

## ABSU urges an end to politicising BTC Assembly incident

■ The All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) has urged BTC Chief Hagrama Mohilary to stop politicizing the November 29 incident at the BTC Assembly, where students clashed and damaged property.



Kokrajhar, Dec 03: The All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) on Tuesday urged upon the Chief of BTC, Hagrama Mohilary, to quit politicizing the November 29 incident at BTC Assembly where agitated students of Bodoland University and other colleges attacked and damaged several facilities of the Assembly. The student union added that the ABSU and Coordination Committee of Tribal Organizations, Assam (CCTOA), together with other tribal organizations, had been condemning the move of the Government of Assam before and after the GoM’s report on ‘ST status to six communities.’ Speaking to reporters at Bodo-fa House in Kokrajhar on Tuesday, ABSU President Dipen Boro stated that the ABSU and CCTOA would keep opposing the Assamese government’s decision to grant ST status to six Assamese communities in order to defend the rights of the current tribal communities. He claimed that on November 25, a sizable assembly of tribal people in Sonapur, Guwahati, expressed their vehement

opposition to six communities’ ST classification. He said that spontaneous rallies of the students of different colleges and universities were continuing to oppose the move and that on November 29 also, the students of Bodoland University and different colleges took out a massive rally from the BU to BTC where the unfortunate vandalism took place at the BTC Assembly. He claimed that the ABSU never intended vandalism nor urged the students to go for violence but that the BPF supremo

had been trying to lay the blame on ABSU. He made it clear that the political parties would go forward with their objectives and that the students would stand against the anti-tribal move and therefore, the political parties must cease dragging the ABSU in the November 29 event. Boro remarked that the government instead of blaming the ABSU for the November 29 incident should focus on settling the matter amicably. “The decision to grant six communities ST status is a ‘Laxman Rekha’ of a critical period for the tribal

communities,” he stated. The study of GoM indicates ‘Plain’ and ‘Valley’ classification of tribals in BTC but KAAC and DHAC which are in Hills category are in pocket region and seems less affected because category ‘V’ could be unfeasible in a proper manner in these two isolated councils.” He urged the Chief of BTC to make it clear if he intended to keep the pressing matter inside the “Laxman Rekha” or allow it to go too far. Additionally, he stated that there was nothing to blame for the on-

going agitation of tribal communities in every area and that students from different colleges, unit ABSU committees, and other tribal student bodies of the university and colleges used their respective organizational flags during the rally. Additionally, he claimed that there weren’t enough security guards at the BTC gate to stop the agitated students from going inside. He further called upon the Chief of BTC to quit politicizing the event and work with a ‘community first,’ ‘politics next’ mindset.

## Crime rates in Assam declined phenomenally: CM

Dec 3: Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said that decisive steps taken by his government in the past five years led to reduction in in Assam. Sarma said that the number of crime cases registered in the state fell significantly from 1.21 lakh in 2020 to 50,000 in 2024. Crime per one lakh people dropped from 379 in 2021 to 128 in March 2025. Pending cases fell from 1.33 lakh in 2021 to 14 thousand in 2024. Charge sheet rates rose from 47.8 percent in 2020 to 66.7 percent in 2024 and conviction rates rose fourfold to reach 22.9 percent. Crimes against women declined sharply. Such cases fell from 26,352 in 2020 to 5,555 in 2024, the Chief Minister highlighted. He noted that the Union Ministry of Home Affairs ranked Assam Police first in implementing the new criminal laws. He said that regular recruitment helped Assam Police achieve discipline, transparency, and strong investigative progress. Adequate officers and constables strengthened law and order and built a peaceful environment. The Chief Minister was speaking at a function held in Guwahati to present appointment letters to 5,818 youths selected for jobs in Assam Police and other directorates of the Home Department.



## Fighting Surges Across Chin State; More Civilians Cross Into Mizoram

Aizawl, Dec 03: A fresh group of displaced Myanmar nationals has entered Mizoram’s Champhai district amid escalating clashes between the military junta and rebel forces across Myanmar’s Chin State. The latest arrivals mark a renewed surge in cross-border movement ahead of the junta-announced elections scheduled for December 28. According to village authorities in Vaphai, 47 people from 11 families of Falam township crossed into Saikhu-

mphai hamlet over the past few days. The first batch reached the area on Friday night, while the remaining families entered late on Monday. Initially housed in a local school building, the refugees have since been shifted to Vaphai, where they are currently taking shelter within the village community. Local leaders reported that the families fled after heavy clashes between the Myanmar military and the Chin National Defence Force (CNDF) around Falam town

and surrounding villages. The fighting, they said, followed a pattern seen in earlier waves of displacement — airstrikes using jet fighters and drones, ground offensives involving infantry units, destruction of homes, and widespread looting of property. Residents recounted that junta troops who had withdrawn from Tiddim and other areas moved into Chin State’s Sagaing division, particularly around Kalaymyo, intensifying violence across multiple town-

ships including Tedim, Hakha and Falam. Village authorities in Vaphai said that as the conflict spreads, more civilians may attempt to flee into Mizoram in the coming days if the situation does not improve. With hostilities rising sharply after the announcement of elections, thousands in the conflict-hit areas are bracing for further instability, prompting fears of another large-scale displacement into India’s northeastern frontier.

## Rajya Sabha returns Manipur GST bill to Lok Sabha for final approval

● On December 2, the Rajya Sabha returned the Manipur GST Bill to the Lok Sabha, moving towards Manipur’s integration into the GST 2.0 framework. ● Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman emphasized that the legislation would provide long-delayed benefits to local businesses and enhance revenue in the conflict-impacted state.

Imphal, Dec 03: The Rajya Sabha on December 2 returned the Manipur GST Bill to the Lok Sabha, moving the state a step closer to joining the nationwide GST 2.0 reform framework. The Lok Sabha had passed the bill a day earlier. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the legislation would finally

extend long-delayed financial benefits to Manipur’s businesses and people, strengthening revenue mobilisation in the conflict-affected state. Sitharaman criticised the Opposition for avoiding parliamentary debates relating to Manipur, accusing them of shedding “crocodile tears” while staying absent from discussions. She said GST 2.0 measures—including track-and-trace systems and rationalised tax slabs—would modernise Manipur’s tax structure and simplify compliance. During the debate, BJD MP Sulata Deo urged the early lifting of President’s Rule and the conduct of elections. YSRC MP Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla supported the bill, noting that reduced compliance burdens would allow Manipur to



align with national economic growth. He highlighted that while violence had decreased over the past decade, renewed ethnic tensions since 2023 underscored the need for stability. Nominated member Harsh Vardhan Shringla said the updated tax regime would attract investment and support Manipur’s economic recovery. The bill now awaits final approval in the Lok Sabha.

## Mizoram online module to ensure easy tax collection at border check-post

Aizawl, Dec 03: In a significant move towards modernising transport management and reducing administrative bottlenecks at border points, Mizoram will soon introduce an online border check-post module aimed at simplifying and expediting entry tax collection from commercial vehicles entering the state. “The digital system, developed in partnership with the National Informatics Centre (NIC), has already been completed and deployed on a live server,” State Transport Director R. Lalrammawia said. “The new module will ensure smoother fee collection and ease vehicular movement at key entry locations, benefiting both transporters and commuters,” he said. According to Lalrammawia, the online system will first be implemented at the Vairengte enforcement check gate on the Mizoram–Assam border and at Kanhmum check gate along the state’s border with Tripura. Notably, the two check gates handle some of the highest volumes of incoming commercial traffic, making them critical points for digital intervention. Once fully operational, Mizoram will become the 28th state in the country to adopt a virtual border check-post mechanism, placing it among states modernising border management through technology-driven solutions. Official sources informed that the initiative is expected to minimise delays, reduce manual interference and bring greater transparency to tax collection processes.

## NFR sets new benchmark with complete biometric integration in ticket checking operations

Aizawl, Dec 03: The North-east Frontier Railway (NFR) has achieved another significant milestone in its continuous drive to enhance system efficiency through modern IT interventions. NFR has successfully implemented 100% biometric Sign On/Sign Off system for all Ticket Checking Staff across 22 TTE lobbies, covering its five divisions. This digital system has been made fully functional at various major stations across the zone, such as Katihar, Kishanganj, Alipurduar Junction, New Bongaigaon, Rangia Junction, Kamakhya, Guwahati, Dibrugarh Town and New Tinsukia, ensuring complete transparency and accountability in staff movement, attendance and duty compliance. The introduction of biometric attendance has further strengthened the efficiency of Ticket Checking operations across NFR. With accurate, real-time attendance capture,



the system ensures better monitoring and optimal deployment of staff for train manning and onboard duties. This has resulted in greater discipline, improved punctuality and enhanced service delivery. Increased checking efficiency has also contributed to higher revenue earnings by reducing ticketing irregularities. Additionally, improved staff presence in the field has led to a notable rise in window ticket sales, further boosting the railway’s

overall revenue. To ensure smooth functioning, dedicated teams at both Divisional and Zonal Headquarters continuously monitor the biometric installations and real-time data from all lobbies. NFR remains committed to leveraging advanced digital technologies to enhance operational efficiency, improve passenger services and boost revenue. This marks another significant step toward a more transparent, efficient and technologically advanced railway network.

## Mokokchung Opens 50-Hectare Urban Forest

Dimapur, Dec 03: A 50-hectare Nagar Van Meraküm Tzüin (urban forest) was officially inaugurated in Nagaland’s Mokokchung village under Mokokchung district on Wednesday, marking a significant step in urban biodiversity conservation and environmental education in the region. Nagaland Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Vedpal Singh, in his inaugural address, elaborated on the core objectives of the central Nagar Van scheme. He emphasised that the initiative aims to boost education, raise awareness, and reconnect urban populations with forest ecosystems, addressing the growing disconnect between humans and nature. “The success of this project lies in the collaborative effort of the village and the department,” Singh stated, highlighting the model’s potential for replication across Nagaland and beyond. He also suggested establishing a monitoring board to track the site’s biodiversity status. He commended Mokokchung village for donating the land and the Mokokchung Forest Division for the timely execution of the project.

## Karbi women’s voices reach global stage - Aaranyak’s Joshna Terangpi Shines at IUCN workshop

Guwahati, Dec 03: Highlighting the rising leadership of Karbi women in conservation, Joshna Terangpi — Project Officer at the leading biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak and an indigenous Karbi woman — took part in an international workshop organised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Kanchanaburi, Thailand. The workshop was held from 24 to 28 November 2025 at the Felix River Kwai Resort near the historic River Kwai Bridge. It brought together 37 participants from seven South and Southeast Asian countries, all engaged in biodiversity conservation and community livelihood initiatives. Focused on enhancing conservation outcomes, the workshop aimed to strengthen participants’ skills in project monitoring, evaluation, communication, and sharing of best practices. It emphasised strategic participatory planning

and inclusive decision-making to foster community ownership, resilience, and sustainable stewardship of natural resources. During the workshop, Ms. Terangpi shared her experiences in community engagement, presenting successful examples of women-led livelihood initiatives as well as the challenges faced on the ground. She gained valuable insights into innovative approaches adopted in other conservation sites across the region, which she hopes to apply in her work back home. Her sustained efforts to organise women, raise awareness, and promote sustainable livelihoods in Karbi Anglong were widely appreciated by fellow participants. The programme also marked her first international trip, making the experience deeply meaningful and motivating as she continues working for both community welfare and conservation. She currently collaborates with hun-



dreds of women across ten project villages in the Diring and Kohora areas of Karbi Anglong. Ms. Terangpi is the daughter of Kaban Engtipi and Lawrance Terang of Chokihola, Karbi Anglong. Aaranyak was also represented at the workshop by Senior Manager Dr. Jayanta Kumar Roy and Director Dr. M. Firoz Ahmed. They shared long-term learnings and best practices from conservation and community-led livelihood initiatives in

the Kaziranga–Karbi Anglong and Manas landscapes in Assam.

Over the years, Aaranyak’s sustainable development models have evolved into exemplary learning hubs, drawing visitors from various communities and sectors to observe and learn from its hands-on approaches. The organisation expressed gratitude to IUCN-KfW for its continued support to its Natural Resource Management Programme.

## 192 NH projects sanctioned for Assam in last 5 years: Gadkari

Guwahati, Dec 03: Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday told the Rajya Sabha that during the last five years, a total of 192 NH projects have been sanctioned for the State of Assam. He further said that out of these, 46 project fall in the Barak Valley region of Assam. Gadkari made the statement while replying to a question from TMC MP Sushmita Dev. He also presented details of the current status of each project, along with the sanctioned cost, up to date expenditure and the original and revised scheduled completion dates in the Rajya Sabha.

Body of IAS officer's daughter recovered in Andhra Pradesh

Amaravati, Dec 03: The case involves the death of a 25-year-old woman, daughter of a senior Indian Administrative Service officer, found in her parents' home in Guntur district under circumstances suggesting suicide.

Her parents allege that her husband and his family harassed her for additional dowry demands. In contrast, the husband has filed a counter-complaint, claiming that the woman's parents harassed her and attempted to forcibly end her marriage.

The police have registered a case of dowry death against the husband based on the mother's complaint. The couple had eloped two years prior and reportedly faced significant familial pressure. The woman's father recounted how they



sought police help to bring her back home after she expressed distress over her husband's demands.

Following her death, the husband has requested an investigation, asserting that his wife was coerced to leave him and that her parents neglected her state as a pregnant woman.

He has labeled the incident as murder rather than suicide, alleging the use of familial influence to obstruct the investigation. Meanwhile, the police are awaiting the post-mortem report to further ascertain the circumstances of the death.

ED attaches assets of Coldrif promoter in Chennai

Chennai, Dec 03: Two flats owned by G Ranganathan, promoter of Sresan Pharmaceuticals, have been seized under anti-money laundering laws following the deaths of at least 20 children in Madhya Pradesh linked to Coldrif cough syrup. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) alleges that Sresan Pharma engaged in unfair trade practices and used inferior raw materials, leading to poisonous products. The flats are valued at ₹2.04 crore. Ranganathan was arrested in October, with investigations revealing negligence in adhering to drug manufacturing standards.



“All kinds of deities”: Revanth Reddy's comments about Hindu gods cause controversy

Hyderabad, Dec 03: Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has ignited political controversy both in the state and potentially at a national level with his remarks about Hindu deities, which he made during a Congress executive meeting. Reddy humorously suggested that there is “a God for every occasion” in Hinduism, citing numerous deities associated with various life circumstances, including Hanuman for the unmarried, and other gods related to specific dietary preferences. His comments, delivered in what he characterized as a lighthearted manner, drew significant backlash from opposition figures who claim he mocked the core principles of Hindu faith



Revanth Reddy commented during a Congress executive meeting, which allowed the opposition BJP and RSS to challenge him.

and tradition.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its associated groups, primarily the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), have seized the opportunity to criticize Reddy, with accusations that he has tarnished Hindu sentiments. Union Minister and former Telangana BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar

expressed his condemnation of Reddy's remarks on social media, framing them as an affront to Hindus and calling into question the Congress party's commitment to Hindu issues. He referred to Congress as a party with “deep-rooted hatred towards Hindus” and suggested that Reddy's comments prove the

Rajya Sabha sees battle of words over name of Raj Bhavans

New Delhi, Dec 03: The recent session of the Rajya Sabha featured intense discussions ignited by AITC member Dola Sen, who highlighted a directive from the Ministry of Home Affairs mandating the renaming of Raj Bhavans to Lok Bhavans. During Zero Hour, Sen expressed concern that this matter had not been discussed or acknowledged by the Parliament, Assembly, or Cabinet, prompting a contentious atmosphere in the chamber. The situation escalated when Sen brought up other issues, particularly the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), which led to intervention from the Chair.

Leader of the House, J P Nadda, objected strongly to Sen's remarks, asserting that they diverged from the intended topic and therefore should not be included in the official record. He insisted that the discussion should remain focused solely on the name change to Lok Bhavan. This viewpoint was supported by Chairman C P Radhakrishnan, who emphasized that any deviations would not be acknowledged in the minutes. In defense of Sen, Leader of



the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge argued that her statements were relevant and had been pre-approved within proper channels.

He accused the government of suppressing parliamentary discourse, asserting that the Leader of the House had overstepped by labeling her comments as irrelevant or “unparliamentary,” claiming this undermined the principles of parliamentary democracy. Nadda, while defending his position, clarified that his intent was not to stifle debate but to maintain focus on the specified subject matter. The Chair reiterated the need for adherence to the topics outlined for discussion during Zero Hour, signaling a struggle over procedural conduct and the boundaries of debate within the parliamentary setting.

Karnataka HC rejects Prajwal Revanna's appeal to postpone life sentence

Bengaluru, Dec 03: The Karnataka High Court has denied former Janata Dal (Secular) MP Prajwal Revanna's plea to suspend his life sentence pending appeal in a rape case. Revanna, accused of raping a 48-year-old domestic worker, sought to suspend his sentence, citing the lengthy appeal process as potentially unfair. The court, however, highlighted the severity of the offense and noted that Revanna is also facing charges in three other rape cases, emphasizing the potential risk of witness tampering if bail were granted. The bench noted that the legal standards for granting interim bail differ from those for suspending a post-conviction sentence, as the presumption of innocence no longer applies. Revanna's defense lawyer argued for



an expedited hearing due to potential long delays in trial, while the public prosecutor pointed to the socio-economic vulnerabilities of the survivors as a reason for previous bail denials. Revanna, connected to prominent political figures, has claimed the charges are politically motivated. This ruling is part of a broader discussion on judicial handling

Revanna, a former MP from Hassan, Karnataka, has been accused of raping a 48-year-old employee who was hired as a labourer by his family, with a reported salary of ₹10,000 and a bag of rice per month.

of cases involving politicians and serious allegations of sexual offenses.

Nari Shakti to vikas  
Focus must shift to women-led progress

Mumbai, Dec 03: Gender equality and women's empowerment serve as the foundational principle for a prosperous future. Achieving gender parity cannot be postponed, as it is essential for transforming societies. The concepts of nari shakti (women's power) and women as devis (goddesses) represent India's civilizational gift and must now transition from symbolic reverence to tangible power. With enhanced freedoms and life opportunities for women, societal advancement follows suit. Gender equality is positioned as both a crucial goal and a catalyst for progress across various sectors, as highlighted by the 2015 McKinsey Global Institute report and subsequent analyses predicting significant GDP growth from closing gender gaps.

India's demographic moment indicates that women must be the focal point of this potential, embodying a demographic dividend. With fertility rates declining and girls' ambitions



rising, near parity in higher education and increased participation in STEM fields point to a shifting landscape. The government's flagship programs have favored women as primary beneficiaries, enhancing their roles in education, access to technology, and financial empowerment. Initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana and rural digital missions have placed resources and opportunities into women's hands, fostering economic independence.

To further this progress, women must evolve from being mere recipients of entitlements to becoming rights holders and decision-makers. Intersectionality highlights that many women contend with compounded disadvantages, and crucial legal reforms, such as the abolition of instant triple talaq and the election of a tribal President, illustrate advancements toward gender and social justice. Safe environments free from violence are fundamental to a gender-equal society, necessitating continued efforts to combat violence against women and support sexual and reproductive rights.

Political participation is vital; the introduction of quotas in panchayati raj institutions has enabled millions of women to become leaders. The passage of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam—a legislative move to reserve one-third of seats for women in legislative bodies—marks a significant stride toward legal parity. Women's influence is becoming increasingly evi-

dent in electoral outcomes, reflecting a demand for improved governance based on safety, education, and livelihood opportunities.

Culturally, women are redefining their roles across industries, reclaiming narratives that honor female empowerment. The next phase of transformation requires comprehensive integration of gender parity across all sectors—from politics to corporate environments—ensuring that women are supported in entering and thriving within fields like science and technology. India's G20 presidency has underscored women's development, affirming commitments to close gender gaps and boost women's participation in the workforce and entrepreneurship.

Empowered women are crucial for global transformation, shaping families, communities, and nations. Sustaining and amplifying this movement will be pivotal for India's emergence as a developed nation by 2047, driven by women's strength.

The PM's principal secretary examines the Dhanbad Ena Mines fire project

Dhanbad, Dec 03: Prime Minister's principal secretary Pramod Kumar Mishra recently conducted a review of rehabilitation and development efforts at Bharat Coking Coal Limited's (BCCL) Ena Mines fire project, situated in the Jharia coalfield of Jharkhand. Following an inspection visit, in which he was accompanied by Coal India Limited Chairman Sanjoj Kumar Jha and other officials, Mishra emphasized the importance of strengthening community outreach and gaining the trust of families affected by the underground mine fire.

During his first visit to Dhanbad, occurring alongside IIT's centenary celebrations, Mishra was briefed on critical safety measures, the progress of rehabilitation ef-

Mishra emphasized the need for quality amenities, access to government schemes, and addressing inconveniences faced by resettled families.

forts, and welfare initiatives designed for residents displaced by the ongoing coalfield fire. He engaged with the displaced community, addressing their challenges and soliciting feedback on their employment and skill development needs. To aid their recovery efforts, Mishra distributed 20 e-rickshaws to affected residents to facilitate sustainable income.

At Belgadia Township, where many displaced families have been relocated, Dhanbad's Deputy Commissioner, who oversees the Jharia Rehabilitation and Development Authority, provided

an overview of the infrastructure projects and welfare initiatives aimed at enhancing the living conditions of those resettled. In response, Mishra underscored the necessity for optimal arrangements within the township, directing officials to focus on providing employment opportunities, improving education and healthcare services, and ensuring the smooth delivery of government welfare schemes.

The visit was attended by notable figures including BCCL CMD Manoj Kumar Agrawal and Senior Superintendent of Police Prabhat Kumar, alongside other senior officials from both the district administration and the coal sector, highlighting collaborative efforts to address the region's challenges.

Chennai on orange alert as Ditwah triggers heavy rains

Chennai, Dec 03: As many as 18 domestic flights were cancelled at Chennai airport due to heavy rains from Cyclone Ditwah remnants. Schools and colleges closed, and the Greater Chennai Corporation deployed 107 boats for rescue operations. The city remained under orange alert, with significant rainfall recorded in several areas, causing traffic disruptions. Approximately 300 personnel from the NDRF and 50 from the SDRF are on standby in Chennai.



Begin by repairing system and pure air will follow: Kiran Bedi outlines 5 changes for pollution battle

New Delhi, Dec 03: Former IPS officer Kiran Bedi, in her blog “Five Reforms India Needs for Clean Air,” advocates for substantial institutional reforms to address India's air pollution crisis, emphasizing that “half-measures” won't suffice, and that systemic changes are necessary. Bedi asserts that India requires robust institutions to ensure access to breathable air, calling for the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to be led by individuals with significant authority capable of coordinating efforts across ministries and influencing budgets directly.

She proposes that the CAQM should be integrated into the Environment Ministry (MoEF-CC) to enhance its operational capabilities, highlighting the need for clean air to be key governance issue rather than a peripheral concern. Bedi also suggests establishing a “Clean Air Mission Fund” to secure stable financial resources over five years for projects related to air quality monitoring, enforcement, and public health communication, asserting that sustainable financing is crucial for translating vision into tangible outcomes.

On enforcement, she calls for the CAQM to develop its own inspectorate, as reliance on existing state agencies compromises regulatory

effectiveness. Additionally, she advocates for a “National Council of Environment Ministers” to unify standards, coordinate reforms across sectors, manage cross-border pollution, and ensure accountability among states.

Bedi emphasizes the need for advanced technology, proposing the creation of a “National Clean Air Data Centre” to facilitate predictive governance through the integration of diverse data sources, thus enabling proactive measures against pollution. The context of her suggestions arises from the ongoing air quality challenges grappling the Delhi-NCR region, which experiences severe pollution worsened by seasonal factors and local emissions, particularly during winter.

Further underscoring the urgency of the issue, the Supreme Court directed the central government and CAQM to reassess their pollution action plan, indicating that air pollution requires persistent and comprehensive solutions rather than temporary fixes. Experts and environmental advocates have criticized existing measures as insufficient for addressing the chronic pollution issues facing Delhi, advocating for long-term structural reforms to tackle the root causes of the air quality crisis.

Bomb threats are made against two Delhi University institutions  
Causing fear

New Delhi, Dec 03: On Wednesday morning, Ramjas College and Deshbandhu College in Delhi received bomb threat emails around 1:59 am, prompting panic and the immediate response of Bomb Detection and Disposal Teams (BDDT) and local police. Ramjas College's principal, Ajay Arora, confirmed that the college was evacuated and students were sent home following the threat. Despite thorough checks, no suspicious objects were found at either college. Deshbandhu College principal, Rajendra Pandey, reported they awaited clearance from the bomb squad. This incident follows a spate of similar bomb threat emails received by various institutions in Delhi. On November 20, five schools faced bomb threat warnings leading to evacuations that were later deemed hoaxes, and just two days prior, multiple district courts and CRPF-run schools experienced similar threats that disrupted operations. An earlier incident on October 28 affected over 200 schools, prompting extensive searches before being declared false alarms. Last year, a 17-year-old student linked to bomb threats was identified but not caught, amidst a significant rise in such threats impacting over 500 schools. The police are still investigating the sender of the latest email threats.



Use of talent across boundaries is for mutual advantage between nations: Jaishankar

New Delhi, Dec 03: Countries imposing restrictions on the cross-border mobility of professionals are likely to become “net losers,” according to Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. His comments reflect concerns over the recent U.S. reforms to the H-1B visa program and rising resistance to foreign workers in

Europe. At a conclave organized by India's World magazine titled “The Mobility Imperative,” Jaishankar argued that the opposition primarily stems from political actors who have specific constituents to please, while leaders in entrepreneurship and technology advocate for the mobility of talent. He linked this opposition to a broader trend of encouraging firms to relocate manufacturing back to domestic markets from countries like China.

Jaishankar stressed that India must convince other nations that facili-

tating cross-border talent movement is mutually beneficial, pointing out that nations would ultimately suffer more by erecting barriers to talent flow, particularly as advanced manufacturing industries demand a skilled workforce. He highlighted a 70% decline in the approval of first-time H-1B visa applications for Indian IT companies, which dropped to 4,573—the lowest in a decade—reflecting a significant decrease since 2015.

He emphasized that the current challenges are not rooted in mobility but are instead tied to the historical decisions that allowed businesses to relocate. Jaishankar noted that job pressure in developed nations was more attributable to outsourcing labor than to the influx of foreign professionals. He further reminded that despite restrictions, work would continue to find a way, indicating that



Jaishankar attributed the resistance to professional mobility in specific countries to their initiatives aimed at persuading companies to relocate their manufacturing from China back to their home nations.

if professional mobility is curtailed, work itself will relocate elsewhere.

Highlighting the economic significance of mobility, he reported that remittances to India last year amounted to \$135 billion, surpassing India's exports to the U.S. Jaishankar asserted that mobility is becoming increasingly vital in the global economy, creating a market for it. The Indian government has taken steps to facilitate mobility by issuing passports

efficiently, responding to diaspora grievances, and establishing the Madad portal to assist Indians abroad, responding to 138,000 grievances in West Asia over three years.

India has initiated mobility agreements with 21 countries and is drafting a new overseas mobility bill to update an outdated immigration framework. Jaishankar mentioned that flexible work arrangements can also drive mobility and pointed out the emergence of 1,700 global capability centers employing approximately two million people, generating around \$65 billion in revenue annually.

# Farmer awareness programme held in Barpeta, attended by Ranjeet Dass

■ A farmer awareness event was organized by the Barpeta district administration in collaboration with the Agriculture Department to discuss the government's initiatives aimed at boosting agricultural self-reliance.

**Barpeta, Dec 03:** A farmer awareness event was held at the District Library by the Barpeta district administration in cooperation with the Agriculture Department. The government's efforts to increase agricultural self-reliance were the main topic of discussion.

Speaking to the media, Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Ranjeet Kumar Dass stated that Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have been working tirelessly to help women and farmers become self-sufficient. He further said that unless its farmers become self-reliant, Assam cannot become self-reliant. Furthermore, the minister argues, "Farmers and agriculture form the backbone of



our country. Our administration is working diligently to move this sector toward higher progress.

We shall continue our initiatives to increase awareness among the populace. Along with the rest of the nation, the BJP Kisan Morcha is working relentlessly to promote these critical initiatives." The Minimum

Support Price (MSP) for mustard and paddy has been raised by the state government in this regard. As compared to the prior MSP of ₹1,250 per quintal for paddy, the current MSP in the state is maintained at ₹2,300 per quintal, hence allowing farmers in Assam to sell paddy at about ₹2,550 per quintal. Similarly, under the

comparable measures established for mustard, the government is acquiring mustard from farmers at ₹6,450 per quintal.

During the Farmer Awareness Program, the programs that could benefit the farmers were discussed, and then the participating farmers had a chance to interact with one another.

## Assam Assembly Session Historic

**Guwahati, Dec 03:** The recently concluded winter session of the Assam Assembly introduced a series of legislative changes covering social, educational, and land rights issues.

Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on December 3, stated on X, "This session of the #AssamAssembly was historic on many counts- from banning polygamy to approving new educational institutions and from preserving our Satras to conferring land rights to our Cha Shramiks- every section of Assam stands to benefit from the outcomes of the session." The reforms are designed to address longstanding concerns and aim to impact the state broadly. A key legislative highlight was the passage of a bill banning polygamy in the state. The law prescribes rigorous penalties up to 10 years' imprisonment for concealing existing marriages and up to seven years for entering into a second marriage without legally dissolving the first. The legislation also ensures compensation for victims while exempting indigenous communities from its purview. On the education front, the Assembly cleared eight significant bills aimed at structural improvements.

## Mechukha to host Asia's only ARWS qualifier in 2026



**Itanagar, Dec 03:** The frontier town of Mechukha in Arunachal Pradesh is set to attract global attention with its selection as host for India and Asia's only Adventure Racing World Series (ARWS) Qualifier in November 2026. The event will act as a gateway to the AR World Championship 2027 and is expected to bring elite international adventure racing teams to the Eastern Himalayas. Tourism Minister Pasang Dorjee Sona launched the event with representatives from Australia and partner organisations. Officials said the challenge will boost adventure tourism, eco-tourism, and filmmaking opportunities while showcasing Mechukha's rugged mountains, indigenous Monpa culture, and high-altitude landscapes. The announcement follows Mechukha's

● The frontier town of Mechukha in Arunachal Pradesh will host the Adventure Racing World Series (ARWS) Qualifier in November 2026, attracting elite international adventure racing teams.

recent success in hosting the 3rd Border National Adventure Racing Cycle Championship in April 2025, which drew 22 teams, including participants from Malaysia. Despite difficult terrain and ongoing road construction, over 90 athletes competed, reinforcing Mechukha's growing reputation as an adventure sports hub. Situated near the India-China border, Mechukha is rapidly emerging as one of India's leading destinations for high-altitude endurance sports.

## Rich tributes paid to Ahom founder as Digboi observes Sukafa Diwas

**Digboi, Dec 03:** Axom Diwas, widely known as Sukafa Diwas, was marked with dignity and enthusiasm at the Tingrai Auditorium in Digboi on Tuesday morning. In collaboration with Digboi and Buridehing Mouza, the Tinsukia District BJP OBC Morcha organized the event, which honored Chaolung Sukapha, the founder of the Ahom dynasty and a key figure in the formation of Assam's historical, cultural, and sociopolitical identity. Bolin Hatiboruah, President of the Tinsukia District OBC Morcha, gave an official greeting and oversaw the events. Strong organizational unity and enthusiasm were demonstrated by the large number of district office bearers, organizational in-charges, mandal representatives, and grassroots workers from throughout the Tinsukia district that attended the auditorium. Delivering the keynote presentation, Dr Ramen Hazarika, the main speaker of the occasion, delivered an entertaining and informative exposition on the significance of Axom Diwas and the far-reaching legacy of Chaolung Sukapha. He highlighted Sukapha's momentous entrance into the Brahmaputra Valley in 1228 AD, marking the beginning of a 600-year-long Ahom civilization, one of the longest uninterrupted reigning dynasties in Indian history. Dr. Hazarika highlighted a number of Sukapha's significant contributions, saying that the Ahom founder's leadership was based on social cohesiveness,

inclusivity, and diplomacy. He emphasized Sukapha's exceptional capacity to unify disparate tribes and villages, producing a harmonious socio-cultural fabric that ultimately evolved into the greater Assamese identity. He further underlined that Sukapha implemented modern agricultural practices like as wet-rice cultivation and methodical land management, which improved the agrarian economy and laid the foundation for continuous success. Dr. Hazarika highlighted a number of Sukapha's significant contributions, saying that the Ahom founder's leadership was based on social cohesiveness, inclusivity, and diplomacy. He emphasized Sukapha's exceptional capacity to unify disparate tribes and villages, producing a harmonious socio-cultural fabric that ultimately evolved into the greater Assamese identity. He further underlined that Sukapha implemented modern agricultural practices like as wet-rice cultivation and methodical land management, which improved the agrarian economy and laid the foundation for continuous success. Dr. Hazarika emphasized the administrative heritage by citing Sukapha's early Paik system framework, which subsequently served as the foundation for the Ahom state's military structure and governance. "Sukapha did not create an empire by force — he created a civilisation by trust," Dr Hazarika observed, underlining that his peace-building method-

ology and consensus-driven leadership remain relevant in current culture.

Addressing the gathering, BJP MLA Suren Phukan emphasized the significance of Axom Diwas as a manifestation of Assam's deep-rooted heritage and identity. He appreciated the Assam Government's consistent efforts in institutionalising the commemoration of the day and ensuring that the contributions of Chaolung Sukapha are cherished and remembered by future generations. Phukan underlined that celebrating Sukafa Diwas fostered pride in Assam's cultural resilience and historical continuity. The gathering also witnessed the attendance of Manoj Dhanowar, BJP State spokesperson and prospective BJP candidate for the Makum Assembly seat, whose participation brought political weight to the celebration. Along with the dignitaries, Arunijyoti Moran, Chief Executive Member of the Moran Autonomous Council, attended the event and honored the great legacy of the Ahom founder. Participants expressed a shared commitment to upholding Chaolung Sukapha's principles of togetherness, harmony, and cultural pride as the event came to a close. The lively Sukafa Diwas celebration in Digboi confirmed the Ahom founder's lasting impact on Assamese identity and the ongoing significance of his vision in the state's contemporary social structure.

## Bamboo Bloom Triggers Rodent Surge, Mizoram Loses 42% of Harvest

**Aizawl, Dec 03:** More than 5,000 farmers across all 11 districts of Mizoram have lost 42% of their annual harvest this year following a massive rodent outbreak triggered by the gregarious flowering of the bamboo species Bambusa Tulda. Officials from the State Agriculture Department confirmed the full extent of the destruction on Tuesday. Deputy Director (Plant Protection) Laldinkimi said the infestation has ravaged more than 1,700 hectares of cultivated land, affecting 5,317 farmers statewide. Combined, the affected farmers have lost nearly half of their produce. She noted that the situation has begun to stabilize over the past few months due to extensive government-led mitigation efforts, including poisoning drives and natural population decline after the harvest period.

"The outbreak is now largely contained because of mass poisoning drives and other control measures.

The rodent population has also begun to drop,"

— Laldinkimi

The north-western district of Mamit, bordering Bangladesh and Tripura, reported the highest number of affected families. A total of 2,009 households suffered an estimated 60% crop loss, making it the worst-impacted region in absolute numbers.

Lunglei district recorded losses among 1,071 farmers, who together lost 60.7% of their crops.

However, in terms of proportional damage, Hnahthial emerged as the hardest-hit district, with 130 farmers losing a staggering 82.9% of their yield.

According to the Agriculture Department, the crisis was triggered by the gregarious flowering of Bambusa Tulda, locally called "Thingtam." The flowering was first detected in a Mamit village in February last year before spreading to 12 villages across

Mamit and Lunglei. By 2025, Thingtam flowering had spread to all 11 districts. Another bamboo species, Udgon montana (syn. Ochropora montana), known locally as "Thingtang," also contributed to the rodent boom. Thingtang flowering was recorded in five villages in 2020, expanded to 45 villages in 2024, and continued spreading in 2025. While paddy suffered the most extensive losses, several other major crops were devastated across districts. These include maize, sugarcane, ginger, brinjal, pumpkin sesame. Agriculture officials noted that the speed and scale of destruction were unprecedented in recent decades. Rodent outbreaks linked to bamboo flowering follow a 48-year cycle in Mizoram. The last major event occurred in 1977. A smaller but widespread surge took place in 2022, affecting at least nine districts.

This year's outbreak is also associated with "Mautam", the cyclical flow-

ering of Melocanna Baccifera, historically known for causing famine-like conditions in the state. Early warnings from the Centre and preparatory measures by state authorities are credited with preventing a severe humanitarian crisis. Agriculture forms the backbone of Mizoram's economy, making the state highly vulnerable to pest-induced disruptions. The dominant practice, jhum (slash-and-burn) cultivation, typically produces short-cycle crops that are more susceptible to sudden ecological shocks. The state also has limited adoption of long-term or high-revenue plantation crops such as oranges, nuts, and pineapples, further increasing economic vulnerability during such outbreaks. Experts note that Mizoram's very formation as a state is closely linked to famines triggered by bamboo flowering cycles, underscoring the deep connection between ecological patterns and the state's socio-economic history.

## Nongjrong to close viewpoint and tourist spots every Sunday from 2026

**Shillong, Dec 03:** The village of Nongjrong in Meghalaya has announced a new regulation that will close its popular viewpoint and all tourist attractions every Sunday starting January 2026.

The decision aims to preserve the environment and provide residents with a much-needed weekly day of rest amid rising tourist inflow. The Dorbar Shnong (village council) said that visitors will be barred from entering the area from Saturday night until the end of Sunday. All homestays will also close during this period. Community leaders said the village has struggled to cope with growing tourist numbers, especially on Sundays when essential services and shops remain closed. Residents have raised concerns about insufficient parking, limited infrastructure and the constant movement of tourists disrupting daily life. The Dorbar stated that the weekly closure is necessary to maintain peace and prevent overcrowding. To regulate visitor numbers on other days, advance booking has been made mandatory for all tourists planning overnight stays. Visitors are advised to verify legitimate homestays through their Google Maps listings. While acknowledging the inconvenience, village leaders appealed for public cooperation, emphasising that sustainability and community well-being are their top priorities. Nongjrong will remain open to tourists from Monday to Saturday under the new system.

● The village of Nongjrong in Meghalaya will close its viewpoint and tourist attractions every Sunday starting January 2026 to preserve the environment and allow residents a day of rest.

## Dibrugarh Corporation Demolishes Illegal Building After Fatal Accident

**Dibrugarh, Dec 03:** The Dibrugarh Municipal Corporation (DMC) on Wednesday demolished an unauthorised four-storied commercial building in the Loharpatty area of the city. The action followed after the structure was deemed structurally unsafe and was found to have been constructed in total violation of prevailing laws, including the Assam Unified Building Construction (Regulation) Bye Laws 2022.

A tragedy immediately led to the demolition on November 19, when 52-year-old Salma Begum was killed by falling construction materials while washing utensils in her courtyard below. Located under Ward No. 10, the building, a multi-storied RCC structure (G+4) constructed by Mohd Yunus Khan, was sealed immediately following the incident. DMC Commissioner Jay Vikas issued the final demolition order following a series of notices issued to the builder. The first notice was sent on November 20 to halt construction and demand documentation, but the subsequent response from Khan was deemed

"not satisfactory." The Commissioner's order provided a stark justification for the extreme measure: "It is also observed that the said building is structurally unsafe and may collapse at any time, and its continued existence endangers the safety of the public. In view of the extreme risk posed, it is imperative to demolish the said structure immediately." The structural inspection confirmed that the building was erected on a plot measuring just 7.75 Ls without any official permission, constituting a severe breach of safety and planning norms.

The DMC's prompt action was also a response to persistent public pressure. Naseer Hussain, a local resident, speaking after the demolition was successfully carried out, expressed relief: "This action was necessary, but it shouldn't have taken a tragedy for the authorities to act. We are relieved that this dangerous structure is finally down, and we hope the DMC continues to monitor illegal construction across the city to prevent another loss of life," the resident stated.

### Gold and Cash Seized

## Gold and cash haul of ₹5 lakh reported from Jorshimuli raid

■ On Tuesday, a joint operation by the Chhaygaon police and Jorshimuli police outpost led to a raid at the home of Shahejul Hussain Saikia in South Kamrup.

**Palasbari, Dec 03:** Acting on a tip-off, a joint team from Chhaygaon police station and the In-Charge of Jorshimuli police outpost conducted a raid on Tuesday at the residence of Shahejul Hussain Saikia of Jorshimuli Gospota in South Kamrup. During the operation, police found a huge quantity of suspected gold ornaments together with cash. The seized items include 12 pairs of gold earrings, 5 suspected gold chains, 2 gold rings, two 10-gram gold coins, one suspected gold round-shaped charm pendant, one gold locket, one 4-gram gold coin, and Rs 5,90,000 in cash.



Police have launched legal proceedings in relation with the case. An investigation is underway to discover the source of the confiscated items and to determine any relevant links with theft cases in the region.

## Rupee notches first, breaches 90 against US dollar as tariffs sheen off equitie

**New Delhi:** The rupee breached 90 against the US dollar for the first time on Wednesday, falling 6 paise to 90.02 in early trade, as banks kept buying the American currency at higher levels and FII outflows continued. However, a weaker dollar index and a fall in global crude oil prices cushioned against a steeper decline, according to forex traders. The rupee is one of Asia's worst performers, having fallen 5 per cent against the dollar year-to-date, as steep US tariffs of up to 50 per cent on Indian goods crimp exports to its biggest market, taking the sheen off its equities for foreign investors. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 89.96 against the US dollar and slipped to a record intra-day low of 90.15 before recovering some ground to trade at 90.02, down 6 paise from its previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee settled 43 paise down at an all-time closing low of 89.96 against the US dollar, largely owing to continued short-covering from speculators and sustained importer demand for the American currency. Foreign Investment Outflows: Foreign investors are withdrawing from the Indian market, a trend exacerbated by tariffs and a "risk-off" sentiment in global markets. Continued Dollar Demand: Banks have been actively buying dollars at higher levels, increasing demand for the US currency. Trade Tensions: Tariffs make Indian exports more expensive for foreign buyers,



while imports become more costly for India, hurting competitiveness and investment prospects.

**Psychological Barrier:** The 90 rupee per dollar level is a major psychological barrier. Once breached, it can trigger a new trend of depreciation if the Reserve Bank of India does not intervene effectively.

"The rupee has been weakening with the Government of India and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) wanting to help exporters and may have kept the dollar well bid in the past few days," said Anil Kumar Bhansali, head of Treasury and executive director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP. "Nationalised banks were buying dollars at higher levels consistently yesterday (Tuesday)... There was a deal at 90.0050 after the close of market hours on the trading platform. The stalled India-US trade talks and heavy FPI outflows are causing

this fall in rupee despite a weakening dollar index," he said. Bhansali said the rupee might hit 91 levels in this cycle if the RBI support eases at 90.

The MPC meeting starts on Wednesday and the interest rate decision will be declared on December 5 ahead of the Fed interest rate decision on December 10. A rate cut by the RBI could invite further selling of the rupee," he added. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.13 per cent lower at 99.22. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.03 per cent lower at USD 62.43 per barrel in futures trade. The Indian rupee has fallen to a new low of 90 against the US dollar, influenced by foreign investors pulling back from Indian equities due to tariffs, coupled with continued buying of the dollar by banks and foreign investment outflows.

## Rupee at 90 probably not bothering 25-bp rate

**Mumbai:** Helios Capital CEO Dinshaw Irani on Wednesday said the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) probably did not expect rupee to fall to 90 a dollar mark. But he believes it is unlikely to sway the central bank's policy decision on Friday, December 5. In an exclusive He said the RBI members have got enough leeway and there can be enough reasons for them to decide. "And having said that, I think if you had looked at the REEL, the REEL was already pointing to these kind of levels.

In fact, even today, the REEL is much higher. The real effective exchange rate, which we were following till not so long back, is still much higher than what it is," Irani said. "I don't see the, that being the sole reason for RBI not to cut interest rates. As I said that on the demand front there, they want demand to be pushed and there is enough liquidity in the system for them to do that. So maybe I won't be too surprised if they undertake a 25 basis points cut," he said.

## 'Re-modelling' exercise ZEEL issues clarification on layoffs

**New Delhi:** Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) on Wednesday issued a clarification following a media report titled "Zee announces more layoffs as business takes a hit after failed Sony merger." "In this regard, we would like to clarify that as a part of its omni-channel approach, the Company has been re-modelling and integrating its business divisions to create a more agile and collaborative organisation structure. This exercise is a part of the consistent and strategic efforts being taken to ensure sharper focus on goals and performance. Furthermore, this optimisation is an ongoing exercise based on business dynamics and has no impact on the operation/performance of the Company," the media firm stated. "We further clarify that the Company had submitted the press release with the stock exchanges on April 5, 2024, captioned 'ZEE's MD & CEO proposes lean



organisation structure to the Board wherein we initiated the process of rationalisation of workforce by 15% across the Company over a period," it added. "We would also like to state that the Company has always complied with its obligations under the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 and will continue to make disclosures in ac-

cordance with the same," ZEEL further stated. On the market front, ZEEL shares were trading 1.49 per cent higher at Rs 99.05. Despite Wednesday's uptick, the stock has declined 19.50 per cent on a year-to-date (YTD) basis. On the market front, ZEEL shares were trading 1.49 per cent higher at Rs 99.05. Despite Wednesday's uptick, the stock has declined 19.50 per cent on a year-to-date (YTD) basis.

## BOB, Union Bank, PNB: PSU banks crash up 7%; should you buy

**Mumbai:** State-run private lenders were hammered hard on Wednesday as traders booked profit after the government ruled out the merger of PSU banks and expectations of increasing the foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in these lenders to 49 per cent from current levels of 20 per cent. Presently, there is no proposal on merger or consolidation of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) that is under consideration of the Government," said Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary in a written reply in the Lok Sabha. In another response, he said that the FDI limit in PSBs and private sector banks is 20 per cent and 74 per cent, respectively. Following the news, PSU Bank index dropped nearly 3.2 per cent on Wednesday, with a number of PSU counters crashing up to 7 per cent during the trading session. PSU

Bank index had surged about 57 per cent from its 52-week lows before profit booking soured the sentiments as traders took money off the table. All constituents of the PSU Bank index were trading in red.

Indian Bank led the laggards, crashing nearly 7 per cent to Rs 804.15 on Wednesday. The lender has soared more than 57 per cent on the year-to-date basis so far. It was followed by Punjab National Bank which crumbled nearly 5 per cent to Rs 119.55, even as the stock jumped nearly 17 per cent in 2025 so far. "We most prefer Bank of Baroda (BOB) among PSU banks and also in our overall banking coverage," said YES Securities in its recent report with a 'buy' rating and a target price of Rs 400. It also has a 'buy' rating on SBI and Indian Banks with targets of Rs 1,225 and Rs 1,075, respectively.

## BoM's NIM healthiest among 8 key PSU banks, prefer BoB shares YES Securities

**New Delhi:** YES Securities in its latest note on PSU banks said Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) has the healthiest net interest margin (NIM) among its comparison universe of eight lenders, driven by healthy loan mix and high CASA ratio. On valuation basis, the brokerage prefers Bank of Baroda (BoB) among PSU banks, even as it has 'Buy' on two other stocks namely State Bank of India and Indian Bank. The domestic brokerage did not offer any rating on BoM. YES Securities said BoM has the highest 3-year loan growth CAGR in its comparison universe of PSU banks. BoM's asset quality is largely under control and provision levels are quite healthy, it said adding that BoM seems reasonably well-capitalised compared with other PSU bank peers. YES Securities finds BoB worth Rs 400, suggesting 33 per cent potential upside over its Tuesday's closing price. It sees SBI at Rs 1,225 with upside potential of 26 per cent. On India Bank, YES Securities has a target of Rs 1,075, which hints at 22 per

cent potential upside. While YES Securities does not offer any rating on BoM, it said the public lender registered a whole bank NIM of 3.9 per cent in the most recent quarter compared with 2.4-3.3 per cent for PSU bank peers. BoM's yield on advances was the highest at 9.2 per cent compared with PSU bank peers at 7.8-8.3 per cent. "BoM's healthy yield is under-pinned by a low share of corporate loans, which is at 38 per cent of total loan book, which is the lowest in our comparison universe, barring Indian Bank. BoM's cost of deposits is also the lowest in our comparison universe at 4.7 per cent compared with 4.9-5.7 per cent for PSU bank peers," YES Securities said. YES Securities said BoM's low cost of deposits is aided by its healthy CASA ratio, which at 50.4 per cent is the highest in the broker's comparison universe. "BoM has the highest 3-year loan growth CAGR in our comparison universe of PSU banks per cent for PSU bank peers, YES Securities said. BoM's credit deposit ratio is relatively high at 80.8



per cent, which is the third highest in our comparison universe. BoM's loan book base is small at Rs 2.5 trn compared with Rs 6.1-43.6 lakh crore for PSU bank peers.

"BoM's asset quality is largely under control and provision levels are quite healthy. BoM's annualised slippage ratio in FY25 at 1.1 per cent is largely under control with PSU bank peers also displaying good outcomes between 0.5-1.6

per cent. BoM is well provided for with specific PCR as high as 98.3 per cent, which is the highest in our comparison universe," it said. "BoM's CET1 ratio at 14.1 per cent is the third highest in our comparison universe. Its Tier 1 ratio is also the third highest at 15 per cent. Its Total Capital Ratio / CRAR is the highest at 18.1 per cent in our comparison universe," YES Securities said.

## Stock markets drop for 4th day amid relentless foreign fund outflows; Sensex dips 31 points

**Mumbai:** Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower in a largely range-bound trade on Wednesday amid persistent foreign fund outflows and profit-taking by investors. Falling for the fourth day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex dipped 31.46 points or 0.04 per cent to settle at 85,106.81. During the day, it dropped 374.63 points or 0.44 per cent to 84,763.64. The 50-share NSE Nifty skidded 46.20 points or 0.18 per cent to 25,986. From the Sensex firms, Bharat Electronics, Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, NTPC, State Bank of India, Adani Ports, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles and Bajaj Finserv were among the major laggards. Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower in a largely range-bound trade on Wednesday amid persistent foreign fund outflows and profit-taking by investors. Falling for the fourth day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex dipped 31.46 points or 0.04 per cent to settle at 85,106.81. During the day, it dropped 374.63 points or 0.44 per cent to 84,763.64.

The 50-share NSE Nifty skidded 46.20 points or 0.18 per cent to 25,986. From

the Sensex firms, Bharat Electronics, Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, NTPC, State Bank of India, Adani Ports, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles and Bajaj Finserv were among the major laggards. Tata Consultancy Services, ICICI Bank, Infosys and HDFC Bank were among the gainers. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,642.30 crore on Tuesday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth Rs 4,645.94 crore, according to exchange data. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi and Japan's Nikkei 225 index settled in the positive territory, while Shanghai's SSE Composite Index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index ended lower. Markets in Europe were trading mostly higher. US markets ended higher on Tuesday. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 0.99 per cent at USD 63.07 per barrel.

Falling for the third straight session on Tuesday, the Sensex tumbled 503.63 points or 0.59 per cent to settle at 85,138.27. The Nifty declined 143.55 points or 0.55 per cent to 26,032.20

## EV production scheme sees low response as OEMs await clarity on India-EU FTA

### India-EU free trade agreement

**Mumbai:** The ministry's admission comes after its flagship incentive scheme for promoting domestic EV production did not garner a response before the October 21 deadline. Earlier this year, the government unveiled a scheme to promote manufacturing of electric passenger cars in India with the objective of positioning India as a competitive EV manufacturing hub. The scheme offered a concessional customs duty of 15 per cent for five years on imports of completely built units (CBUs), provided participating firms set up manufacturing plants in the country. In addition, manufacturers were required to commit a

minimum investment of ₹4,150 crore and meet domestic value addition (DVA) norms of 25 per cent within three years, increasing to 50 per cent within five years. However, the ministry noted that original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) have cited three primary concerns for not applying. These include uncertainty over the outcome of the ongoing India-EU FTA negotiations, restrictions on rare-earth magnets that could hinder localisation targets, and high investment thresholds and strict compliance timelines associated with the incentive scheme. OEMs have communicated that participation decisions are contin-

■ Ministry of heavy industries says auto-makers cite tariff, technology sourcing and localisation uncertainties under the pending India-EU FTA before committing to domestic EV scheme.

gent on greater clarity around tariff structures, technology sourcing and supply chain rules expected under the FTA. The ministry, however, said that during recent stakeholder consultations, OEMs have conveyed that they may take a decision regarding participation in the scheme post finalisation of the India-EU FTA.



Anand Rathi said, "Support is seen at Rs 5,000, while resistance is placed at Rs 5,500. A decisive move above Rs 5,500 may trigger a further upside toward Rs 5,700. The expected short-term trading range is between Rs 4,900 and Rs 5,700." Riyank Arora, technical analyst at Mehta Equities said, "Tata Elxsi is attempting a recovery after a period of corrective decline. The stock is holding firmly above the Rs 5,000 support zone, showing signs of stabilisation. Momentum indicators are gradually turning positive, and price action suggests a potential higher-low formation. A breakout above Rs 5,250 can accelerate the upmove. Price Targets lie between Rs 5,350 and Rs 5,520. Support lies at Rs 5,000." Tata Technologies

Tata Technologies shares were trading on a flat note at Rs 675 today. Total 0.27 lakh shares of the It is finding strong buying interest near Rs 660-665, forming a base. Momentum is still muted, but improving volumes indicate accumulation. A close above Rs 700 is essential to trigger strength and trend reversal. Targets lie between Rs 715 and Rs 740. Support is at Rs 660. Sustained trade below this weakens sentiment."

Aamir, Vir Das launch Happy Patel



**Mumbai:** Aamir Khan Productions has unveiled its next venture, and this time, it marks a new milestone for comedian-actor Vir Das. The production house officially announced Happy Patel, a film directed by Vir Das himself, and released an exciting promo video. The announcement has sparked widespread buzz. The film will also mark the return of Imran Khan to acting.

Taking to their official Instagram handle, Vir Das shared announcement video in which Aamir Khan is seen scolding Vir Das. Aamir Khan is seen asking “You think getting beaten up is action? Your idea of romance is getting slapped by the girl? I requested one item number, you have done it yourself!” Aamir is seen reprimanding Vir. “This film will be a flop,” he says, and then Vir talks about Laal Singh Chaddha, which makes Aamir angry. Then there is a surprise as we get a glimpse of the film, and it also shows Imran Khan and Aamir. This is a Delhi Belly reunion. Recently, Aamir Khan has finally given fans a major update on his long-anticipated Mahabharat project, one of the most talked-about and eagerly awaited films. Khan revealed that his journey to bring the epic tale to life has been decades in the making. For him, this isn’t just another movie, it is a spiritual and creative endeavour that he considers his life’s most important project.

In a recent interaction on Game Changers with Komal Nahta, Khan shared that internal preparations for the project have already begun, and scripting is expected to start within the next two months. He also spoke about the immense scale of the project, describing it as a “yagna.” Vir Das recently revealed his honest reviews after watching the horror film Weapons. The celebrated stand-up comedian, actor, and comedy musician with a global following showcased his witty skills in a tweet, highlighting his analysis of the situation after the premiere of Weapons. In a post on X, Vir Das recently talked about watching Weapons, which again instilled a desire to direct a horror film.

Splitsvilla 16 Crowns First Ideal Match, But Spoilers Ignite Fan Annoyance

**Mumbai:** Splitsvilla Season 16 is expected to arrive in December, though the makers have not yet disclosed an official release date. Karan Kundrra and Sunny Leone return as hosts, bringing with them explosive drama, surprising turns and fresh connections formed in a tropical setting.

Even without a confirmed premiere, discussions about the upcoming season have already begun spreading across social platforms. Fans are especially curious about early spoilers, particularly regarding which pair might become the very first ideal match of the season. A wave of conversation recently unfolded on Reddit in a thread titled “First ideal



match of splitsvilla 16”, where a user claimed that Gullu (Kusha Tanwar) and Asmita Adhikari might be the first ideal match of the new season. The user stated, “Gullu and asmita adhikari became the first ideal match of splitsvilla 16. Gullu’s performance till now in splitsvilla top notch ... whether in physical task or dome session. Gullu overpower

yogesh rawat in splitsvilla.” This claim, however, remains unverified and is being treated as pure speculation by the community. As the rumour circulated, several users voiced their irritation over premature spoilers. One comment read, “These spoilers are so annoying, show Shuru toh hone do for god sake.” Another user questioned the authenticity of the leaks, writing, “Source? I have also seen a page in insta called splitsvilla16 news the guy is repeatedly giving fake rumours for engagement.” When the discussion shifted to the possible wrap-up date for the shoot, someone responded, “Mostly 20th or earlier because the villa is booked for some movie post that.”

London Travel Request: Shilpa Shetty, Raj Kundra Face Court Scrutiny in Fraud Case Shetty seeks London trip

**Mumbai:** Shilpa Shetty and Raj Kundra have approached the Bombay High Court seeking permission to travel to London to visit the latter’s ailing father. As reported by Free Press Journal, the actress and her businessman husband, who have been accused of a fraud of Rs 60 crore, have sought suspension of the Look Out Circular (LOC) issued against them so they can visit Kundra’s ailing father in London.

In the plea, the couple stated that Kundra’s father was diagnosed with a chronic and unexplained iron-ammonia deficiency, causing severe complications and blood loss earlier this month. He has been advised to undergo a repeat capsule endoscopy or double-balloon enteroscopy. They have also claimed that Raj’s father is experiencing breathlessness and that his condition is deteriorating. Therefore, they have sought permission to travel to London as soon as possible by January 20, 2026. Earlier this year, Shilpa Shetty and her husband Raj Kundra were booked by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) for allegedly cheating a Mumbai-based businessman of Rs 60.4 crore in connection with a loan-cum-investment deal. Another unknown person was also charged in connection with the incident. The complainant, Deepak Kothari, has alleged



that the couple defrauded him of over Rs 60 crore, which involved Shetty and Kundra’s now-defunct company, Best Deal TV Pvt Ltd. According to Kothari, he invested the amount between 2015 and 2023 under the pretext of expanding a business, but the money was allegedly misused for personal expenses. EOW is now investigating the case. Previously, Shilpa Shetty and Raj Kundra’s lawyer denied the allegations, saying they were purely civil in nature and had been adjudicated by the NCLT Mumbai on October 4, 2024. “This is an old transaction, wherein the company went into financial distress and eventually got entangled in a long legal battle at the NCLT. There is no criminality involved, and our auditors have submitted all the necessary supporting documents from time to time, as requested by the EOW, including detailed cash flow statements,” said advocate Prashant Patil.

Dil Raju confirms Akshay film, dismisses Salman Khan reports

**Mumbai:** Telugu producer Dil Raju has become the center of a lot of recent buzz after reports suggested he might be backing a pan-India film with Salman Khan. Naturally, fans and media alike got excited at the thought of this big collaboration. However, Raju has now stepped in to set the record straight. In an official statement, Raju said that he is fully focused on a different project with Bollywood superstar Akshay Kumar.

The producer’s team added that many of the reports circulating were outdated or speculative, and they emphasised that official announcements will be shared at the right time. In their statement, Dil Raju’s team said, “In light of recent rumours and ongoing speculation surrounding the upcoming projects of Producer Dil Raju and Sri Venkateswara Creations, we wish to clarify that these reports are entirely baseless and have been blown out of



proportion. Several outdated speculations are being linked to current developments which is inaccurate.”

They added, “We are presently developing a project with Akshay Kumar that will be directed by Anees Bazmee. The film is currently in the pre-production stage and we will share official details in due course.” The team also requested media outlets to avoid spreading unconfirmed information: “We humbly request members of the media to refrain from drawing conclusions or circulating speculative information without confirmation

from our end.” There has been some speculation that the upcoming Akshay Kumar film could be a Hindi remake of the Venkatesh Daggubati starrer Sankranthiki Vasthunam, which tells the story of former IPS officer YD Raju investigating a high-profile kidnapping case. However, nothing has been officially confirmed yet. A report by Pinkvilla noted, “Akshay has multiple films lined up, including Haiwaan, Bhagam Bhaag 2, Welcome To The Jungle, and Hera Pheri 3, along with a couple of other projects that are being kept under wraps.

Blockbuster Status: Tere Ishk Mein Poised to Join the ₹100 Crore Club Rapidly

**Mumbai:** Tere Ishk Mein is turning out to be a major winner at the box office. The Anand L Rai film, led by Dhanush and Kriti Sanon, has matched the strong buzz it carried before release and is now steadily inching toward the Rs 100 crore net milestone in India.Early estimates suggest the film earned around Rs 10.25 crore on its fifth day, with almost the entire chunk coming from the Hindi version. Tuesday’s numbers were a noticeable jump from Monday’s roughly Rs 8.25 crore, which had seen a sharp drop after the film hit its peak on Sunday with Rs 18.25 crore. With a solid opening weekend of about Rs 50 crore, the film has now reached an estimated Rs 71 crore net in India. Its overall performance remains strong across the board. The movie’s all-India gross has touched about Rs 84.25 crore, while international markets have contributed



another Rs 7.25 crore. This pushes the film’s global total to around Rs 91.5 crore in just five days, placing it in a comfortable position to recover its reported Rs 95 crore budget soon. Day 5 also marks a milestone for Dhanush, as the film’s domestic gross has already overtaken the lifetime numbers of his 2013 hit Raanjhanaa. With Hin-

di net collections alone crossing the earlier film’s tally, Tere Ishk Mein has become his highest-grossing Hindi release within days. The film will now enter a competitive phase with Ranveer Singh’s Dhurandhar arriving this Friday, followed by the Hollywood release Avatar: Fire and Ash the week after.

Deepika-Ranveer’s Tender Exchange at Goa Wedding Becomes Viral Sensation

**Mumbai:** Power couple Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone recently stole the spotlight at a family wedding in Goa. Thanks to Bollywood socialite Orry, who gave fans a sneak peek through his fun reel.

In the video, Orry captured moments with the bride, offering glimpses of the joyous wedding celebrations. The footage shows Ranveer and Deepika warmly engaging in the festivities, spreading their signature charm. Known for their maximalist fashion, the couple was spotted donning coordinated ensembles, perfectly twinning in shades of red. The Dhurandhar actor exuded regal charm in a red and gold kurta, accessorised with a garland around his neck, while Deepika looked stunning in a red saree paired with a stylish backless blouse. In Orry’s video, the power couple was seen seated in the front row, sharing sweet moments and engaging in lively conversations as they watched the bride and groom perform the wedding rituals. The clip beautifully captures Deepika leaning in to whisper into Ranveer’s ear.

During the wedding, Ranveer Singh accompanied the bride to the altar, and later he was seen congratulating the



bride and groom with Deepika by his side. Clips from the afterparty showed Ranveer Singh lighting up the stage with his signature energy, dancing joyfully alongside his family. They were seen grooving to the beats of the title track from Ranveer’s upcoming film, Dhurandhar. The film, helmed by Aditya Dhar, has been making a buzz among fans since the trailer was dropped. Recently, the makers hosted an event in Mumbai for the music launch, where Ranveer Singh entertained the crowd with his showman energy. He was seen

joining rapper Hanumankind and Jasmine Sandlas on the stage and performing the track. The spy action thriller is loosely inspired by real-life incidents, geopolitical conflicts, and covert operations carried out by RAW, particularly Operation Lyari, a government-led crackdown on gangs and crime syndicates in Karachi, Pakistan. Alongside Ranveer Singh, the film stars Sanjay Dutt, Akshaye Khanna, R. Madhavan, Arjun Rampal, Sara Arjun, and Rakesh Bedi in prominent roles. Dhurandhar is set to hit theatres on December 5.

Palash Muchhal Seeks Peace at Vrindavan Ashram Following Smriti Mandhana Wedding Postponement

**Mumbai:** Palash Muchhal has once again become the centre of attention after he was spotted at spiritual leader Premanand Maharaj’s ashram in Vrindavan, days after his highly publicised wedding with Indian cricket star Smriti Mandhana was postponed. The music composer was seen sitting among devotees, wearing a mask, with traces of wedding mehendi still visible on his hands. He was accompanied by his mother. The spotting comes at a time when the couple’s relationship has been under intense scrutiny online, with rumours and speculation gaining traction ever since the wedding was abruptly called off.

Smriti and Palash were set to marry on 23 November in Sangli. Hours before the ceremony, Smriti’s father suffered a sudden health issue and had to be



hospitalised, forcing the family to push the wedding indefinitely. Soon after, Palash himself was admitted due to what sources described as stress-related complications. Both were discharged later, and the families said the postponement was due to health emergencies alone. However, the silence from both sides opened the door to online chatter, with everything from cheating rumours to rifts being speculated without confirmation. Over the weekend, social media buzzed with claims

that the wedding had been rescheduled for 7 December. Smriti’s brother Shravan Mandhana shut down the rumours, telling Hindustan Times, “I have no idea where these dates are coming from. As of now, the wedding is still postponed.” For now, there is no new wedding date, and both families continue to maintain that the postponement was purely due to the sudden medical emergencies involving Smriti Mandhana’s father and Palash Muchhal himself. Smriti has stayed by her

father’s side as he recovers, while Palash has kept a low profile apart from his recent visit to Premanand Maharaj’s ashram. Despite the wave of online rumours, neither Smriti nor Palash has issued any official clarification about their relationship, leaving fans waiting for a definitive update from the couple. Muchhal’s visit to Premanand Maharaj’s spiritual center is seen by many as a clear effort to seek peace and resilience amidst the emotional turmoil and public scrutiny.Meanwhile, India teammate and close friend Jinimiah Rodrigues has decided to stay back in India rather than rejoin the Brisbane Heat in the Women’s Big Bash League. The WBBL team said they fully support her decision and have released her from the remainder of the tournament so she can be with Smriti.

Method Behind the Madness: Sayani Gupta Reveals Unique Prep for Delhi Crime Season 3

**Mumbai:** Actor Sayani Gupta, who joined Delhi Crime in its third season as Kusum, says stepping into a show already loved worldwide was both exciting and slightly intimidating. Speaking to News18 Showsha exclusively, the actor explained why she never watched a single episode of the International Emmy-winning Netflix series before joining the cast — and why she still hasn’t.

Sayani said she knew many of the actors had been part of the show since season its first season, while she was coming in fresh. “It’s season three for a couple of them from the cast. I was excited to join a team; it’s a lot of fun. But, you know, they already have a thing. I



had a great time playing Kusum. Everybody was grinning behind the camera. You have to do that to get through the grim subject that you’re dealing with,” she said. The actor then admitted she had not seen any of the earlier seasons. “I haven’t seen a season. I haven’t seen season three, of course, because I have not had

the time. And I haven’t seen season one or season two. I’m a weirdo!” Sayani said she stayed away from Season 1 when it first released because the case depicted in the show was too emotionally heavy for her. Based on the Nirbhaya case, the first season followed the Delhi Police investigation into the findings of the men

who perpetrated the crime. “When Delhi Crime one came out, everyone sort of loved the series, but you know the case was... even now, when I think about it, I feel extremely scared and triggered and all of those things. I didn’t watch it because I knew I’d be triggered and I didn’t ever dare to go through it. I didn’t have the stomach to watch it, honestly.” The actor also spoke about the final season of her hit Prime Video series Four More Shots Please!, which is expected to drop soon. “It’s a really fun season. And it’s looking beautiful. And we have two directors this time. Both women and from FTII. So, it’s quite exciting and we all want it to come soon.”

## Chicken Soup with Wild Rice and Hominy



We love the combination of wild rice and hominy in this simple soup. Brown rice or any leftover cooked grain would work well, too. We use a few tricks to get maximum comforting flavor into the soup, starting by enriching the chicken broth with a roast chicken carcass and by adding chopped cilantro and scallion at the very end for freshness.

Direction 1. Cook the rice according to package directions; set aside to cool.2. Put the chicken carcass and bones in a large pot (they can be in pieces). Cover with the broth and 4 cups water. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat; reduce the heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Skim any foam or fat from the top of the broth with a ladle as necessary. 3. Remove the bones and carcass with tongs or a slotted spoon; set aside to cool. Add the carrots, celery, onion and bay leaf to the broth. Bring back to a simmer and cook until the vegetables are about half cooked (they will still offer a little resistance when poked with a knife), about 10 minutes. 4. Meanwhile, when the carcass and bones are cool enough to handle, pick off any meat and shred it into bite-size pieces. Roughly chop the cilantro and scallions together. 5. Add the shredded chicken, cooked rice, hominy and cilantro-scallion mixture to the broth and simmer until warmed through, about 1 minute. Season with 1/2 teaspoon salt or more to taste. Serve hot with lime wedges.

## Even a single alcoholic beverage impacts brain mitochondria.

If you want to keep your brain working well as you age, a new study makes the case to eliminate alcohol consumption altogether. This recent study found that a single drink can have lasting effects on the cellular function of the brain. A study published in PNAS suggests that a single alcoholic drink can have long-lasting effects on mitochondrial function in brain cells. These plastic changes to the brain are acute and long lasting. Mitochondria, responsible for energy production and cellular processes, appear to be significantly affected by alcohol consumption. The study, conducted on mice and fruit flies, two species often used for modeling the human brain, revealed that alcohol disrupted the expression of genes related to mitochondrial function, leading to decreased energy production and impaired cellular metabolism. These changes persisted beyond the duration of alcohol's presence in the body. Such alcohol-induced mitochondrial dysfunction in brain cells may contribute to cognitive impairment and the development of neurodegenerative diseases and, may be a leading contributor to alcohol dependency (ie. The reason why some people get addicted to alcohol). Here's a summary of the function of mitochondria:

- Mitochondria are like

powerhouses in our cells.

- They produce energy called ATP, which cells need to function.
- Mitochondria break down food molecules to generate this energy.
- They also help regulate metabolism and control calcium levels in cells. Additional studies have explored the impact of alcohol on mitochondrial function in different cell types. One study demonstrated that chronic alcohol exposure reduced mitochondrial function in liver cells, po-



tentially contributing to liver damage and disease. Another study suggested that alcohol disrupted mitochondrial dynamics in heart muscle cells, which could contribute to cardiovascular dysfunction associated with excessive drinking. Together, these studies emphasize the potential harm of alcohol on mitochondrial function in various tissues, including the brain, liver, and heart. The findings underscore the importance of considering the long-term effects of alcohol consumption, even in moderation.

## Is Bottled Water Better than Tap Water?

In almost every home in America, fresh drinking water can be obtained straight from the tap, almost for free. Yet Americans drink over \$15 billion dollars' worth of bottled water every year. That's more than the total annual revenue from movie ticket sales in America. When I was young, we got water from the tap and from water fountains. But today, bottled water is everywhere and some people won't drink water if it's not from a plastic bottle. Why is this? Is bottled water that much better for you? While bottled water may seem like a convenient and healthier option, a closer examination reveals that our obsession with bottled water may be less healthy for you and has a cost beyond the price tag most Americans are not aware of.

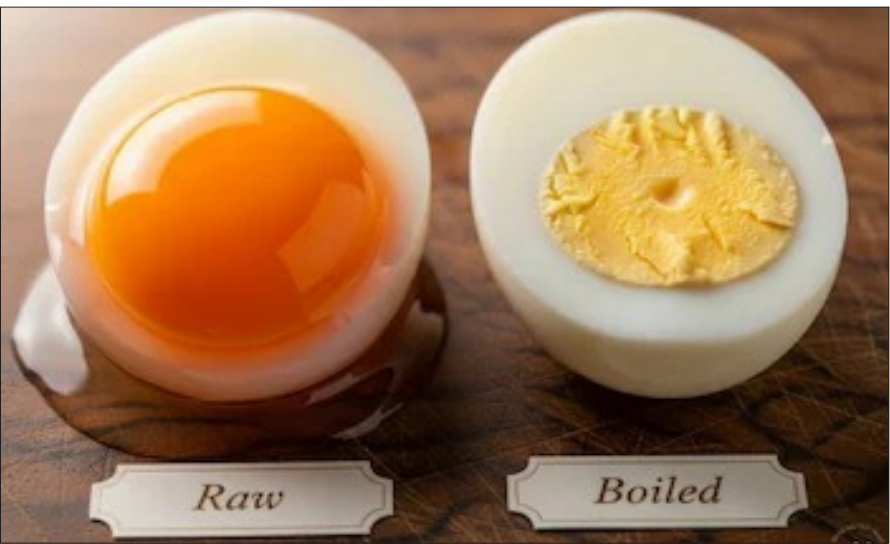
Is Bottled Water Healthier? Marketing by bottled water companies would have us believe that bottled water is purer and therefore better for you than tap water. But one of the most compelling arguments in favor of tap water is the rigorous regulatory standards it must adhere to. Municipal tap water is subject to stringent testing and regulation by government agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the United States. These regulations ensure that tap water meets specific safety standards and undergoes regular monitoring for contaminants. On the other hand, the quality of bottled water is not always guaranteed.

Despite perceptions of purity, bottled water is not necessarily safer than tap water. In fact, studies have shown that some bottled water brands contain contaminants that exceed allowable limits. For example, in 2006 Fiji Water (Fiji water comes from an artesian aquifer on the island of Fiji) ran an ad campaign that said, "The label says Fiji because it's not bottled in Cleveland," basically taking a jab at American city tap water. The city of Cleveland took it personally and ran tests on Fiji water (and many other brands) vs their own tap water. The third-party analysis found 6.31 micrograms of arsenic in Fiji water whereas Cleveland tap water had none. In early 2024, a French newspaper ran an explosive story that reported that drink giant Nestle, the owners of Perrier and Vittel, illegally filtered water for years from contaminated sources. Natural mineral water, as Perrier and Vittel is advertised, is supposed to be pure from its source and should not require purification. That's why people have trusted those brands for decades. The discovery that the "natural" sources are now contaminated is a cause for concern. If you're saying "well those are isolated incidents" consider this. Recent advances in technology now allow us to see with detailed clarity nano particles. These are extremely tiny particles. A recent study found that a typical plastic bottle of water contains over 240,000 nano particles of plastic—almost a hundred times more than what was found in previous studies that could only examine larger particles. Scientists aren't sure what the long-term effects of ingesting these particles are but I'm willing to bet that it can't be good for you. Some people for health reasons refuse to drink tap water because it contains chlorine (to kill bacteria) and fluoride (for dental health). However, chlorine is easily removed by even the most basic water filter (Brita for example) or by letting the water stand overnight since chlorine evaporates quickly. Most basic water filters (like the one in your fridge) can't remove fluoride but many filters that will remove fluoride are easily found on Amazon for less than \$100.

Environmental Impact: The environmental cost of bottled water cannot be overstated. From the production of plastic bottles to transportation and disposal, every step of the bottled water supply chain exacts a

toll on the environment. The manufacture of plastic bottles requires vast amounts of fossil fuels and contributes to pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Americans alone throw away 38 billion water bottles a year—\$1 billion worth of plastic. Then there's the cost of bringing the bottled water to the store. Take Fiji water for example again. If you ever travel to Fiji, you'll realize what an astonishing feat it is to deliver water from there to here. It's an 11-hour flight from Los Angeles to Fiji and then another 4 hours of driving on a two-lane road to the water plant. Of course, the journey in reverse is by boats and trucks. The cost of shipping makes up more than half the cost of the water. And when you consider that the empty plastic bottles must be shipped to Fiji first, it's really double the journey to bring you water from Fiji. And the state-of-the-art Fiji water plant runs around the clock, requiring a lot of electricity. More than the local utility infrastructure can handle. So, the plant uses 3 large diesel generators running non-stop spewing exhaust into the local air. Like their marketing says, Fiji water may come from one of the "last pristine places on earth" but the water plant is far from pristine. Water from Pepsi and Coke (Aquafina, Dasani among others) are sourced from municipal tap water. That's right. Twenty-four percent of all the bottled water we drink in America is just tap water. This allows the companies to bottle near their markets, so it has the least environmental impact. But to maintain the same taste no matter the source of tap water (so that water in Atlanta tastes the same as the water in Seattle), and to be able to say the water is purified, the companies run the tap water through a reverse-osmosis system that is more potent than the systems used to turn seawater into drinking water. To clarify, the water they are purifying is ready to drink—they are purifying perfectly clean tap water. Moreover, the disposal of plastic bottles poses a significant challenge. Despite recycling efforts, a large percentage of plastic bottles end up in landfills. The environmental consequences of plastic pollution are far-reaching and can persist for hundreds of years, posing a threat to wildlife and ecosystems.

Cost-Effectiveness: Another compelling reason to choose tap water over bottled water is its cost-effectiveness. While the initial investment in a reusable water bottle or filtration system may be higher, the long-term savings are substantial. Bottled water, especially when consumed regularly, can quickly add up in expenses, making it a costly choice compared to tap water. For example, municipal water for the city of San Francisco comes from Yosemite. The water is so pure that the EPA doesn't require it to be filtered. Let's say a half-liter of bottled water from the store costs about \$1.35. If you filled that bottle with San Francisco tap water every day, it would take 10 years before it would cost \$1.35. Put another way, if all the water you used at home (showers, cooking, and drinking) was in the form of bottled water, your monthly water bill would run you \$9,000. And there's a human cost. It would be one thing if buying bottled water from Fiji actually helped many Fijians rise from poverty. But these bottling plants are so efficient that almost all of it is automated. Fiji's main export has been sugar. But since 2010, the sale of Fiji water equaled the sale of sugar. The main difference is that the sugar industry in Fiji employs over 10,000 people. The Fiji water company employs 250 people. Paying the added cost of drinking Fiji water vs tap water is not helping thousands rise from poverty. The added cost is paying for shipping and packaging (plastic).



## Raw Egg vs Boiled Egg: Which Is Safer And Gives More Protein?

When considering a protein-rich diet, eggs are often the first food that comes to mind. From fitness enthusiasts to everyday households, eggs are a staple for healthy eating. However, a long-standing debate persists: is it better to consume eggs raw or boiled? While some believe raw eggs offer more protein, research suggests that boiled eggs are safer and provide greater nutritional benefits. The key difference lies in protein absorption and overall safety.

Eggs are often called a "treasure of protein" because they contain all essential amino acids. But the amount of protein your body can absorb depends on how the egg is prepared. The human body absorbs only about 51% of the protein in raw eggs. In contrast, boiled

eggs provide around 91% protein absorption, meaning boiled eggs deliver almost double the benefit.

**Raw Eggs**

Less Protein Absorption: Raw eggs contain a protein called avidin, which prevents the absorption of biotin (Vitamin B7) – crucial for hair, skin, and the nervous system. Cooking eggs neutralises avidin, allowing the body to access complete nutrition.

Harmful Bacteria: Raw or partially cooked eggs carry the risk of salmonella bacteria, which can lead to food poisoning symptoms such as stomach pain, diarrhoea, and fever. Boiling destroys these harmful bacteria, making eggs safe to consume.

**Boiled Eggs**

Higher Protein Absorption: Boiled eggs provide nearly double the protein of raw

eggs, supporting strength, energy, and overall fitness.

Safe and Healthy: Properly boiled eggs eliminate bacteria like salmonella, making them suitable for all ages groups.

Convenient and Portable: Boiled eggs are an easy snack for work, school, or travel. They require no additional ingredients and minimal preparation.

Low in Calories: Without added oil or spices, boiled eggs are low-calorie and ideal for weight management. They offer a perfect balance of taste, nutrition, and health benefits.

If you need the full nutritional advantage of eggs, boiled eggs are the clear choice. They provide more protein, eliminate risks associated with raw consumption, and are convenient and healthy for all ages.

## Travel-Friendly Lunch Ideas for Work

Let's be honest; Packing a wholesome lunch for the days that you're going to work can be a challenge. For most of us we need something that can be prepared in advance, something that travels well and something that tastes great. Sandwiches and salads are good options but they can get monotonous if you make them all the time. That's why we've rounded up these lunch recipes. You'll find classic options like wraps and grain bowls—but you'll also find some new ideas like fried rice, quesadillas and even chicken fajitas. So, whatever you're craving, you can fill up and power through your day! A good place to start? This lemon-drizzled salmon and veggie grain bowl. It's the perfect midday pick-me-up—and a breeze to prepare, too.

Direction 1. Zest 1 teaspoon of the lemon rind and reserve. Cut the lemon in half. 2. Bring a medium saucepan of generously salted water to a boil. Add the farro and cook until just tender, 20 to 25 minutes. Drain and rinse under cold water, then set aside. 3. Meanwhile, heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a skillet over medium



heat. Season the salmon with salt and pepper. Add the salmon to the skillet and cook about 3 minutes per side, until just cooked through. Squeeze in the juice of one of the lemon halves. Set the salmon aside to cool slightly, then flake with a fork into chunks. 4. Squeeze the juice of the remaining lemon half into a small bowl, add the shallots, the reserved lemon zest and the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil and whisk together. Season to taste with salt and pepper. 5. Divide the farro between 2 bowls. Arrange the salmon, radishes, peas and avocado over the farro and drizzle over the dressing. Garnish with dill and serve.

## Roti Vs Oats: Which Carbohydrate Source Is Better For Older Adults?

As we age, nutrition becomes more than just eating to stay full. It becomes about eating smart for energy, bone strength, heart health, and digestion. Carbohydrates are a primary energy source, but the quality of carbs matters most for seniors. Among

easy to pair with vegetables, pulses, and dairy, making them part of a balanced meal. However, portion size is important. Too many rotis can add excess calories, which may not be ideal for those with slower metabolism or diabetes. Opting for multi-

For older adults dealing with constipation, oats can be a great daily breakfast option due to their fibre content. They also keep blood sugar levels more stable than many refined carb sources, making them suitable for those with diabetes or prediabetes



common choices, roti and oats stand out. But which one is better for older adults? Let's break it down.

**The Case for Roti**

A staple in Indian households, roti is made from whole wheat flour and is rich in complex carbohydrates. Whole wheat roti contains dietary fibre that supports digestion, helps manage blood sugar, and provides steady energy throughout the day.

For older adults, rotis are

grain or millet-based rotis can further enhance nutritional value.

**The Case for Oats**

Oats have gained popularity as a 'superfood' carb source. They are high in soluble fibre, particularly beta-glucan, which helps lower cholesterol and supports heart health. Oats are also easy to digest, light on the stomach, and versatile in preparation, from porridge to savoury upma-style dishes.

ing both in moderation. Rotis can remain part of lunch or dinner, while oats make an excellent breakfast or evening meal.

For older adults, variety is key. Mixing roti and oats into a weekly diet ensures balanced nutrition, improved digestion, and long-term heart health. Instead of focusing on "which is better," seniors should focus on combining these healthy carbs mindfully.

# Everyday habits that quietly damage your kidneys, doctor warns

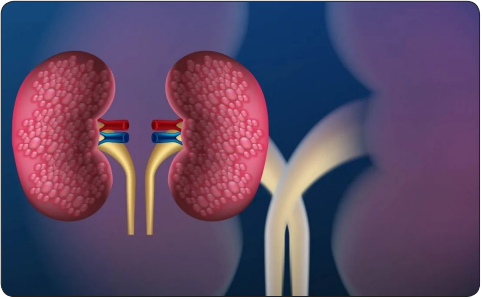
Our kidneys are vital organs that work to filter waste, balance fluids and regulate blood pressure. Yet, many everyday habits can place an unnecessary burden on them, increasing the risk of long-term damage. While kidney disease often develops silently, lifestyle choices play a major role in prevention. Read on as Dr. Kshitij Raghuvanshi, Urologist at Ruby Hall Clinic, Pune shares some common habits that can harm your kidneys and how to avoid them.

**Painkillers and kidney damage explained**

Over-the-counter (OTC) painkillers, especially non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen and naproxen, are widely used for headaches, body aches, or menstrual cramps. However, frequent or unsupervised use can be dangerous. Long-term or excessive use may lead to chronic interstitial nephritis, a form of kidney inflammation that can progress to permanent kidney failure. The risk increases further when multiple painkillers are combined or recommended dosages are exceeded.

**The truth about salt and kidney health**

Many people believe that alternatives like sea salt or Himalayan pink salt are healthier than table salt. However, all salts are chemically the same, sodium chloride, with only negligible differences in trace minerals. The real danger lies in excessive sodium



intake. High sodium levels can increase blood pressure, which is a leading cause of kidney damage. When the body is overloaded with salt, the kidneys must work harder to excrete the excess. Over time, this strain can reduce kidney function and contribute to chronic kidney disease. The solution is not to

switch to a different type of salt but to limit overall sodium consumption, regardless of the source.

**Can too much water harm your kidneys?**

While staying hydrated is essential, drinking six to seven liters a day does not protect the kidneys and can even be harmful. Excessive water intake can cause hyponatremia, a condition where blood sodium levels drop too low. This forces the kidneys to work overtime to excrete the excess water, and in severe cases, it may lead to brain swelling, seizures or even death. For most healthy adults, two to three liters of water per day is sufficient, though this can vary based on physical activity, climate and individual health.

**Tips to protect kidney health daily**

Many habits that seem harmless, taking painkillers for minor aches, adding extra salt to food or drinking excessive amounts of water, can quietly damage the kidneys over time. By using medicines responsibly, keeping salt intake under control and staying appropriately hydrated, you can reduce unnecessary strain on your kidneys and protect them for the long term.

# heavenly potato rotis are easy to make



These soft, thin and heavenly potato rotis are easy to make, taste divine and can be had for breakfast, lunch or dinner. The trick in this recipe is not to add any water to the dough. this recipe is intended to serve four, it is not at all guaranteed. You can have it simply with yogurt and achaar (Indian pickle) as a traditional North Indian breakfast,

or with any curry such as chana masala or saag paneer--or even steal a bite as a mid-day snack. Put the potatoes in a large pot and cover with cold water. Add enough salt so the water tastes as briny as sea water. Bring to boil and cook until completely tender when pierced with the tip of a knife, 40 to 50 minutes. (If you're

in a hurry, you can quarter the potatoes and boil about 20 minutes.) Drain the potatoes. Once cool enough to handle, peel and mash the potatoes in a large steel or glass mixing bowl. I find it easier to get an even mash by coarsely grating the potatoes. Add the ghee, chiles, cilantro, 1 cup of the flour and 1 teaspoon salt and mix well to form a soft dough. Add more flour as needed to form a dough, but be careful and add a little at a time as you cannot add any water to this recipe. Divide the dough into about 15 balls. Heat a nonstick skillet or seasoned cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Keep a bowl of flour nearby. Dab each dough ball in flour, flatten to look like a patty and then dip in flour again. Roll each patty into a thin round on a generously floured surface. The potato in the dough makes it extremely sticky and you will need to use the flour as you roll. Add 1/2 teaspoon of oil to the skillet, then add a roti. Cook until light brown spots appear on each side, about 1 1/2 minutes per side. Repeat with the remaining roti and additional oil. put the rotis in an insulated chapati box or insulated casserole dish to keep warm as we go. Alternatively, you could wrap them in a towel or kitchen cloth to keep warm.

# A delicious Indian Chana Masala recipe that everyone should learn

Indian cuisine is incredibly diverse. You'll find rich curries and breads throughout the Northern region, rice- and lentil-based dishes in the Southern — and plenty of sweets, street foods and drinks sprinkled throughout. From everyday dishes meant for weeknight cooking to ones reserved for special occasions like Diwali, you'll easily find many that you return to on a regular basis. And, if you're anything like us, you'll be inspired to keep a few essentials (like paneer, a jar of ghee and the spice blend, garam masala) on hand, too. You can't go wrong with any of the recipes in this roundup but Chana Masala is one of our favorites. Often called Amritsari Chole, this chickpea curry originates from Punjab but is popular all over India. There are many versions of this dish and every house has its own take on it. Ours features chickpeas smothered in a delicious thick, piquant and spiced gravy

Chana masala or chickpea curry, often called Amritsari Chole, originates from Punjab but is popular all over India. There are many versions of this dish and every house has its own take on it. This super authentic recipe from my mother-in-law's kitchen is my favorite, with the chickpeas smothered in a delicious thick, piquant and spiced gravy. First, they are cooked and infused with black tea and black cardamom, then simmered with a masala made with supremely aromatic roasted spices. This dish gets its tang from dried pomegranate seeds and raw mango powder. Though it's a little bit of work, it is the real McCoy and once you've had this version, nothing else will live up to it!

Drain the chickpeas, then combine them in a large Dutch oven with the baking soda, bay leaves, black



tea bag, black cardamom, 1 teaspoon salt and 3 cups of water. (To pressure cook the chickpeas, see Cook's Note.) Bring the mixture to a boil in a large Dutch oven, then reduce to a simmer and cook, partially covered with a lid, until the chickpeas are tender, about 1 hour. If the liquid is evaporating too quickly before the chickpeas are tender, pour in an additional 1 cup of water and continue to cook. Discard the tea bag, bay leaves and cardamom. Drain the chickpeas and put them back in the pot. Meanwhile, heat the ghee and/or oil in a large skillet or saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the onions and 1/2 teaspoon salt and cook, stirring and scraping occasionally, until the onions are very soft and golden brown, 10 to 12 minutes. Add the ginger, garlic and green chiles and cook until the raw smell goes away, about 3 minutes. Add the tomatoes and 1/2 teaspoon salt and cook until well cooked and pasty, about 8 minutes. Add the Roasted Chana Masala Spice Blend along with 2 tablespoons of water and saute until well

mixed and the flavors have melded, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the spice mixture to the chickpeas with 1 cup of water (see Cook's Note), mix well and bring to a simmer over medium heat; simmer until the curry thickens and coats and infuses the chickpeas, about 5 minutes. Adjust salt to taste. Garnish with fresh cilantro and serve with lime wedges or julienned ginger slaw, if desired. Combine the whole spices (coriander, cumin, black pepper, cinnamon and cardamom) in a small heavy skillet (preferably cast iron, if you have it) and roast over medium-high heat, shaking the pan often to ensure even roasting, until the spices start getting darker, 3 to 4 minutes. Lower the heat to low and add the powdered spices (pomegranate powder, mango powder, black salt, chile powder, turmeric and asafoetida) and cook, shaking or stirring constantly, until slightly darker, about 30 seconds. Be careful not to burn the spices. Immediately transfer the spices to a bowl and cool. Once cooled, grind the spices. You can double or triple this recipe and keep it in an airtight container for future use.

# 7 Healthy swaps for Indian festive eating

1. Fried pakoras → air-fried or baked pakoras No desi gathering is complete without crunchy pakoras. Instead of deep-frying, try air-frying or baking them. They stay crisp and tasty with a fraction of the oil. Using besan (gram flour) with spinach, onions, or paneer keeps them protein-rich too.
2. Gulab jamun → baked or jaggery-sweetened jamuns Gulab jamun is the king of Indian desserts, but it's also dripping with sugar syrup. Swap refined sugar with jaggery or palm sugar, and try baking instead of frying. The result? A guilt-free treat that still melts in your mouth.
3. White rice kheer → millet or oats kheer Kheer is festive comfort in a bowl. Make it healthier by using foxtail millet or oats instead of white rice. Sweeten with dates or stevia, and top with nuts. You get the same creamy texture but with more fibre and nutrients.
4. Deep-fried samosas → baked whole wheat samosas That irresistible triangular parcel can still be your par-



ty hero. Use whole wheat dough, stuff it with spiced peas and sweet potatoes, and bake instead of frying. Crispy edges, spicy filling, and none of the greasy fingers.

5. Creamy gravies → cashew or curd-based gravies For gravies such as shahi paneer or butter masala, forgo the traditional cream and butter. A blend of curd, melon seeds, or cashews can be

tenderly whipped to the desired finish with the dish and deliver a calorie-reduced alternative. Let the spices work their magic.

6. Soda or colas → spiced buttermilk or nimbu pani Festivals often mean bottles of cola at every house. Swap them for chilled chaas with roasted jeera or a refreshing nimbu pani with honey. Hydrating, digestive-friendly, and infinitely more Indian.



7. Refined flour sweets → atta or multigrain ladoos Unlike the mithai shops filled with sugar-laden sweets, besan and ragi ladoos, along with atta ladoos, offer a nutrient-rich alternative. Roast in ghee for flavour, add jaggery for sweetness, and garnish with almonds. They store well and keep your energy stable.

Festive food doesn't have to

be a health nightmare. Jaggery replacing sugar, millet standing in for refined flour, baking in place of frying—these smart, subtle swaps allow you to save your health while not letting go of the cherished flavours or customs. Because in the end, celebrating is about being happy, not wearing a burden. And when guilt-free is as delicious as delight, that's a celebration indeed.

# Craving Aloo Bhujia But Worried About The Calories? Try This No-Oil Version Today



Aloo bhujia is the ultimate comfort snack that never fails to hit the spot! Whether you're a busy professional looking for a quick pick-me-up or someone who loves snacking with a cup of shaam ki chai, this crispy delight has been a constant companion in our lives. But let's get real - the oil-soaked goodness can be a major bummer for health-conscious foodies. What if you could indulge in the same crunch, spicy goodness without the guilt? Say hello to this no-oil aloo bhujia recipe, crafted to satisfy your cravings without compromising on taste or nutrition. This recipe is a game-changer for snack enthusiasts and was shared by MasterChef Neha Deepak Shah on her Instagram handle.

Aloo Bhujia Recipe | How To Make Healthy Aloo BhujiaTo make this delicious and healthy aloo bhujia, you need to follow these steps:

In a bowl, combine boiled potatoes, besan, red chilli powder, turmeric, cumin powder, coriander seeds powder, salt, pink salt and powdered poha. Mix well.

Gradually add water and oil to the mixture to form a smooth dough. Place the dough into a sev machine and extrude it onto butter paper in a spiral pattern. Place the butter paper in the air fryer basket and air fry at 150 degrees C for 7-8 minutes or until crispy. Allow the sev to cool, then crush it into bhujia-shaped pieces.

Mix chaat masala with dried pudina powder and sprinkle it over the bhujia. Toss

well to combine. Your healthy, homemade aloo bhujia is now ready to be enjoyed! Tips For Making Perfect Aloo Bhujia At Home:

1. Achieving The Right Dough ConsistencyEnsure the dough is slightly soft for easy extrusion through the sev press. If the dough is too stiff, it may be difficult to pipe out the sev evenly.
2. Spacing MattersPipe out the sev well-spaced to prevent overlapping, which can affect the texture. This will also help the sev cook evenly and crisp up nicely.
3. Oil BrushFor added crispiness, lightly brush the sev with oil after 3-4 minutes of air frying (optional). Be gentle when brushing to avoid breaking the delicate sev strands.



# Few Traditional Sweets You Can Include In Your Onam 2025 Feast

Onam is one of Kerala's most awaited festivals. It is marked by ten days of rituals, family gatherings, and community celebrations. Homes are decorated with vibrant pookalams, traditional songs and dances fill the air, and kitchens come alive with festive cooking. Among the highlights of the season are the sweets, which carry both cultural and emotional significance. Sharing them with family and friends is as much about togetherness as it is about indulgence. Their ingredients reflect Kerala's agricultural abundance and culinary heritage. Whether served at home or exchanged as festive offerings, these traditional sweets embody warmth and nostalgia. Here's a selection of popular and lesser-known delicacies that you must try:

**Ada Pradhaman:** Ada Pradhaman is one of the most famous Onam sweets. It is made with rice ada (thin flakes),

jaggery, and coconut milk. It has a deep, caramel-like sweetness. The addition of fried cashews, raisins, and a touch of cardamom makes it richer and festive. Its layered flavours and velvety texture make it a must-have at every Onam sadya.

**Paal Payasam:** If you want a timeless festive dessert, you cannot go wrong with paal payasam. It is made with rice, milk, and sugar. Simple and easy to make, this payasam is the perfect choice if you don't have too much time to cook. You can customise it as per your needs and taste. Don't forget to garnish it with dry fruits and nuts.

**Parippu Payasam:** Parippu Payasam celebrates the wholesome goodness of moong dal in dessert form. The lentils are cooked with jaggery and coconut milk, creating a thick and hearty treat. The earthiness of dal combines beauti-

fully with the richness of ghee and fried nuts. It is a festive favourite you cannot afford to skip!

**Chakka Pradhaman:** This payasam highlights the sweetness of jackfruit, a fruit loved by many in Kerala. The pulp is cooked with jaggery and coconut milk until it becomes thick and aromatic. Roasted cashews, coconut bits, and raisins enhance its texture and flavour. If you want to try an Onam sweet different from the usual, opt for Chakka Pradhaman.

**Ney Appam:** Ney Appam is a deep-fried sweet fritter made with rice flour, jaggery, and coconut. Some recipes use bananas. Fried in ghee, it turns golden brown and develops a crisp outer layer. However, the exact method of preparation can differ from household to household. It is often enjoyed during festivals, especially Onam, as a homely and nostalgic treat.

## FIH Jr. Men's WC: France book direct QF berth

**New Delhi:** Last edition's silver medallist France continued their unbeaten run, eking out a narrow 3-2 win over a fighting Bangladesh to directly qualify for the quarterfinals of the FIH Men's Junior World Cup with an all-win record here on Tuesday.France, who had defeated Korea 11-1 and Australia 8-3, topped Pool F with maximum nine points from three matches.The ever-improving Frenchmen were a treat to watch as they controlled the proceedings against Bangladesh for most part of the match.France got their first scoring chance in the second minute from a penalty corner but star drag-flicker Amirul Islam made a fine goal line save.France kept up the pressure and secured two more short corners soon, the second of which resulted in a penalty stroke and Tom Gaillard made no mistake from the spot in the seventh minute.Two minutes into the second quarter, Bangladesh secured a penalty corner but this time Amirul fell short as his powerful flick was brilliantly saved by French goalkeeper Antoine Robert.Bangladesh, however, drew level in the 28th minute through their first field goal of the tournament by Md Abdullaah the final hooter, Bangladesh secured two more penalty corners, and Amirul converted the second chance to reduce the margin and take his goals tally to seven in the tournament.



## Teen prodigy Veer Ganapathy 3-shot

**Ahmedabad:** Teenage rookie Veer Ganapathy shrugged aside the disappointment of missing the cut last week by grabbing the sole lead at the Indian Golf Premier League (IGPL) Invitation-al Ahmedabad with a masterful round of 8-under 64 to take a three-shot lead over special invitee Santiago de la Fuentes of Mexico. Veer, son of Rahul Ganapathy, a former India world number one who also won professional titles before turning a coach, showed what he has learnt from his dad with a bogey-free round. The long-hitting youngster, who has earlier contended this season, had six birdies and an eagle at Glade One Resort. I knew I had the game, and somehow it did not come together at Kensville. This week I was determined, and today all parts of the game worked, and I hope to continue in the same vein,” said the youngster, who is also coached by his father, as quoted by an IGPL press release.Veer birdied the second and then added two more on the sixth and the eighth, and capped it with an eagle two on the Par-4 ninth to turn in 5-under 31. On the back, he birdied the 11th and had back-to-back gains on the 13th and the 14th. He parred the last four, though he could have picked another shot or two. But he also had a couple of good saves. “Overall, a happy day,” he added, Santiago, winner of the 2024 Latin America Amateur Championship, which gave him a spot at three Majors - the Masters, the US Open and the Open, showed why he is seen as a prodigious young star.The 24-year-old, who studied at Houston, who did well at Bharath Classic also, opened with four birdies in a row, He added two more against one bogey on the back nine for a 67, which had him second.Sachin Baisoya, who lit up Kensville with a 10-under final day show.

## Slow mechanics behind India's eroding home in Test cricket

**New Delhi:** As Simon Harmer continued to spin his web around the Indian batters in Guwahati during the second Test, broadcasters kept highlighting how much slower the South African spinners were operating compared to their Indian counterparts. A few minutes after he closed off the game and the series with a six-wicket haul, Harmer revealed that slowing down was a deliberate ploy, tailored to the red-soil pitch in Guwahati. “Coming here, we spoke about it and with the red soil pitch being a bouncier, quicker turn sort of wicket, we felt that the slower pace would

be better,” said Harmer at the post-match press conference. In the Kolkata Test, played on a diabolically unpredictable surface, and it delivered spectacular results. Harmer, Keshav Maharaj and Aiden Markram combined for seven of the nine wickets to fall in India's doomed 124-run chase. “If you look at the Indian finger spinners, they're extremely accurate. On surfaces that assist spin, it becomes very difficult because at that pace, you force a batter to commit very early. Slower pace allows the batter to adjust once the ball is bounced,” explains Harmer.

## Virat Kohli will participate in the Vijay Hazare Trophy

**New Delhi:** Virat Kohli on Tuesday informed the Delhi and Districts Cricket Association (DDCA) that he is available for the upcoming Vijay Hazare Trophy.“He has confirmed his availability to us, and we look forward to him playing for Delhi,” DDCA president Rohan Jaitley confirmed to Sportstar.Contrary to earlier speculations that the former India captain may skip the tournament, beginning on December 24, Kohli called up the State body officials and made it clear that he would be available for the group stage. The premier domestic 50-over competition will commence on December 24, and Delhi will begin its campaign on the opening day against Andhra Pradesh in Alur. However, it needs to be seen whether he plays all the seven group fixtures, or decides to pick and choose keeping the workload in mind. India's three-match ODI series against New Zealand will begin on January 11, and with Virat set to feature in the se-



ries, he is likely to join the Indian camp a couple of days prior. Keeping that in mind, there is a possibility that he could make himself available for four to five games, even though sources indicated that no decision has been taken yet.Delhi is in a tricky group, along with Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Saurashtra, Odisha, Services, Railways and Haryana, and the presence of Virat, who last played in the Vijay Hazare Trophy in 2010, will be a huge boost to the team.Since January this year, BCCI has instructed all its

players to feature in domestic cricket in order to be eligible for international assignments, and earlier this year, Virat and Rohit Sharma both featured in a Ranji Trophy game for Mumbai and Delhi respectively.

Now, with both wanting to continue till the 2027 ODI World Cup, they need to feature in the Vijay Hazare Trophy on a regular basis. While Virat is confirmed to feature in the tournament, Rohit, too, is set to turn up for Mumbai, even though a formal word is awaited.

## Cummins could comeback as Australia delay final

**New Delhi:** Pat Cummins is in contention for a sensational return to Australia's playing XI for the second Test against England at the Gabba, with selectors set to take a final call on Wednesday afternoon following a further inspection at the pitch, as per ESPNcricinfo.Australia's stand-in skipper Steven Smith did not confirm the XI during Wednesday's

press conference, stating that the decision would be taken later in the day. This keeps the door open for Cummins to resume captaincy and also raises the possibility of Australia going without their only specialist spinner Nathan Lyon for a second consecutive day-night Test. Australia must also find a replacement for injured opener

Usman Khawaja. Josh Inglis is currently seen as the front-runner to slot into the middle order ahead of Beau Webster, with Travis pink-ball Test in Adelaide against India, and did not bowl at all in the 2022 In the first Test in Perth, he bowled just two overs, both in the first innings as England faced only 67.3 overs across the two days of the match.

## IND vs SA: Rejuvenated Rohit, Virat look to seal series for India in Raipur

**New Delhi:** The Indian squad eventually retaliated against South Africa for the first time in the bilateral series, revitalized by the presence of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma. Playing in Ranchi's JSCA Stadium, India triumph did not come easily though. The hosts overcame the Proteas in the opening ODI by 17 runs in what evolved into a nervy and unexpected duel. The two veterans emerged as the stars of the match, unleashing magnificent knocks that helped the hosts set a hard aim for the South African team. Rohit and Virat

were the centre of attention in Ranchi last Sunday, and the surrounding excitement will remain just as intense ahead of the second ODI in Raipur on Wednesday, December 3. Raipur, which does not host international matches often, has dressed up to welcome the duo, aware that the city might be witnessing two legends in the final couple of years of their careers. There is a sense of occasion around their presence that the fans and the organisers have embraced fully.And that sense of excitement is valid. What the senior duo did in the

opening ODI commands that respect. The methods that Rohit and Virat applied in Ranchi again showed that the duo are desperate to secure their spots on the teamsheet for the 2027 World Cup. They know very well, especially after the Border-Gavaskar Trophy last year, that the difference between boarding a flight to South Africa for that tournament and being left at home could come down to just a couple of innings. That fine margin has forced them into a mindset where every knock feels like part audition and part statement.

## Real Madrid and Girona tie 1-1 as Barcelona takes the lead

**New Delhi:** Real Madrid drew 1-1 away to Girona, a result that lifted FC Barcelona to the top of La Liga after 14 rounds.

Barcelona has 34 points, one more than Real Madrid. Villarreal sits a further point back, with Atletico Madrid on 31. Real Madrid has dropped six points with three consecutive draws.Madrid wanted to dominate possession, but the red-and-whites kept their lines tight to disrupt the opponent's flow and waited for the right moment to strike. That moment came just before halftime: a quick recovery, a vertical transition, and a brilliant individual play by Azzedine Ounahi, who scored a stunning goal with a sharp, angled shot that made Montilivi erupt.The goal rewarded Girona's discipline and bravery, as they did not shy away from

going for the game. In the second half, however, Madrid increased the pressure and found relief in a penalty that Mbappé converted in the 67th minute to level the score.Far from collapsing, Girona showed remarkable maturity. They endured, adjusted, and protected their area as Madrid ramped up the intensity. The defensive blocks withstood the final onslaught of an opponent desperate for points, growing increasingly nervous in a negative streak that now includes three consecutive draws. For Girona, the point is much more than just a result: it is an exercise in character, a boost of confidence, and confirmation that the team still has the tools to compete. Montilivi, once again, became the faithful reflection of a combative, proud Girona capable of competing against



any opponent.Barcelona beat Deportivo Alaves 3-1 on Saturday, with Lamine Yamal and Dani Olmo overturning Pablo Ibanez's first-minute opener.Villarreal stayed in the title race with a 3-2 win at Real Sociedad, sealed by Alberto Moleiro's 95th-minute strike after Ayoze Perez and Moleiro had put the visitors 2-0 up. Carlos Sol-

er and Ander Barrenetxea brought Sociedad level before the late winner.Real Betis won 2-0 away to Sevilla through goals from Pablo Fornals and Sergi Altimira. Isaac Romero was sent off for Sevilla, and the match was halted temporarily due to objects thrown from the stands; the club faces a fine and possible ground closure.

## India advanced to the quarterfinals by defeating Switzerland 5-0 Junior Men's Hockey World Cup

**New Delhi:** India stormed into the quarterfinals of the FIH Men's Junior Hockey World Cup after a commanding 5-0 win over Switzerland, extending their unbeaten run in the competition. The result, powered by a brace from Manmeet Singh and two penalty-corner strikes from Sharda Nand Tiwari, ensured India topped Pool B with nine points from three matches. It also reaffirmed their attacking sharpness and defensive discipline as they marched into the knockout stage as group leaders. Switzerland began with promise, earning consecutive penalty corners in the opening minute, but India's defence held firm to avert any early danger. The hosts hit back immediately. In just the second minute, Manmeet Singh opened the scoring after latching onto a precise pass from Dilraj Singh - a goal that set the tone for India's dominance.Manmeet, celebrating his birthday, doubled the lead in the 11th minute with a neat deflection from a long ball. Two minutes later, Sharda Nand Tiwari convert-



ed India's second penalty corner to make it 3-0. While the forwards were clinical, goalkeeper Prinde Deep Singh produced several important saves to maintain India's control. India continued to create chances, earning another penalty corner in the 21st minute, but Swiss goalkeeper Timo Graf denied Anmol Ekka's high flick. Switzerland tried to pull themselves back into the contest with a penalty corner of their own in the 23rd minute, only to be thwarted again by India's or-

ganised defence.Arshdeep Singh made it 4-0 in the 28th minute with a crisp reverse slap shot. Rohit came close to adding another from a short corner, but Graf's quick reflexes kept the deficit from growing further. India's sustained pressure ensured Switzerland had little room to launch meaningful counter-attacks.

The Swiss returned from halftime with renewed intent and carved out two opportunities, yet Prinde Deep Singh stayed alert to preserve the clean sheet. Their best chance came late in the third quarter when they earned a penalty stroke, but Prinde Deep Singh produced a brilliant save with his outstretched right foot.India pushed on in the final quarter, winning another penalty corner in the 50th minute, though Rohit was once again denied by Graf. Switzerland earned back-to-back penalty corners soon after, but India's disciplined defensive unit stood firm. In the 54th minute, Sharda Nand Tiwari struck again from a short corner to complete India's tally.

## The Windies explode, Bracewell and Smith bring New Zealand back to life

**New Delhi:** Michael Bracewell and Nathan Smith's gritty 52-run stand for the seventh wicket ensured New Zealand ended a rain-hit opening day on level terms after a dramatic collapse in seam-friendly conditions at Hagley Oval. By stumps, the hosts had reached 231 for 9, recovering from a perilous 148 for 6 after Kane Williamson's half-century laid the early foundation. West Indies kept striking at regular intervals. Jayden Seales bowled Rachin Ravindra with a full ball from around the wicket, and Layne claimed his maiden Test wicket when Will Young edged to second slip for 14. Shields added another when Tom Blundell dragged an inside-edge onto his stumps, leaving the hosts wobbling at 120 for 5 and then 148 for 6. Bracewell and Smith then staged the fightback. Bracewell counterattacked, Smith dug in, and together they added 52 runs that hauled New Zealand back into the contest. Chase eventually broke the stand when Smith flicked loosely to short midwicket. Sensing the tail was exposed, Bracewell went for his shots. The approach didn't last. On 47, he miscued a pull to give Shields his second wicket. Matt Henry soon fell to a Roach bouncer for 8, and two balls later, Jacob Duffy was struck on the helmet by another sharp short ball. West Indies captain Roston Chase had no hesitation in bowling first after winning the toss, citing the heavy overhead conditions, a green-tinted pitch, and the venue's history — only once in 15 Tests here has a captain chosen to bat first. The decision paid off instantly. Kemar Roach,



returning to Test cricket for the first time since January 2025, struck in his third ball. Operating around the wicket, he drew Devon Conway into a loose poke, and Justin Greaves accepted the edge at second slip. But the innings had barely begun when rain forced a 90-minute delay with only 3.3 overs bowled. Another shower truncated the first session to just 10.3 overs, during which New Zealand mustered only 17 runs. After lunch, Williamson found a way to move the scoreboard, picking up two boundar-

ies in three balls off Johann Layne. While not always in command, he relied on soft hands and late play — hallmarks of his technique — to survive and score on a tricky surface.

Debutant Ojay Shields endured a nervous start. His first ball in Test cricket was a short, wide no-ball that Tom Latham, then 2 off 34, cracked for four. Shields later bowled Williamson through the gate, only to be denied by another overstep — an early sign, edged to second slip for a valuable hand.