrid 3–2 in a dramatic final in Saudi Arabia to retain the Super Cup, but it was Mbappe’s actions after the final whistle that drew widespread attention. As Barcelona players applauded Madrid while they walked up to collect their medals, the France international was seen gesturing to his teammates and guiding them away, ensuring the gesture was not returned. The clip quickly spread across social media, with many fans accusing Mbappe of deliberately avoiding a traditional show of sportsmanship. The forward appeared visibly upset after the defeat, reflecting Madrid’s growing frustration against their rivals. Sunday’s loss marked the third consecutive final in which Barcelona have beaten Los Blancos.



Mbappe’s own night was a difficult one on the pitch as well. The 25-year-old had been expected to miss the final due to a knee issue but travelled to Saudi Arabia and was introduced as a second-half substitute. Despite his arrival, Madrid failed to wrest control back, and Mbappe was unable to make a decisive impact as Barcelona closed out the contest. The final itself lived up to its billing. Barcelona opened the scoring in the 36th minute through Raphinha, only for Vinicius Junior to respond with a brilliant solo goal. Robert Lewandowski restored Barcelona’s lead shortly after, before Gonzalo Garcia equalised right on the stroke of half-time to make it 2–2. The decisive moment

came after the break when Raphinha unleashed a strike from outside the box that took a crucial deflection past Thibaut Courtois. Barcelona then had to withstand sustained late pressure, including a red card for Frenkie de Jong and Mbappe’s introduction, before holding on to secure the trophy. The result also intensified scrutiny on Madrid head coach Xabi Alonso, who later attempted to downplay the importance of the defeat. For Barcelona, the win delivered their first silverware of the season and extended their recent dominance over Madrid, while Mbappe’s refusal to offer a guard of honour ensured the final ended with as much controversy as drama. Kylian Mbappe sparked con-

troversy after Real Madrid’s 3-2 defeat to Barcelona in the Spanish Super Cup final in Saudi Arabia, when he appeared to pull teammates away and refuse to participate in the customary guard of honour for the winners. The incident has gone viral, drawing sharp criticism and debate across football circles. After the final whistle, Barcelona players formed a guard of honour for Real Madrid as they collected their runners-up medals. Traditionally, the losing side then reciprocates by applauding the winners. - Mbappe was seen gesturing to teammates, pulling them away, and refusing to line up for Barcelona’s guard of honour. The video quickly went viral, sparking heated debate among fans and pundits. - Many commentators labeled Mbappe’s move an “ugly gesture,” arguing it showed poor sportsmanship. ome Madrid fans defended him, saying emotions were raw after losing another final to Barcelona. Mbappe had only recently returned from a knee injury and came on as a substitute.

Man United crashes out of FA Cup as club weighs up candidates for interim coach

United face season’s minimum games



Manchester: Managerless Manchester United crashed out of the FA Cup with a 2-1 defeat to Brighton on Sunday. At the end of a week that saw the storied Premier League team and 13-time FA Cup winner fire head coach Ruben Amorim, the loss at Old Trafford has likely consigned United to another trophyless season and was greeted with loud jeers from the home crowd. Interim coach Darren Fletcher admitted the 20-time English champion was “not in a good moment,” but said it was too soon to write the season off with Champions League qualification still

achievable. It’s probably not what fans want to hear about Manchester United because they’ve been winning cups and challenging for the Premier League,” he said. “Don’t waste the season. That would be the challenge that I would set. That’s the challenge that probably the players feel like they need to achieve this year.” Former United striker Danny Welbeck scored what proved to be the decisive goal in the 64th minute, and Benjamin Sesko’s late header was only a consolation for the hosts in the third-round match. United has exited both domestic knockout competi-

tions at the earliest possible stage this season, following the humbling loss to fourth-tier Grimsby in the English League Cup. The latest defeat means United will play the bare minimum of 40 competitive games for a top division team this season. Its only chance of silverware this term is the Premier League, which would require a remarkable turnaround with United currently seventh in the standings and 17 points behind leader Arsenal with 17 games left. A trophyless campaign would be back-to-back seasons in which United has ended up empty-handed. The club’s hierarchy hope an interim coach will be able to salvage the season by securing Champions League qualification. United has spoken to former players Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Michael Carrick about taking on the role until the summer. Fletcher, who has taken charge of the two games since Amorim’s departure, is also a contender, as well as former United striker Ruud van Nistelrooy.

WPL 2026: Fresh from MI escape, RCB face tough questions against UP Warriorz

New Delhi: Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) may have beaten Mumbai Indians (MI) in their previous outing, but they head into Match No. 5 of the Women’s Premier League (WPL) 2026 against UP Warriorz on Monday in Navi Mumbai with several questions still unanswered. RCB are well aware they scraped past the finish line from a position where nine times out of ten, teams end up on the losing side. Had it not been for Nadine de Klerk’s brilliance, the 2024 champions would have been staring at defeat. With only six specialist batters in the squad, RCB remain vulnerable. Any game in which they lose three early wickets could brutally expose their thin batting depth. Radha Yadav, Arundhati Reddy and Shreyanka Patil do offer batting support, but can they consistently produce match-defining knocks like de Klerk? That remains a major question. In the absence of a reliable lower-order cushion, the pressure inevitably shifts to the bowlers, who could find themselves carrying an unsustainable burden over the course of the tournament. If RCB are keen to strengthen their batting ahead of this clash, one option could be to drop Linsey Smith, who conceded 23 runs in just two overs in the previous match. Bringing in Georgia Voll as Smriti Mandhana’s opening partner and pushing Grace Harris down to No. 5 or 6 could add much-needed firepower. Even without Smith, RCB still have six bowling options, including Harris — a player who already has a WPL hat-trick to her name. For the Warriorz, the firepower is clearly there, but their batting unit needs restructuring as they look to get on the board following a 10-run defeat to the Gujarat Giants. A player of Deandra Dottin’s calibre cannot be batting at No. 7 and should be promoted up



sides sharing three wins apiece. Last season, their Bengaluru clash went into a Super Over, which the Warriorz won. The two teams have met once in Navi Mumbai, where RCB secured a five-wicket victory. Kiran Navgire had an off day in the previous match, but considering the impact she can have in this format, the Warriorz should not contemplate moving away from her. Deepti Sharma, too, endured a rare off outing with the bat and will be keen to find rhythm at the earliest. The pitch in Navi Mumbai has been conducive to batting, with batters able to play their shots on the up. At the same time, it has offered assistance to pacers, as demonstrated by the likes of Lauren Bell and Nadine de Klerk, while spinners have also enjoyed a fair share of success. With no chance of rain and temperatures hovering around 28 degrees Celsius, conditions should be ideal for cricket. Given the strength of both teams, the Warriorz appear to have the upper hand heading into the contest. With a strong bowling attack at their disposal, a few early wickets could firmly put them in the driver’s seat. “She has been one of our top picks. A captain’s delight. She is so accurate in whatever she does. Ready to take it on, and very happy for her. Devine went on to win the Player of the Match award for her blistering 95 off 42 balls, an innings studded with seven fours and eight sixes, before sealing the win with her late-over heroics with the ball.

Shah, Hanna clinch titles

Vadodara: Top seed and local favourite Manush Shah and the Korea Republic’s Ryu Hanna registered contrasting victories to clinch the men’s and women’s singles titles respectively in the WTT Feeder Series 2026, presented by Sports Authority of Gujarat, at the SAMA Indoor Sports Complex here on Sunday. The inaugural edition of the WTT Feeder Series in Vadodara, presented by the Sports Authority of Gujarat, was hosted by the Table Tennis Association of Baroda and implemented by UTT, according to a WTT release. Manush looked in trouble when he lost the opening two games in the final against Payas Jain, but kept his nerves to make a comeback and win crown. The closing moments of the first half were dramatic. Lewandowski extended Barcelona’s lead in stoppage time, but Real responded almost immediately. Gonzalo Garcia is making it 2-2 in a breathless end to the opening half. The second half was scrappy at times, with frequent stoppages as both sides looked to gain control.

Virat Kohli stores trophies at mother’s Gurugram home, citing no space available in his residence

Vadodara: India stalwart Virat Kohli won hearts once again on Sunday, not just with a match-winning knock but with a heartfelt revelation about his relationship with individual honours. The Indian batting icon starred in India’s four-wicket win over New Zealand in the opening ODI in Vadodara, setting the tone for the hosts’ 2026 campaign. After being named Player of the Match for the 45th time in his ODI career, Kohli offered a glimpse into his personal side, revealing that every individual award he has won over nearly 18 years of international cricket is sent to his mother’s home in Gurugram. Speaking at the post-match presentation, the former India captain admitted he does not keep track of the honours himself. “Honestly I have no idea,” Kohli said when asked about his growing collection of Player of the Match trophies. “I send it to my mum in Gurgaon, she likes to keep them. If I look back at my whole journey then it is nothing short of a dream come true for me. I have always known my abilities, I have worked a lot for where I am today, God has blessed me with way too much and I have a lot of grati-

tude in my heart, I feel proud.”

The award capped another landmark evening in Kohli’s storied career. His fluent 93 off 91 balls anchored India’s chase of 301 and ensured New Zealand’s late fightback did not derail the hosts, who had briefly stumbled after his dismissal. Although Kohli fell before seeing the chase through, Harshit Rana’s spirited contribution and KL Rahul’s calm under pressure helped India shut the door on a determined New Zealand comeback and cross the line after a tense finish. The innings also carried historic significance. Kohli became the fastest batter to reach 28,000 international runs and moved past Kumar Sangakkara to become the second-highest run-scorer in international cricket history, with only Sachin Tendulkar ahead of him. In terms of individual honours, Kohli’s 45 ODI Player of the Match awards place him behind only Tendulkar and Sanath Jayasuriya in the format. Across all formats, he has now won the award 71 times and is closing in on Tendulkar’s overall record of 76. It took Virat Kohli three balls to find his first boundary in Vadodara. During the South Africa series, it



took him five deliveries just to get off the mark, and when he did in Raipur, it came via a towering six. In the game before that, in Ranchi, there was no waiting at all: Kohli got going immediately, unfurling a boundary with his very first scoring shot. Different venues, different bowlers, different situations – and yet a common thread ran through each of those innings. Kohli was not interested in settling in. He was intent on asserting himself early, even when the safer option might have been to absorb pressure and ease his way into the contest. It is an approach that marks a subtle yet telling shift in how one of the modern greats is looking to reinvent himself in the later phase of his career. For much of his journey at the international level, Kohli was the anchor around whom the innings revolved. He ensured that he stayed till the end, maximising India’s

chances of winning games. The longer he occupied the crease, the more control he exerted – over bowlers, run rates, and match situations. That ability to bat deep, to turn starts into something far more damaging, became his defining trait across formats. Now, however, Kohli appears to be rethinking what his role demands in the evolving landscape of limited-overs cricket. He has acknowledged a conscious change in approach. Rather than being the automatic stabiliser, he is focused on extracting maximum value from each delivery and igniting a counter-attack when India find themselves in a spot of bother. Well, the basic idea is I bat at number 3. If the situation is tricky, I back myself to counterattack now rather than to play the situation. Because some ball has your name on it, no point waiting for it. You back yourself enough to put the pressure back on the back foot,” Kohli said after winning the Player of the Match award for his 91-ball 93 time in the match. The six he hit during his knock on Monday was his first maximum for the tournament so far. Pakistan side World Cup and missed the Asia Cup last year.

Jeddah: The San Francisco 49ers kept Super Bowl hopes alive by knocking out last year’s winner, the Philadelphia Eagles in the NFL Wild Card Round match-up in Philadelphia on Sunday. Brock Purdy and co. now go to the NFC Divisional Round where they play the Seattle Seahawks. The 49ers progressed to the divisional round despite a massively injury-plagued season. In the Eagles game, tight-end George Kittle tore his right Achilles. But it was a Brock Purdy show Sunday as the quarterback almost single-handedly led the team to a 23-19 victory over the Eagles. Purdy completed 18 of 31 passes for 262 yards to go with two touchdowns. He had a quarterback rating of 80.3, as the 49ers came back from behind to knock the Eagles out.

With the Seattle Seahawks and the San Francisco 49ers facing off in the NFL Divisional Round playoff game,



it will be an almost entirely NFC West divisional round. Also read: George Kittle injury update: Did 49ers TE tear his achilles? Video raises concerns The 49ers will have to play away from home at the Lumen Field, in what will be a rematch of the two teams’ Week 18 fixture. Notably, the 49ers suffered an embarrassing 13-3 loss to the Seahawks that day. As far as the head-to-head match-up between the two teams go, the Seahawks lead the all-time series 31–24 and hold a 30–23 edge in regular-season meetings

against the 49ers. However, their playoff matchups are tied 1–1. The San Francisco 49ers confirmed that tight end George Kittle has been ruled out for the remainder of the game against the Philadelphia Eagles due to an Achilles injury. Kittle suffered the injury with six minutes remaining in the first half in Philadelphia. Recovery time for an Achilles injury can vary widely depending on severity. Mild cases, such as tendinitis from overuse, may take only a few weeks, while a complete typically requires.