

In Brief

Oil India pact to probe vital minerals in Arunachal

Itanagar: An important development in enhancing India's mineral resource security occurred on January 2, when OIL India Limited signed an agreement for the Composite Licence of the Phop Graphite and Vanadium Block in Arunachal Pradesh. Notable figures from the Directorate of Geology and Mines, OIL, and CESHS participated in this signing. Under the agreement, CESHS will hold a 10% partnership interest and will assist with exploratory surveys and coordination with local stakeholders. This collaboration aims to combine local insights with OIL's technical expertise, enhancing operational efficiency and promoting sustainable mineral development. The agreement is viewed as a pivotal moment in India's minerals strategy, supporting self-reliance and regional development in Arunachal Pradesh.

CM Himanta begins MMUA seed money distribution in Sipajhar

Guwahati: Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, the chief minister of Assam, distributed Rs 10,000 seed capital checks to 39,665 eligible female members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Sipajhar, Darrang district, as part of the Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan (MMUA) program aimed at empowering rural women entrepreneurs. The event, held in Ramgaon village, highlighted Sipajhar as having the most beneficiaries among 62 legislative assembly constituencies. Chief Minister Sarma noted the goal of covering all eligible beneficiaries by February 10, targeting 32 to 40 lakh women SHG members nationwide. He also discussed strategies for the 2026 Assam Assembly elections, including grassroots surveys and the ongoing seat-sharing discussions with ally Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), while predicting a decline in Congress's performance in Assam.

Sonitpur's first neurosurgeon

Tezpur: Dr. Angiras Bhattacharya of Tezpur has made the district extremely proud by becoming the first neurosurgeon in Sonitpur and earning the esteemed MCh in Neurosurgery with a Gold Medal. He received widespread recognition for his exceptional academic achievement after passing the highest university exam administered by Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences from Guwahati Medical College. Dr. Bhattacharya, who was well-known for his academic prowess, earned his MBBS and MS from Guwahati Medical College before enrolling in the MCh (Neurosurgery) program there. His success in passing the university exam and earning a gold medal is evidence of his commitment, tenacity, and excellence.

Dr Angiras Bhattacharya becomes Sonitpur's first neurosurgeon

Tezpur, Jan 03: Dr. Angiras Bhattacharya of Tezpur has made the district extremely proud by becoming the first neurosurgeon in Sonitpur and earning the esteemed MCh in Neurosurgery with a Gold Medal. He received widespread recognition for his exceptional academic achievement after passing the highest university exam administered by Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences from Guwahati Medical College. Dr. Bhattacharya, who was well-known for his academic prowess, earned his MBBS and MS from Guwahati Medical College before enrolling in the MCh (Neurosurgery) program there. His success in passing the university exam and earning a gold medal is evidence of his commitment, tenacity, and excellence.



Music talent hunt launched in Assam tea garden model schools

Guwahati, Jan 03: The Hans Foundation, in collaboration with the Department of Secondary Education, Government of Assam, has launched a state-wide music talent hunt and mentorship programme for students studying in Model Schools located in tea garden areas of the state. The initiative is part of ongoing efforts to promote holistic education among children from tea garden communities. The programme currently covers 54 Model Schools across Sonitpur, Tinsukia and Dibrugarh districts.

These schools are supported by The Hans Foundation under its Utam Xikhya programme, which aims to improve access and quality of education for tea tribe children. The number of schools under the programme is expected to increase to 101 by April this year. The idea of structured co-curricular and vocational activities, including music education, was earlier highlighted by Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma during a review meeting held on April 4, 2025. He stressed that activities beyond classroom learning were important for the all-round development of students in tea garden areas. Following this guidance, The Hans Foundation introduced formal music classes across all 54 Model Schools. Dedicated music teachers were ap-



pointed for each school, and during the past several months, more than 14,000 tea tribe students have taken part in weekly and bi-weekly music lessons.

The Foundation noted that students have shown strong interest and participation in these sessions. Building on this experience, a structured music competition has now been announced to identify talent-

ed students and provide them with long-term mentorship support. Under the programme, auditions will be held in all participating schools over the next month. Shortlisted students will then appear for district-level rounds in Sonitpur, Tinsukia and Dibrugarh, from which 160 students will be selected. A pre-state competition will take place in Dibrugarh on January 21.

From this round, 15 finalists will be chosen for advanced training. These selected students will be brought to Guwahati for grooming and mentorship sessions.

The final round of the competition will be held on February 6, where the top five students will be declared. Speaking about the initiative, Jurismita Puzari, Program Manager (North East), The Hans Foundation, said that

education goes beyond textbooks and structured music learning can help build confidence and self-expression among children. She added that participation by more than 14,000 students shows that talent exists everywhere, even when opportunities are limited. She said the programme aims to provide deserving children with exposure and educational support that could help shape their future.

Election will be between people and the 'King': Gaurav Gogoi

Guwahati, Jan 03: Assam Pradesh Congress Committee President Gaurav Gogoi on Friday said that the coming election in Assam will be a contest between the people of the state and what he described as the "ruler". He was speaking at a mass convention organised by the Dibrugarh District Citizens' Forum at Amolapatty Natya Mandir. The programme was held to raise concerns about democracy and the rights of citizens. In his address, Gogoi said that the Constitution gives every citizen not only the right to vote, but also the right to question the government and criticise injustice. He said that democracy cannot function without the right to question. According to him, peo-

ple should be able to ask about the government's work in fields like health, education and infrastructure. He alleged that the present government does not want people to exercise these rights and follows an approach similar to old kings and rulers. Gogoi said that under such systems, rulers distribute benefits from time to time, but only to those who maintain loyalty. He claimed that similar behaviour can be seen in government schemes today. He alleged that conditions are being linked to schemes, and that beneficiaries fear losing assistance if they support opposition parties or criticise the ruling leadership. He further said that it was unfortunate for a democratic country that

threats and intimidation were being used in politics. He urged people from different communities and backgrounds to remain united and not fall prey to what he called divisive politics based on religion, language or ethnicity. According to him, unity among citizens is the real strength in a democracy. Gogoi also criticised what he described as the government's increasing dependence on loans, and alleged that instead of creating employment, the focus has shifted towards creating beneficiaries. He said that government schemes should reach all deserving people, regardless of political affiliation, and that public money must be used responsibly for education, health-care and infrastructure.

He added that people in Assam mainly want good hospitals, proper schools, working public services and fair treatment from the police and administration. Instead, he alleged that attention has shifted to schemes while basic services remain weak.

He also said that Assam should have been among the leading states in human development but continues to remain behind. Gogoi stressed that there will be a decisive political contest ahead and called for unity among the Opposition. He said that alliances will be formed according to the wishes of the people and that the election is not simply between political parties but between the people and what he called the "ruler".

Eight Udashin Bhakats in Goalpara receive government scheme benefits



Goalpara, Jan 03: The Goalpara district's religious community, particularly the devotees of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev, were thrilled on Friday when the State Government added eight Udashin Bhakats, or Brahmachari monks, who lived in the district's several Satras, to the government benefit plan. Pradip Bhakat, Vivekananda Das, Pares Nath, Joyram Nath, Haricharan Nath, Satradhar Das, Pankaj Kalita, and Kapil Krishna Medhi are among the esteemed Bhakats who are now qualified for the monthly honorarium of fifteen hundred rupees.

Through a local arrangement at the DC's conference hall, all of the beneficiaries took part in a statewide video conference meeting that Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma addressed from Guwahati.

The local meet's organizer, Prodip Timung, DC, congratulated the Bhakats and commended their lives and efforts in promoting Vaishnav dharma.

Among those in attendance were Jagadish Brahma, ADC, Tribeni Kachari, SPO, Nabajit Pathak, Co-district Commissioner of West Goalpara, and Marry Hazarika, DIPRO In-Charge.

Assam CM: AGP can contest any number of seats; BJP will not interfere

Guwahati, Jan 03: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said that the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) is free to decide how many seats it wants to contest in the upcoming Assembly elections, and that he has "no right to comment" on the internal decisions of the ally party. Speaking to the media in Guwahati, Sarma said that the BJP and AGP share a long-standing understanding that is based on mutual trust rather than formal negotiations. He made it clear that AGP is an independent political party and not controlled by the BJP. "AGP is not run by BJP. JP Nadda is not the president of AGP. Atul Bora is," he said. "So if AGP says it wants to contest 100 seats, I have no right to comment on that." The Chief Minister said that discussions on seat-sharing will only take place if AGP chooses to contest the

polls as part of the BJP-led alliance. In that case, he said, AGP president Atul Bora and BJP leader Dilip Saikia will discuss and decide the final seat allocation. "If AGP wants to fight the election together with us, then Atul Bora and Dilip Saikia will sit together and decide how many seats AGP will get," Sarma explained. "But if AGP wants to contest on its own, BJP cannot stop them." Sarma also dismissed speculation about differences between the two parties. He said that he remains in regular contact with senior AGP leaders, including Phani Bhusan Choudhury, and that the alliance is functioning smoothly. "We are together in the cabinet, so we talk every day," he said. "It's not like our relationship is sour." According to the Chief Minister, the BJP and

AGP do not rely on formal press announcements or public meetings to hold discussions. Instead, conversations often take place informally. "We don't need to organise meetings and inform the media professionally," he said. "We can discuss things personally. You may not even know when our discussions take place." Sarma added that the working style of the BJP-AGP alliance is different from that of other political parties. "The way Rajiv Dal and Congress hold official meetings, BJP and AGP don't function like that," he said. "We are like brothers." The Chief Minister also spoke about his personal rapport with AGP president Atul Bora, mentioning that Bora lives near his residence and that they can meet and talk at any time.

Accident

Demow, Jan 03: On Thursday, a young person from Dhemechi Maj Gaon died and two others were hurt in a traffic accident on the Dekhari Borphukan route in Demow. Sources claim that while returning from a picnic in Desangmukh, a Bolero car fell from an iron bridge. It was on its way to Dhemechi. After receiving initial care, the injured individuals were referred to Assam Medical College & Hospital (AMCH) in Dibrugarh for more advanced care, as reported by a Demow Model Hospital-cum-CHC health official on Friday.

Garima Demands Swift Justice in Zubeen Case

Guwahati, Jan 03: The court on Saturday held the third hearing in the case related to the death of cultural icon Zubeen Garg, with his wife Garima Saikia Garg present to closely follow the proceedings.

Speaking to the media after the hearing, Garima expressed concern over repeated adjournments and warned that frequent delays could prolong the trial significantly. "If the case keeps getting dates every 15 days, it may take years to conclude. There are 396 witnesses, and examining them alone will take a long time," she said. Garima also questioned the

legal strategy adopted by the defence and said she sensed no remorse during the proceedings. "They are taking a very strong stand by engaging lawyers from outside the state. We expect the government to respond with an equally strong prosecution team of senior advocates and experts. Otherwise, justice will suffer," she said. She said she has appointed a lawyer to assist her in the case and alleged lapses in the preparation of the chargesheet, stressing the need to fix accountability. During the hearing, key accused Shyamkanu Mahanta and Siddharth Sharma appointed lawyers.

S D Singh Jamwal appointed as new Police chief of Arunachal Pradesh

Itanagar, Jan 03: Arunachal Pradesh will soon have a new Director General of Police (DGP), as the Central government has decided to appoint senior Indian Police Service officer S D Singh Jamwal as the head of the state police force. The move comes as part of a reshuffle of senior IPS officers posted in different parts of the country. Jamwal is a 1995-batch IPS officer. Until now, he was serving as the DGP of Ladakh. A fresh order issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs on January 2 directed that he will now take charge of the police leadership in Arunachal Pradesh. He will replace the present DGP Anand Mohan, who has been asked to report to Delhi. Reports suggest that Mohan may be given a role in the Delhi Police, although a final posting order is still awaited.

Officials familiar with the development said that the transfer is part of a routine reshuffle of senior officers. However, the change is also seen as significant because Arunachal Pradesh shares a long and sensitive border with China, making policing and security matters especially important in the state. Jamwal has served in different law-and-order roles during his career and is considered an experienced officer. His appointment is expected to bring continuity and direction to policing in the state. Along with Jamwal's transfer, another major appointment has been made. Mukesh Singh, a 1996-batch IPS officer, has been named the new DGP of Ladakh. Singh is currently serving with the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). He has been asked to return and take charge of the police adminis-



tration in the Union Territory. Before joining the ITBP on deputation, Singh worked for many years in Jammu and Kashmir. He served as Inspector General and later Additional Director General of Police for the Jammu

range. He belongs to the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir cadre, which was later merged with the AGMUT cadre after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019. Arunachal Pradesh has always been considered a strategically important state because of its long international border. The state also has hilly terrain and remote areas, where travel and communication are not always easy. This makes policing work more challenging than in many other regions. Officials said the government aims to strengthen police leadership in such key locations through timely administrative changes. The official appointment order for the postings was issued on January 2 by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The officers are now expected to take charge according to government instructions.

A Pediatrician’s Guide: 6 Brain-Boosting Foods for Kids

Children are at that growing stage where their brains require nutrients to focus on all the learning. Nutrition is one of the building blocks for memory, concentration and overall cognitive development. So, as a parent, making your child finish homework on time or stay up to date with coursework won’t be enough to make them smart. Real smartness comes from within, and nutrition is the fuel for that. Diet for children, especially, cannot afford to be shallow with empty nutrients for convenience’s sake, like the boring and generic cereals for breakfast. To truly ensure your child thrives, add fresh foods with a robust nutrient profile which fuel their growing brains and, in turn, help to learn better at school.

Dr Kushagra Gupta, paediatrician at Fortis Hospital in Greater Noida, told HT Lifestyle that certain nutrients even help children overcome learning difficulties and support the symptoms of neurodevelopmental disorders. ADHD is one of them and is very frequent among school-aged children. As per DSM-5, ADHD or Attention



Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder means, “A persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development.” Dr Gupta, regarding ADHD’s relation to nutrition, said, “Increased omega-3 intake and better blood sugar management are even more important for children with challenging learning difficulties such as ADHD. ” Even other than ADHD, school kids struggle with concentration and focus. But nutrition helps with their hyperactivity. Dr Gupta listed 6 brain-friendly foods that are

beneficial:
1. Fatty fish: Salmon, mackerel and sardines are filled with omega-3 fatty acids, which are key for brain development. These good fats are great for improving memory, lowering ADHD symptoms, and helping with neural connections. Local options are fresh river fish available.
2. Eggs: Source of the best brain food: stuffed eggs contain choline important for the production of neurotransmitters. Whether it is masala scrambled eggs or eggs in parantha, eating eggs give you superb concentration and attention.
3. Berries: Berries, blueberries and dark berries are rich in antioxidants, which help improve communication between brain cells and enhance short-term memory. Throw them in smoothies or serve as a healthy snack.
4. Leafy greens: Palak, methi, and sarson ka saag are all abundant in folate, vitamin K and iron, all nutrients

that help support concentration and prevent cognitive decline. These are easily available vegetables, and they beautifully find a place in Indian curries and lentil dishes, which I cook.
5. Seeds and nuts: Walnuts, almonds and pumpkin seeds have vitamin E and healthy fats that can help brain cells. Use as snacks or mix into homemade trail mixes. Always test for allergic reactivity in young children.
6. Whole grains: They help in giving energy over a period of time because they have both complex carbohydrates and B vitamins. This helps in sustaining focus and concentration during the time spent in school.
Lastly, he cautioned against certain snacks, “Severely processed snacks, sweet beverages that have added sugars, and sugary sweets lead to an energy rush and crash that directly affects concentration and emotion. Opt for natural alternatives that will give you lasting energy, instead.” Children naturally have a tendency to lean towards processed foods, but it becomes the responsibility of the parent to encourage healthy eating habit.

Laura Ashley: From Wales to a global fashion empire



There’s no clearer sign that the prairie look is still gaining popularity than when incongruously sported by an icon of metropolitan life: New Yorker Carrie Bradshaw of Sex and the City. In the final season of the show’s divisive sequel, And Just Like That, which concluded in August, a trip to her boyfriend Aidan’s farmhouse in rural Virginia has her running off to the local store to clothe herself in the lacy collars, puffed sleeves and long floral skirts more commonly seen on 19th-Century settlers. Her transition from witty columnist to the writer of Victorian-era romantic fiction sees her throwing off her Manolo Blahniks and dressing like her characters. And it’s not just Carrie. Nostalgia for Victoriana, and the simple way of life it embodies, has seeped into social media via tradwife influencers such as Utah farmer Hannah Neeleman of Ballerina Farm; and on to catwalks and high streets. Several decades before this 19th-Century homestead look spread across the internet, however, there was an earlier revival of nostalgic, romantic fashion, spearheaded by the British clothing and textile designer Laura Ashley, who was born 100 years ago on 7 September 1925. Widely considered an influential tastemaker, she was described as “creating an image of Englishness that women worldwide wanted to buy”. Through the 1970s and early 80s her signature rose-tinted, bucolic style was a big mood in UK fashion and homeware.

“I don’t think there’s anything very special about our things,” the Welsh designer, batting back the suggestion that she was a “trendsetter”. Instead, the designs simply gave women what they needed, and “evolved from necessity”. The business had a quintessentially British beginning in 1952, with Ashley, a secretary for the Women’s Institute, visiting the organisation’s display of traditional handicrafts at the V&A. Inspired by the patchwork textiles, she resolved to make something similar. However, the Victorian fabrics she had admired at the museum, featuring small flowers and delicate stripes, no longer existed: she would have to print her own. The result – made possible by a rudimentary printing screen fashioned by her husband Bernard – who also co-managed the business – pleased her, and, noting a gap in the market for items that were both pretty and practical, she began making scarves, tea towels, and later, aprons. Bernard had bigger ideas, envisaging reams of upholstery fabric sold wholesale, and so it was Laura’s name that went on the label, and stayed there as the orders flooded in. In 1968, customers queued at the door of the first Laura Ashley shop in South Kensington. By Laura’s death in 1985, the company had 220 shops in 12 countries, only fading out when looks such as ‘80s power dressing and ‘90s minimalism took over, reflecting women’s changing role in society. The timing of Laura Ashley’s Victorian-inspired venture was perfect, bolstered by a post-war boom in production, and offering a wholesome, high-necked alternative (always in natural fibres) to the bold hot pants and revealing miniskirts of the hedonistic Swinging Sixties scene. Feminism might have been in ascendance, but

not everybody welcomed this shifting society. Ashley was offering a retrograde alternative, just as the tradwife trend does today. “I knew in my heart that was not what most people wanted,” she said. “I sensed that most people wanted to raise families, have gardens and live life as nicely as they can.” Laura Ashley’s aesthetic, and the values it espoused, were romantic throwbacks to what she felt was a simpler time. As Anne Sebba notes in her 1990 biography Laura Ashley: A Life by Design: “To her mind, the Victorian era symbolised gentle, gracious living, a time when standards, domestic and industrial, were at their highest and England at its best.” Her clothing was intended for women in a traditional domestic setting, that was both comfortable and charming. It was “brilliant marketing,” Sebba. Laura struggled to reconcile the demands of the business with her belief that a mother shouldn’t work when the children were around, sometimes packing the children off to bed at 4:30pm to make this possible. She would also decline her OBE – deeming it a slight on Bernard, particularly as the letter addressed her as “Ms”, which, for someone who valued the sanctity of marriage above all, felt beyond the pale. For a while, in the ‘70s and early ‘80s, Victoriana seemed unstoppable. The more fashion-conscious hippies seeking a more billowing, bohemian silhouette jumped on the trend, and children’s characters such as Holly Hobbie and Strawberry Shortcake, dressed in patchwork pinafores and bloomers, flooded the US and European markets with merchandise, from dolls and stationery to bed linen and curtains. Meanwhile, the US series Little House on the Prairie (1974-1983) became one of television’s most popular shows. Melissa Gilbert was just a child when she played Laura Ingalls with her strawberry-blond plaits, but 50 years on, her lifestyle brand Modern Prairie, founded in 2022, answers a demand for cottagecore dresses, smock aprons and textiles reminiscent of the era. And there is a Netflix reboot of Little House on the Prairie currently in the making. The simple Victorian prints that Laura Ashley had seen in the V&A worked brilliantly in monochrome, which, coupled with imported cotton, kept costs low, enabling customers to style themselves and their homes on a budget. “They somehow clocked the aspirational desires of a whole generation,” says Sebba. “And by producing these clothes that seemed to come from the countryside and were very cheap, and the household fabrics to go with it, they enabled a whole generation to ignore social class, and that was powerful.” That their fabrics should be described as “an image of Englishness”, however, overlooks the company’s connection with Wales, where Laura was born. In 1960, now parents of three – and later, four – children, the couple relocated to a 500-acre farm in the Welsh Valleys, bringing the company with them, and providing welcome employment. A champion sheep shearer became their master garment cutter, and even when their products were stocked by Harrods and Liberty’s, “made in Wales” was printed on the labels, and the fabric dyed in the earthy browns, greens and grey-blues that recalled the landscape she loved. This connection with the British countryside was part of the packaging of the look. “It was the first company to offer this whole lifestyle,” explains Sebba. “It wasn’t simply that you were buying a dress or decorating your walls, or making curtains, you were buying into this whole notion that the rural life was preferable to urban life.” Fifty years on, Carrie Bradshaw’s milkmaid look enacts this fantasy of a country life, as well as her desire for domestic stability, described by Laura Ashley as “security at home”, and central, she said, to her clothing’s appeal. ”

Eating Right, Evolving Fast: What 2025 Taught Us About Nutrition

The way we eat is evolving. No longer just about cutting calories or tracking macros, nutrition in 2025 is about understanding how food fuels the body at a cellular level. It’s about metabolic health, longevity, gut-brain-skin connections, and nutrients that communicate with our genes.
“We’re finally beginning to understand that the way we eat has less to do with dieting and more to do with how our cells function,” says Shradha Sounil Khanna, AVP Nutrition, Well-being Nutrition. “The mitochondria, the powerhouses of the cell, are now the stars of nutrition science,” explains Khanna. Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, amino acids, polyphenols from berries, olives, and green tea, as well as botanical extracts like matcha and berberine, enhance mitochondrial efficiency. The result? Cleaner, sustainable energy, fewer blood sugar spikes, and even healthier ageing. “Think less post-lunch fatigue, no brain fog, and reversing cognitive decline,” she adds. Gut health continues to dominate headlines, but the conversation has shifted. “It’s not just about more fibre,” says Khanna, “but about the optimal balance of soluble and insoluble fibres to generate short-chain fatty acids that energise colon cells and reduce systemic inflammation.” A daily mix of legumes, millets, fruits, and whole grains helps regulate blood sugar, cholesterol, and weight, while also supporting immune health.



“Protein isn’t just about quantity anymore,” Khanna notes. “The timing and type of protein, paired with compounds like leucine or Velositol, can double muscle protein synthesis.” Collagen peptides aid tissue repair, while creatine, once seen as a muscle-only supplement, now shows benefits for cognition and recovery. Personalisation is key: “It’s not just how much protein you eat, but when, what kind, and with what,” she emphasises. Micronutrients are emerging as the unsung heroes of health. “Magnesium doesn’t just relax muscles; it activates over 300 enzymatic reactions, affecting everything from glucose regulation to mood stability,” says Khanna. Iron, zinc, and vitamin D are equally crucial; missing them is like running the latest software on an outdated device.
Static diets are giving way to cyclical nutrition. “Fasting, re-feeding, or rotating nutrients can turn on autophagy, the cell’s cleaning process, and prevent metabolic plateaus,” ex-

plains Khanna. Timing these cycles with the body’s circadian rhythm optimises cellular function and overall well-being. Celebrity dietitian Simrat Kathuria adds, “One diet works for none. Personalised nutrition, based on gut microbiome and genetics, is far more effective than one-size-fits-all plans.” She notes the rising importance of protein-fibre synergy to stabilise blood sugar, improve satisfaction, and aid weight control. Sustainability is also central: choosing local, minimally processed foods is not just healthy, it’s responsible. Ria Pawar, Coaching Specialist at Elevate Now, sums it up: “Nutrition in 2025 is about the basics done right – complete proteins and fibre-rich whole foods. True longevity comes from personalisation and timely interventions to help your body function at peak performance.” Correct eating in 2025 is precision nutrition: it’s not a trend, it’s cellular self-care. The focus has shifted from chasing quick fixes to supporting long-term metabolic, cognitive, and immune health. In short, eating right now means eating smart, sustainable, and in tune with your body.

Genelia D’Souza Stuns in Kalamkari and Rich Browns for Festive Season

Genelia D’Souza has always had a way of making traditional wear feel fresh, relatable, and aspirational all at once. This time, she stepped into the festive spotlight in an earthy-toned lehenga look that celebrated both heritage and modernity. With a hand-painted Kalamkari dupatta as the hero and statement silver jewellery to match, her ensemble wasn’t just about looking glamorous; it was about telling a story through craft, colour, and culture.
For her latest look, Genelia D’Souza wore a regal lehenga set by Aamra by Lavanya. The look centred around a brown lehenga set priced at Rs 54,000, paired with a standout Kalamkari dupatta. The lehenga featured subtle striped shimmer detailing, which caught the light and gave the silhouette a luxurious, fluid movement. But it was the dupatta that became the focal point of the ensemble. With hand-drawn Kalamkari artistry depicting birds, the drape added not just visual appeal but also a touch of storytelling and symbolism. It was a nod to heritage craftsmanship, rein-



terpreted for today’s festive wardrobe. To complement the earthy richness of the lehenga, Genelia chose a bold choker set with matching earrings, stacked bangles, and a statement ring that created layers of traditional glamour. The silver and gold tones offset the warm browns of the outfit beautifully, while also amplifying the artisanal detailing of the dupatta. Her glam stayed true to her signature style: fresh, glowing, and unfussy. With softly defined eyes, a dewy base, and a neutral lip, the makeup balanced the richness

of the outfit and jewellery. Her hair was styled in soft waves and pulled back partially, framing her face while letting the dupatta and choker command attention. Genelia’s look struck the perfect balance between heritage and high fashion. The earthy brown base was understated yet powerful, while the intricate Kalamkari dupatta brought depth, culture, and individuality. Paired with statement silver jewellery, it was a masterclass in how to wear Indian crafts with contemporary relevance.

Understanding and managing monsoon-related joint pain easily

The sound of raindrops brings joy to many, but for those living with arthritis or chronic joint pain, the monsoon season often signals discomfort. Stiffness, swelling, and inflammation seem to rise with the rains, leaving many to wonder whether the weather is to blame. Doctors confirm that this is more than just a coincidence; there are scientific explanations behind the flare-ups. “People often complain that their knees or shoulders hurt more during the rainy season, and it’s not in their heads. There are physiological changes triggered by weather shifts that directly impact joint health,” says Dr. Prateek Gupta, Consultant – Orthopaedics, Manipal Hospital, Ghaziabad.
Drop In Atmospheric Pressure – When the air pressure dips, joint spaces expand, creating strain in already sensitive joints. “This widening effect can worsen pain for those with arthritis, osteoporosis, or old injuries,” explains Dr. Gupta.
High Humidity Levels – Moist air causes tissues around the joints to swell and stiffen. High humidity acts like a trigger, leading to increased discomfort and reduced mobility.
Temperature Drops – Cooler temperatures tighten muscles and restrict free movement. This explains why sudden weather dips often bring on stiffness.
Reduced Physical Activity – “During the monsoon, people tend to stay indoors and cut down on their exercise routines,” says Dr. Gupta. This leads to poor circulation, muscle stiffness, and lower flexibility.
Old Injuries Resurface – Injuries from years ago may ache again. Weather changes can flare up scar tissue or weak joints, making dormant pain feel active.
Vitamin D Deficiency – Less exposure to sunlight reduces vitamin D synthesis. “Low vitamin D can weaken bones and worsen aches,” Dr. Gupta emphasises.



Increased Risk Of Infections – Damp weather also promotes viral or bacterial infections. For those with autoimmune conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, this can further fuel joint inflammation.
The good news is that a few simple adjustments can help ease the discomfort. “Keeping joints warm with compresses, doing gentle indoor stretches, and maintaining regular movement are very effective,” says Dr. Gupta. Low-impact exercises like yoga or light walking indoors promote circulation and prevent stiffness. The good news is that a few simple adjustments can help ease the discomfort. “Keeping joints warm with compresses, doing gentle indoor stretches, and maintaining regular movement are very effective,” says Dr. Gupta. Low-impact exercises like yoga or light walking indoors promote circulation and prevent stiffness. Alongside medical advice, simple lifestyle tweaks can help manage the season better. Warm soaks, turmeric-infused drinks, and light stretching routines can go a long way in keeping pain at bay. Avoid sitting for too long, dress warmly, and keep joints covered during damp spells.

Manipur Child Rights panel unveils draft plan for rehabilitation of displaced children

Imphal, Jan 03: The Manipur Commission for Protection of Child Rights (MCPCR) has come out with a draft State Action Plan to support children who have been displaced by the ongoing violence in the state. The plan was discussed at a stakeholders’ convergence and review meeting held at the Office of the Deputy Commissioner in Bishnupur. The session was chaired by MCP-CR Chairperson Keisam Pradipkumar. The discussion focused on how the state can better protect Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) children and help them rebuild their lives. Officials reviewed the support systems already in place and also invited suggestions to make the response more child-friendly and effective. Speaking at the meeting, Pradipkumar said there is a strong need for a coordinated plan to help these children settle into safer and more stable conditions. He urged the Manipur government to introduce a State Transitional Support Plan for displaced families who are now resettling. He also called for the early notification of the Manipur State Policy for Children, saying that these measures would help the state address both immediate and long-term concerns faced by children affected by the conflict. District-level updates were also shared. Additional District Magistrate T. Opendro informed that 292 house-



holds, covering 1,027 persons, have already been resettled in Bishnupur district. Housing support is being extended under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) scheme. Families with partially damaged homes receive ₹70,000, while those who lost their homes completely receive ₹3 lakh. Out of 1,180 applications, 40 houses have already been built so far. District Child Protection Officer Indrani Devi said that 1,862 children have been recommended for assistance under the Mission Vatsalya Sponsorship Scheme. Another 2,798 displaced children in the district have been officially identified as Children in Need of Care and Protection. However, several concerns were also

• *The Manipur Commission for Protection of Child Rights (MCPCR) has drafted a State Action Plan to assist children displaced by ongoing violence in the state.*

raised during the meeting. Participants noted that the current framework of Mission Vatsalya does not fully match the situation in Manipur. They said the support system needs to be more flexible, especially considering the emotional and psychological stress children are going through. The meeting also stressed the need for stronger mental-health support and better coordination between health services, child protection units, juvenile justice bodies, and local community groups.

Gaurav Gogoi slams Assam government, says schemes fail to ensure real economic empowerment

Guwahati, Jan 03: Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) President Gaurav Gogoi today criticised the Assam government led by Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, saying that most welfare schemes launched by the ruling party fail to ensure real economic empowerment of the people. He was speaking at a press conference held in Tinsukia. Gogoi said that the present government has only focused on turning women and poor families into beneficiaries of financial aid schemes, instead of helping them become self-reliant. Referring to the announcement of ₹1,500 assistance for temple attendants, he said that no serious

plan has been made to make sattras economically independent in the long term. He added that real development cannot come from short-term financial benefits alone. The APCC President said that similar beneficiary-based schemes like Arunodoi exist across many states in India. What Assam truly needs, he said, are programmes that help common people earn their own income. He recalled that during earlier Congress governments, more attention was given to economic empowerment, including support to sattras so that many of them could sustain themselves. Gogoi also said that if the Congress returns to power, it will study

the problems faced by women and design new schemes aimed at genuine empowerment. Only when schemes address deeper economic issues, he said, will people see real change in their lives. He further criticised the Chief Minister for making only small increases in pensions and women-oriented schemes, while project costs rise sharply when handed over to a few selected contractors. Gogoi alleged that such practices widen the gap between the rich and the poor, with only a small section becoming increasingly wealthy. The Congress leader also raised concern over the state of higher education in Assam. He pointed to re-

cent unrest at Tezpur University and said that during the Congress period, the university was recognised as one of the leading institutions in Asia. He alleged that today, even though the government speaks about financial support for students, the education system itself has weakened. He also accused the Chief Minister of misleading the public regarding the Scheduled Tribe (ST) status demand of six communities. Gogoi said the government first celebrated the submission of a ministerial report as a major step, only to later admit that ST status would not be granted before the Assembly elections.

FLC of EVMs, VVPATs begins in Dima Hasao ahead of Assam polls

Hailong, Jan 03: For the forthcoming Assam Legislative Assembly Election 2026, the Dima Hasao district has started the First Level Checking (FLC) of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs).

According to the timetable provided by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Assam, the FLC would take place at the EVM and VVPAT warehouse close to the Additional Court Building in Hailong from January 2 to January 8, 2026.

The procedure covers the district’s only Legislative Assembly Constituency, 113-Hailong (ST).

To ensure openness in the pre-election process, authorized representatives of recognized national and state political parties from the Dima Hasao area are present during the verification. Five engineers from the Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) have been assigned to carry out the machines’ technical verification. Every day, the workout is planned from 9 a.m. until 7 p.m.

According to officials, the FLC was an essential stage in evaluating the dependability and operation of EVMs and VVPATs well in advance of polling. Shhaurya Sharma, ACS, Additional District Commissioner Dima Hasao, who also serves as the FLC Supervisor, is in charge of the entire procedure.

By closely adhering to Election Commission rules, the district election authorities reaffirmed their commitment to holding free, fair, and transparent elections in the district.

Oil India pact to probe vital minerals in Arunachal

Itanagar, Jan 03: An important step toward bolstering India’s vital mineral resource security was taken on January 2 when Oil India Limited (OIL) signed the Deed of Agreement for the Composite Licence of the Phop Graphite and Vanadium Block situated in the Yazali circle of Keyi Panyor

SHS, a local stakeholder with a significant presence on the ground, will support the project through preliminary and exploratory survey activities and promote coordination with local people and pertinent authorities. It is anticipated that the combination of CESHS’s local knowledge and en-



district, Arunachal Pradesh. Senior representatives from the Directorate of Geology and Mines (DGM), OIL, and CESHS, as well as AK Singh, Secretary (Geology and Mines), Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Raghunath Mishra, Chief General Manager of OIL, and Tana Tage, Director (CESHS), were present when the agreement was signed. As a local partner and stakeholder, CESHS will share a 10% partnership interest with OIL under the terms of the agreement. In order to ensure that exploration operations are carried out smoothly, CE-

gagement skills with OIL’s technical competence and resource exploration experience will improve operational efficiency, guarantee successful stakeholder coordination, and encourage ethical and sustainable mineral development in the area. According to officials, the agreement’s signing represents a significant turning point in India’s vital minerals roadmap, supporting national initiatives for strategic mineral self-reliance and energy transformation while also advancing Arunachal Pradesh’s regional development.

Tripura Border District Imposes Prohibitory Orders

Guwahati, Jan 03: A Tripura district has issued prohibitory orders under section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita along a stretch of the Bangladesh border following the apprehension about possible militant movement and infiltration.

In an order, Gomati district magistrate Rinku Lather said reports had been received from the Commandant of 169th Battalion of Border Security Force that there were apprehensions of the movement of the members of Bangladeshi militant groups – PCJSS and UPDF – and infiltration of Bangladeshi nationals as well as Rohingya people from Labokant Para border outpost to Chaplin Chera border outpost in the



Karbook sub-division with the intent to engage in criminal activities, smuggling and disturb public order.

“There are sufficient grounds to impose restrictions under section 163 BNSS for ensuring peace, tranquility by preventing designs of anti-national elements and activities of associations inimical to safety and security of the general public,” the order read. The DM said the restrictions falling

within 300 meters of the border from Labokant Para border outpost to Chaplin Chera border outpost would remain in force till February 2026.

The order further restricted the assembly of more than four persons from 6 pm to 6 am without obtaining permission from local authority. Public movement during the same hours without valid written authority of the sub-divisional magistrate has been completely restricted. “No person shall carry lathis, firearms or any weapons except police, CRPF, BSF personnel on duty...People residing within 300 meters of the international border shall be excluded from the restriction,” the DM’s order further read.

Guwahati to host grand Bagurumba dance show with over 10,000 artistes on January 17

Guwahati, Jan 03: Guwahati is getting ready for a very big cultural event this month. More than 10,000 artistes will come together to perform Bagurumba, the traditional folk dance of the Bodo community, at a grand programme to be held on January 17. The event will take place in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, making it one of the biggest cultural gatherings in the state in recent times. The Assam government has said that this mega performance is part of its effort to showcase the rich cultural heritage of the state on a larger platform. In the past few years, the government has organised several large-scale cultural events, where traditional dance and music of different communities have been presented before national and international audiences. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that just

like Bihu and Jhumoir were highlighted earlier, the focus will now be on Bagurumba. He said that Bagurumba represents the identity and traditions of the Bodo community, and the government wants the world to know more about it. “After popularising Bihu and Jhumoir at major events, it is now time for Bagurumba to shine,” the Chief Minister said. Bagurumba is a graceful folk dance performed mainly by Bodo women. It is often inspired by nature, including the movement of butterflies, birds and trees. The dance is usually part of cultural celebrations and festivals in Bodo-inhabited areas. The upcoming event in Guwahati will bring together artistes from different parts of Assam, making it one of the largest Bagurumba performances ever organised. This is not the first time the state has hosted such a

massive cultural programme. In February last year, more than 8,000 young artistes from the Adivasi tea garden community performed the traditional Jhumoir dance at the Sarusajai Stadium in Guwahati. The event was organised to mark 200 years of Assam Tea and was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He even played the dhomsa, a traditional drum of the tea garden community, which gave a special cultural touch to the programme. That Jhumoir event was described as the biggest performance of the dance form so far. It was also attended by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar along with ambassadors and heads of mission from over 60 countries. A laser show and fireworks added to the attraction, and the programme received wide attention both in India and abroad.

Police use air firing to restore order after cattle theft suspects detained

Dibrugarh, Jan 03: In the Majjan Naton Gaon district of Dibrugarh, people organized a night patrol to prevent livestock theft, which resulted in a tense confrontation with police. Early on Friday morning, authorities fired rounds into the air to disperse an irate gathering. Thefts, according to the villagers, have been occurring for over a week. Because of this, young people in the area made the decision to maintain watch at night over the New Year. They saw a suspicious car driving through the village at around four in the morning. The occupants inside allegedly tried to flee as they tried to halt it. The car stopped when the road was blocked, but the people inside would not get out. The police were then notified by the townspeople. After the police arrived

and apparently let the car go without interviewing the occupants, the situation got worse. The people were incensed by this and started to protest, accusing the police of shielding livestock robbers. Officers fired rounds into the air to scatter the throng as emotions increased and some locals approached them. To help control the situation, more police officers were called in. SSP Abhijit Gurav Dilip verified the order of events when speaking to reporters on the scene. According to the SSP, the three people inside the car were taken to the Dibrugarh police station to be questioned. “We don’t yet have any proof that they stole cattle. Interrogation is still ongoing. Those who attempted to impose their own laws will also face legal repercussions, he declared.

Nagaland records highest GST growth in India at 37%

Kohima, Jan 03: Nagaland has registered the highest Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue growth in the country for the ongoing 2025–26 financial year up to December 2025. According to data released recently, the State recorded a 37% rise in GST collections compared to the same period last year. This growth is much higher than the all-India average GST revenue growth of 6.8% for the same period. The information was shared in an official update issued by the CGST Dimapur Commissionerate. Officials noted that the rise in GST revenue has come even though GST rates were reduced on more than 375 goods and services under the GST 2.0 reforms in September 2025. Despite the rate cuts, there has been strong consumer spending in the State, which appears to have supported

the increase in tax collections. Nagaland has consistently been among the leading States in GST growth in recent months. As a consumer State with a smaller industrial base, the destination-based GST system has helped channel more revenue to Nagaland, improving its financial position. The release further stated that awareness programmes for taxpayers and businesses have played an important role in improving compliance. Authorities have also strengthened enforcement measures to ensure timely and honest tax declaration. In addition, increased digitalisation of tax procedures has made filing and processing faster and more transparent. Officials believe this has encouraged more businesses to comply with GST rules, contributing to the steady rise in revenue.

CM Himanta Biswa Sarma begins distributing seed money under MMUA in Sipajhar

Guwahati, Jan 03: Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, the chief minister of Assam, initiated the distribution of Rs 10,000 seed capital checks to 39,665 qualified female members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in the Darrang district’s Sipajhar Legislative Assembly Constituency. The program is a component of the flagship Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan (MMUA), which aims to empower rural women entrepreneurs and assist them in earning at least Rs 1 lakh annually. The Darrang district administration arranged a ceremonial distribution event in Ramgaon village in Sipajhar. Parliamentarian Dilip Saikia, Sipajhar lawmaker Dr. Paramananda Rajbongshi, District Commissioner Parag Kumar Kakaty, Co-District Commissioner Papori Das, and other dignitaries were among the important guests. Speaking to the crowd, Chief Minister Dr. Sar-

ma emphasized that of the 62 LACs in the state where distributions had been finished thus far, Sipajhar had the most beneficiaries.

He continued by saying that the MMUA aims to cover all qualified beneficiaries by February 10 and targets between 32 and 40 lakh women SHG members countrywide. In a later interview with the media, Dr. Sarma described the BJP’s methodical approach to choosing candidates for the 2026 Assam Assembly election, which included grassroots surveys, party worker talks, and evaluations of the performance of current MLAs. He acknowledged that seat-sharing negotiations with ally Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) are still underway, pointing out that a few rounds of talks have already taken place but that a final decision is still awaited.

The Chief Minister said that the Con-



gress party’s status in Assam would deteriorate even worse than its previ-

ous performance in Bihar when asked about the party’s chances in the polls.

I noticed a straightforward fact at Zohran Mamdani’s block party: people want more politics, not less

On 1 January, to mark his inauguration as mayor of New York, Zohran Mamdani threw a block party. As he was sworn in outside city hall in front of a crowd of a few thousand of us, a nearby street in Manhattan was closed to traffic so that tens of thousands more could gather to watch the historic moment live on enormous screens. The weather – a cloudless blue sky and arctic winds – felt somehow fitting: a licence to dream and a warning against complacency. Mayors don’t usually take office amid such a festival atmosphere. A smaller, more exclusive event is normally adequate. But a key feature of Mamdani’s rise has been the desire for mass participation in politics. There was no chance this day was going to pass without an open-invitation party. Throughout his mayoral campaign, Mamdani found novel ways to include people in his movement. It began in November 2024 with a viral video taking to the streets to interview people in parts of Queens and the Bronx that had swung heavily to Donald Trump in the election. As his popularity grew, he inspired an army of volunteers for canvassing and door-knocking whom he eulogised in his speeches. In August of last year, he organised a city-wide scavenger hunt that thousands of people took part in.

There was a football tournament not long after. After his victory in November, he immediately opened a jobs portal where people could submit their CV and area of interest, prompting 74,000 applications. In mid-December, he invited New Yorkers to speak with him about their problems and concerns in 15-minute slots, across 12 hours. No longer is politics “something that is done to us”, he declared in his victory speech. “Now, it is something that we do.” These forms of participation are not trivial publicity stunts: they are as much a part of Mamdani’s rejection of the old neoliberal consensus as his universalist welfare policies are. For decades, major political parties across the west subscribed to a negative image of politics, in which government’s declared role was to get out of the way of private business and to help people only begrudgingly. In this framing, receiving welfare could feel like a sign of individual failure and participating in electoral politics like a waste of time. Political leaders themselves stoked disillusionment and suspicion toward their power. “The nine most terrifying words in the English language are ‘I’m from the government and I’m here to help,’” President Ronald Reagan famously declared. Former British prime minister Tony Blair felt compelled to say in 2000: “I don’t feel

myself a politician even now.” As election turnouts fell or stalled, and political parties shed their partisan purpose and their memberships, a generalised feeling of depoliticisation and apathy set in. By 2006, the political scientist Peter Mair could aptly describe governing western democracies as “ruling the void”. Mamdani’s remarkable achievement is for seeing that this “void” is full of interesting voices, overlapping interests and shared yearnings – and for unashamedly stating that the government should be here to help them. His project is, in this sense, to transform the role politics plays in people’s lives. Enacting his universalist welfare reforms – free childcare, free buses for all and a rent freeze on all rent-stabilised apartments, free from any stigma about who “needs” it – is one part of the challenge. The other part is to continuously explore ways to include people in politics. It is a far harder task when governing than when campaigning, but one that Mamdani and his team see clearly. “I don’t think the campaign can end,” Mamdani said in a recent interview. “The same people who got us to this point, we want to keep moving forward with them.” The inauguration event felt like both a triumphant culmination and a symbolic continuation of the campaign. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Bernie Sanders pro-

vided the supporting cast, as they had at various moments in the mayoral election. There were chants of “tax the rich”, the unofficial soundtrack of the campaign. Volunteer leads were given the bulk of the seats, and every attendant received a pamphlet with “a message from the mayor” that paid exclusive homage to their efforts. “We are able to gather together only because more than 104,000 of our friends and neighbours ... gave their time and energy to this movement,” it read. For the finale, Mamdani’s closing speech provided both a love letter to New York and an ode to the power of collective action, heralding “a new era” of “big government”. “If our campaign demonstrated that the people of New York yearn for solidarity, then let this government foster it,” he said. Mamdani is far from the first politician to seek to answer this yearning. Since the 2008 financial crash, spurred by social media and disillusionment with the major parties, various movements have arisen to meet this burgeoning desire for participation, this appetite for alternatives, across the political spectrum. Even the likes of Trump and Nigel Farage – with their mass rallies and social media fluency – give their supporters a feeling of inclusion and an appearance of an alternative. But the negative image of politics, which longs to

rule a void, persists. Keir Starmer’s uniform unpopularity offers a warning of where this approach can lead. Unlike Mamdani, Starmer has assumed that people want less politics. As he explained in January 2024, after 14 years of Tory misrule, people wanted “a politics that treads a little lighter on all of our lives”, because “the thing about populism” is that it “needs your full attention ... and that’s exhausting, isn’t it?” In this vision, the best prime minister is one who lets us go about our business in peace once again. But the intended quiet didn’t last long, and soon all sorts of noisy actors rushed in to fill that silent void. The assumption that people want less politics affirms the conflation of politics with disappointment, scandal and devious leadership, surrendering to the disillusionment of past decades. Mamdani has shown the opposite can be the case. Many people want more from politics, and more of it: a movement to believe in, work for, mobilise and socialise through – spurred by the dream of a collective life, not a quiet one. “It will be loud, it will be different,” Mamdani told the crowd. With the block party broadcasting his speech a few streets away, it sounded as if his words were echoing through the city. Even Manhattan’s imposing skyscrapers were standing to attention.

The world needs to pay attention to Gaza’s winter as Palestinian hardship worsens once more

As Gaza enters the bleakest period of winter, children are dying of hypothermia, drowning in flooded camps and burning to death as their families try to cook in flimsy tents. Israel destroyed nine out of 10 homes over more than two years of war. Camped amid the ruins, Palestinians struggle against strong winds, heavy rain and freezing temperatures. Aid deliveries resumed following the ceasefire, staving off the famine that had taken hold in parts of the territory, but remain wholly insufficient: 1.6 million people face acute food insecurity. The sanitation infrastructure has collapsed. The UK, Canada, Japan, France and six other nations have jointly warned that the situation is catastrophic. Yet Israel is now deepening one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises.



and neutrality for humanitarian organisations. Israel says that the measures are necessary to prevent NGOs employing staff with links to extremist groups. It has repeatedly claimed that Hamas has infiltrated aid organisations and exploited international aid, while providing little evidence. Given the many relief workers arbitrarily detained and killed since the war began, the demand for staff lists has prompted alarm. Israel has reportedly refused requests for meetings on the issue. Meanwhile, as Israel bars life-saving supplies such as tent poles and generators from humanitarian shipments, claiming they could be exploited for military purposes, it allows traders to bring such items into the territory. While ordinary Palestinians suffer, players inside and outside the territory profit financially and politically. US officers in Israel have reportedly urged that key items, including tent poles, be removed from the blacklist – without success. In Washington, there appears to be growing frustration at Benjamin Netanyahu’s attempts to stall the peace process.

Yet while Donald Trump said he wanted to move to the second phase as quickly as possible when he met the Israeli prime minister on Monday – and warned there would be “hell to pay” if Hamas did not disarm very rapidly – he appeared relaxed about Israel’s reluctance to withdraw from the half of Gaza that it controls. Far from “[living] up to the plan, 100%”, as Mr Trump claimed, it is clear that Israel is not complying with a deal that Palestinians greeted with tentative relief only as the alternative to continued war. If he wants to be lauded as a dealmaker, he should enforce it. Ensuring relief to those in desperate conditions is not an act of munificence subject to inclination, nor a clause for negotiation. It is not merely what basic humanity and decency require; international law demands that the parties to conflict facilitate aid. Israel’s allies were slowly pushed into acknowledging and challenging the carnage in Gaza. They must not drag their feet again. It is not bad weather but bad faith that is the greatest threat to those now struggling to survive.

Let 2026 be a year of reckoning, from Benjamin Netanyahu to Donald Trump

It’s not quite a new year resolution, and it’s certainly not a prediction. Think of it instead as a hope or even a plea for the next 12 months. May the coming year see those leaders who have done so much damage to their own countries, and far beyond, at last be called to account. Let 2026 be a year of reckoning. Start with the man whose reach is longest, by dint of the mighty power he wields. Such is the nature of the US electoral system that Donald Trump, who returned to power less than a year ago, will face the judgment of voters in 10 months’ time. His name will not be on the ballot but, make no mistake, the midterm elections of 3 November will deliver a verdict on the second Trump presidency. A slew of congressional defeats for his party would be satisfying in itself, wounding that gargantuan ego of his, but it would also have practical significance. Few predict the Republicans losing control of the Senate, where Democrats would have to flip at least four seats to take charge – near-impossible given the geography of the 35 seats up for grabs in November. But, in normal circumstances, it should be the safest of political bets that the House of Representatives will no longer be in Republican hands a year from now. Such a reverse would dispel the aura of indomitability that has enveloped Trump since he beat Kamala Harris, allowing him to bully and intimidate multiple US institutions, including much of its media, into ceding to him far more power than is rightfully his. It would render him a lame duck, incapable of passing new laws through a hostile chamber. Above all, it would see Trump confronted at last with a



body both eager and able to hold him to account: a Democratic House would have the appetite and the muscle for serious scrutiny. Armed with subpoena power, it could investigate everything from the cost of Trump’s tariffs for US taxpayers to the astonishingly brazen pattern of corruption and pocket-lining that has characterised this administration. And up its sleeve would be the constant threat of a third impeachment trial. So November could indeed bring a reckoning for Trump, which is why he will stop at nothing to avert that outcome. Hence the words of caution above: “in normal circumstances”. Trump will make the circumstances abnormal, if that’s what it takes to keep the House. That effort is already under way, whether in the form of gerrymandered maps in Texas or moves to make voting harder in Democratic areas across the country. There are heartening signs of institutions beginning to push back – witness last week’s supreme court decision reining in Trump’s deployment of US troops on the streets of Democrat-led cities – but this will be one of the battles of 2026, as the president stretches every sinew to avoid the accountability an

autumn defeat would bring. In that, he has a soul brother in the man he hosted in Mar-a-Lago this week, in what was their sixth and final meeting of 2025: Benjamin Netanyahu. Except the electoral peril confronting Netanyahu, whose first term as Israel’s prime minister began in 1996, is more direct: at some point between now and October, Israelis will go to the polls in a contest that could remove him from power altogether. Central will be the holding of Netanyahu to account. Many around the world will want that to be for the killing of tens of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza, for the relentless aerial bombardment that has left the strip in ruins and for the withholding of humanitarian aid. But inside Israel, the accountability that is sought most keenly is for the deadly failures of 7 October 2023, for the complacency and strategic errors that left a string of southern communities, and hundreds of people at a music festival, exposed to murderous Hamas attack. Israeli officials at every level, civilian and military, have paid for that catastrophe with their jobs – bar one. Only Netanyahu has never admitted the slightest responsibility, let alone apologised, for the fact that

the deadliest day in the country’s history came on his watch. He has refused to establish a commission of inquiry like those that swiftly followed previous calamities, preferring instead a sham investigation staffed by loyalists – equivalent, as the father of one slain hostage put it, to asking the iceberg to find out who sank the Titanic. So the only chance Israelis will have to hold to account the man who has ruled them for 18 of the past 30 years will be at the ballot box. The stakes could hardly be higher. Plenty of Israeli campaigners fear this election might be the last chance to save key democratic institutions that have been under sustained assault from Netanyahu for so long. Like Trump in the US or Viktor Orbán in Hungary, who also faces voters this year, Netanyahu has been in an escalating war with the judiciary and independent media, squeezing them ever harder, hoping they will choke. And, like his pal in Washington, Netanyahu will stop at nothing to deny his opponents an electoral victory: on trial on corruption charges, he needs to stay in power in order to stay out of jail. Accountability of both the political and legal varieties terrifies him.

What’s the key to happiness in 2026? It’s far easier than you may imagine

I have a proposal to make: 2026 should be the year that you spend more time doing what you want. The new year should be the moment we commit to dedicating more of our finite hours on the planet to things we genuinely, deeply enjoy doing – to the activities that seize our interest, and that make us feel vibrantly alive. This should be the year you stop trying so hard to turn yourself into a better person, and focus instead on actually leading a more absorbing life. Naturally, I anticipate certain objections to this suggestion. Possibly you consider yourself far too busy even to think about spending time in ways you’d enjoy, and you wonder what sort of monster of privilege could even raise the notion. In this economy, and with AI coming for your job? Or maybe you’re convinced you need to address your personal failings first – your tendency towards procrastination, your sedentary lifestyle, your atrocious diet. On the other hand, maybe you think it’s morally outrageous to focus on yourself while the Earth is overheating, or while the sinister forces of ethnonationalism stalk the land. Or perhaps you’re worried that if you were to let yourself do what you want, you’d find yourself slouched on the sofa, scrolling slack-jawed through Instagram while overconsuming Hula Hoops, or gin, or heroin. None of these objections hold any water, though. In fact, there’s excellent reason to believe that doing more of what you want in 2026 will do nothing but good for your health and wellbeing, for your feelings of overwhelm, and even for the state of society. To see why, consider first the hidden logic of the conventional approach to self-improvement and habit change – the approach that, if it actually worked, would presumably have destroyed the market for further books and courses on self-improvement and habit change some time ago. It starts from the premise that there’s something badly wrong with you, which you need to fix. Then it prescribes the daily behaviours that – were you to follow them with sufficient discipline – might eventually lead you to the point at which you’d be an acceptable member of humanity, and could therefore relax (although not too much, for fear of backsliding). Yet it’s entirely possible that there isn’t anything badly wrong with you, other than the conviction that there’s something badly wrong with you. And even if there is, it’s not clear that organising your life around the grim struggle to fix it is a particularly effective strategy. It turns every day into a grinding internal struggle between different elements

of your psychology. Which can become, ironically, a comfortable way to avoid launching into the life you really want to live – making the career switch that would fulfil you, for example, or daring to commit to a relationship. “Claiming that we are problematic,” the psychotherapist and author Bruce Tift points out, “means we don’t have to engage with our lives fully, because we aren’t ‘ready yet’ – there’s something wrong that needs to be fixed first. [So] we have a good excuse not to show up.” For one vivid illustration of the futility of fixing yourself – and the positive benefits of doing what you want instead – consider the ubiquitous problem of spending too much time online. If you’re prone to pointlessly doomscrolling, or numbing out with superficially amusing entertainment, you’ve probably experimented with multiple ways to stop yourself succumbing to temptation, like Odysseus ordering his sailors to bind him to the mast of his ship, to resist the call of the sirens. But app blockers and strict personal rules rarely seem to work very well, or for very long. (The most effective such intervention I discovered this year is Brick, a tiny device that blocks distracting phone apps, so that you physically have to move yourself and your smartphone to wherever you’ve put the device, in order to regain access. It turns out that there’s one thing more powerful than the lure of online time-wasting, which is the inertia of not wanting to get up and go upstairs to find your Brick.) A much more reliable way to stay offline is just to be doing things so engaging that it wouldn’t occur to you to drift online in the first place. On the few magical days in 2025 that I realised I’d forgotten where my phone even was, it was because I’d become so immersed in reading or writing or conversation or nature that the thought of it had left my mind entirely. “If you want to win the war for attention,” as the New York Times columnist David Brooks once put it, “don’t try to say ‘no’ to the trivial distractions you find on the information smorgasbord; try to say ‘yes’ to the subject that arouses a terrifying longing, and let the terrifying longing crowd out everything else.” Or as Katherine Martinko, author of Childhood Unplugged, argues in the context of how parents might encourage their children to spend less time online: “If we want our children to revel in reality, then the most effective way to teach them is to do it ourselves ... My advice is to fight [internet dependency] less with fleeting (and unreliable) hacks like time limits, tech-free zones, digital detoxes,

tech fasts, focus mode, and grayscale screens, and more with an overwhelming love and appreciation for being present, active, and engaged with the real world.” It isn’t hard to see how you might extend this principle to other domains of life as well. Instead of focusing on the food groups you plan on banning yourself from consuming this year, are there healthier styles of cooking about which you might genuinely enjoy learning – so that by the time you might normally be reaching for an inadvisable sort of snack, you’re already too full of nutritious food to want one? Instead of concocting a workout you’ll have to force yourself through three times a week – looking forward the whole time to the moment that it’s “out of the way”, so you can resume enjoying life again – are there forms of movement you naturally enjoy, and might only need to do a bit more often, or more intensely? Be careful, though: this is the point at which it’s tempting to devise all sorts of demanding plans for doing things more enjoyably – walking in the park five times a week! Working on your art project for an hour every day! – which may themselves become oppressive or intimidating, and thus speedily abandoned. You’re trying to spend more time doing things you enjoy – not turning the idea of “doing what you enjoy” into an unwanted extension of your already horrendous to-do list.

You’re freely choosing to incorporate something extra into your day, because you truly want to do it; accordingly, it becomes harder to think of yourself as nothing more than the indentured servant of your to-do list. Nor should you be concerned that doing more of what you want might turn you into an unproductive, socially isolated layabout and irresponsible citizen. Notice the extraordinarily low opinion of yourself suggested by such fears: the implication that you’re such a nightmare, personality-wise, that only the fiercest schemes of self-improvement, applied with unceasing vigilance, can spare you from disaster. (It’s also a self-contradictory worry, since you’d surely be unlikely to have much interest in the topic of changing your habits in the first place if you were really such a basket case.) Isn’t it at least possible that none of this is true – that if you paid careful attention to the question of what you really enjoy, you might find that it included feeling healthy, being well connected with others, and making whatever difference you could to the world at large? At the very least, it might be worth the experiment.

Transport Canada warns Air India of losing flight rights over alcohol rules

Mumbai: An Air India pilot was arrested at Vancouver International Airport last week as he was preparing for a flight, with Canada’s transportation agency warning the airline that it faced loss of its flight authorisations if it did not comply with rules about alcohol consumption.Transport Canada said in a statement Friday that the incident took place on December 23, and it would engage with Air India and Indian aviation authorities to ensure appropriate followup actions were taken.The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said the arrest occurred after a report of concern involving an airline crew member.Police said an investigation is ongoing and no further information would be released.A spokeswoman for the airport said the pilot had been preparing for Air India’s scheduled daily flight from Vancouver to Delhi, which was delayed for several hours but later departed safely. Flight tracking website FlightRadar24 shows that the December 23 Air India flight from Vancouver to Delhi via Vienna was scheduled to depart at 3 pm but did not leave YVR until 10:02 pm.Air India did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Transport Canada said in its statement that the Directorate General of Civil Aviation of India had primary responsibility for regulatory oversight of Air India.The statement said Canadian aviation regulations prohibited pilots or any other crew members from acting within 12 hours of drinking alcohol or while under its influence.It said airlines could not assign crew who were unfit for duty.Non-compliance with these regulations may result in the suspension or cancellation of a Canadian Aviation Document under the Aeronautics Act, it said.Airlines could also face judicial and other penalties, the statement said.

The FAA prohibits overflights after Venezuela accuses the US of assaulting several locations

New Delhi: Venezuela’s government accused the United States of attacking civilian and military installations in multiple states after at least seven explosions and low-flying aircraft were heard around 2 a.m. local time Saturday in the capital, Caracas.The Pentagon and White House did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Smoke could be seen rising from the hangar of a military base in Caracas. Another military installation in the capital was without power. People in various neighbourhoods rushed to the streets. Some could be seen in the distance from various areas of Caracas.The whole ground shook. This is horrible. We heard explosions and planes, said Carmen Hidalgo, a 21-year-old office worker, her voice trembling. She was walking briskly with two relatives, returning from a birthday party. We felt like the air was hitting us. Venezuela’s government, in the statement, called on its sup-



porters to take to the streets.People to the streets! the statement said. The Bolivarian Government calls on all social and political forces in the country to activate mobilization plans and repudiate this imperialist attack.The statement added that President Nicolás Maduro had ordered all national defence plans to be implemented and declared a state of external disturbance.This comes as the US military has been targeting, in recent days, alleged drug-smuggling boats. On Friday, Venezuela said it was open to negotiating an agreement with the US to combat drug trafficking.

Maduro also said in a pretaped interview aired Thursday that the US wants to force a government change in Venezuela and gain access to its vast oil reserves through the monthslong pressure campaign that began with a massive military deployment to the Caribbean Sea in August. Maduro has been charged with narco-terrorism in the US The CIA was behind a drone strike last week at a docking area believed to have been used by Venezuelan drug cartels in what was the first known direct operation on Venezuelan soil since the US began strikes on boats in September.US President Donald Trump for months had threatened that he could soon order strikes on targets on Venezuelan land. The US has also seized sanctioned oil tankers off the coast of Venezuela, and Trump ordered a blockade of others in a move that seemed designed to put a tighter chokehold on the South American country’s economy. The US military has been at-

tacking boats in the Caribbean Sea and the eastern Pacific Ocean since early September. As of Friday, the number of known boat strikes is 35 and the number of people killed is at least 115, according to numbers announced by the Trump administration.They followed a major buildup of American forces in the waters off South America, including the arrival in November of the nation’s most advanced aircraft carrier, which added thousands more troops to what was already the largest military presence in the region in generations.Trump has justified the boat strikes as a necessary escalation to stem the flow of drugs into the US and asserted that the US is engaged in an armed conflict with drug cartels. Meanwhile, Iranian state television reported on the explosions in Caracas on Saturday, showing images of the Venezuelan capital. Iran has been close to Venezuela for years, in part due to their shared enmity of the US.

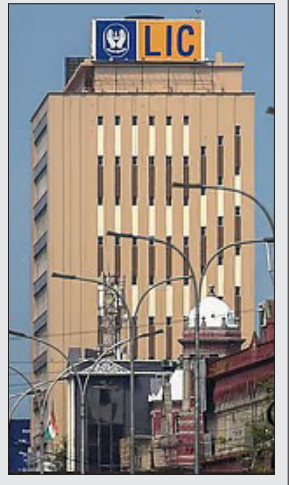
LIC launches special campaign to revive lapsed life insurance policies

New Delhi: The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) on Friday announced the launch of a special campaign for the revival of lapsed individual life insurance policies from January 1, 2026, to March 2, 2026. The campaign has been launched for the benefit of policyholders who were unable to pay premiums on time due to unfavourable circumstances.

Under the special revival campaign, policies can be revived within five years from the date of the first unpaid premium, subject to the policy’s terms and conditions. Policies that are in a lapsed condition during the premium-paying term and have not completed the policy term are eligible for revival under the campaign. Policies must be kept in force to avail full insurance benefits. LIC said it is always advisable to revive an old policy to restore insurance cover, adding that the campaign provides an opportunity for policyholders to ensure financial security for their family members.

The life insurer is also offering concessions on late fees for all non-linked insurance plans, up to 30 per cent of the late fee, subject to a maximum of ₹5,000, if eligible for revival under the scheme.

LIC said that if the total receivable premium is up to ₹1 lakh, a concession of up to ₹3,000 will be allowed. In cases where the total receivable premium is between ₹1,00,001 and ₹3 lakh, customers will be eligible for a concession of up to ₹4,000. For premiums of ₹3,00,001 and above, a concession of up to ₹5,000 will be allowed. In the case of micro insurance plans, a 100 per cent concession on the late fee will be provided.



Travel boomed, insurance rose, and spending got sharper

New Delhi: The year 2025 saw a clear shift in how Indians travelled, both within the country and overseas. Travel volumes rose sharply, driven by pilgrimage tourism, festival-led homecomings, leisure breaks, and renewed international mobility. At the same time, travellers became more financially conscious, placing greater emphasis on insurance cover, advance planning, and value for money. One of the clearest trends of 2025 was the growing acceptance of travel insurance as a necessity rather than an add-on. According to data from Policybazaar.com, travel insurance policy issuance rose 15 per cent year-on-year, reflecting a more risk-aware traveller base. Indian travellers increasingly opted for higher sum insured options.A cover of USD 250,000 emerged as the preferred choice for trips across Asia, Africa, Japan and Europe, while those travelling to the US and Canada largely chose USD 500,000 policies, driven by steep overseas healthcare costs. Senior citizens accounted for 15 per cent of all insured travellers, underlining the rise of older Indians travelling more frequently. Student

travel insurance remained a niche but steady segment at 1 per cent, supported by long-term education requirements.Individual travel policies dominated the market with a 75 per cent share, while family policies made up the remainder. Medical claims continued to account for the highest claim value, while baggage delays, loss, and trip disruptions were the most frequent incidents.

Meet Kapadia, head of travel insurance at Policybazaar.com, said 2025 clearly marked the year when travel insurance became integral to travel planning, with travellers prioritising preparedness as disruptions and medical risks remained real concerns. Domestic travel saw strong momentum, particularly from smaller towns and rural areas. RedBus data shows that 61 per cent of travellers began their journeys from small towns, while 33 per cent originated from metro cities and 6 per cent from state capitals. Passenger growth from Tier-III destinations rose 26 per cent compared to 2024, highlighting deeper travel penetration beyond large cities. Pilgrimage travel emerged as the biggest driver. Travel to reli-

gious destinations grew 88 per cent year-on-year, far outpacing the 25 per cent growth in leisure travel. Routes connected to Tirupati, Shirdi, Katra, Ayodhya, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Ujjain and Puri recorded heavy demand.

AC buses accounted for 73 per cent of bookings, reflecting a preference for comfort on long journeys. Sleeper seats made up 50 per cent of all bookings, followed by hybrid seats at 30 per cent and seaters at 20 per cent. Sundays saw the highest occupancy, followed by Fridays and Saturdays, driven largely by weekend travel back to hometowns. Women accounted for 32 per cent of passengers, while millennials formed the largest traveller group at 44 per cent. Gen Z travellers made up 33 per cent of the passenger base. The average seat price across India stood at ~₹64 in 2025. Paytm Travel data shows spiritual travel remained a key theme. Bookings to Prayagraj surged during the Kumbh Mela, while searches for Ayodhya, Varanasi and Tirupati rose sharply. Festival-led travel around Chhath Puja, Diwali and Independence Day continued to drive peaks in demand.A

notable behavioural trend was spontaneity. Bookings rose 15 per cent immediately after salary credits, pointing to a close link between cash flows and travel decisions. Tier-II cities such as Indore, Lucknow, Patna, Surat and Kochi saw rising inbound travel, reflecting growing aspirations beyond metros. International travel in 2025 increasingly centred on experience-led journeys, including wellness trips, multi-generational holidays, and celebration travel. Chris McFall, vice president - sales at Shangri-La Group, said travellers now seek authenticity, comfort, and connection, supported by AI-driven planning and personalisation.Bleisure travel also gained ground, with professionals extending work trips for leisure. Longer stays and blended itineraries are expected to shape global travel behaviour well into 2026. Taken together, 2025 signals a maturing Indian traveller, more mobile, better insured, and increasingly value-conscious. From spiritual journeys to global escapes, travel this year was not just about movement, but about smarter planning and deeper experiences.

DGCA is highlighted by the IndiGo disruption: what it is and does

New Delhi: As IndiGo’s mass cancellations threw Indian air travel into chaos, the country’s aviation regulator quietly rolled back key parts of the very Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) rules that triggered the crisis. On Friday (December 5), the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) granted airlines a “one-time temporary exemption” from the revised FDTL rules, after days of disruptions and hundreds of IndiGo flights being cancelled or delayed.The change that had airlines up in arms — which increased pilots’ weekly rest from 36 to 48 hours and sharply reduced night landings — has been withdrawn for now, offering partial relief to IndiGo and other carriers.

Earlier on Thursday, the Civil Aviation Ministry had also stepped in to review the situation with the airline and the DGCA after the meltdown left passengers stranded in Delhi, Mumbai and other airports. The DGCA is India’s main civil aviation regulator. It is an attached office of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and is described by the government as the regulatory body for civil aviation, “primarily dealing with safety issues” and responsible for enforcing air regulations, air safety and airworthiness standards.In 2020, Parliament amended the Aircraft Act, 1934 to give the DGCA formal statutory status, alongside the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) and the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB).

The law says the DGCA will carry out “safety oversight and regulatory functions” for civil aviation, while remaining under the overall superintendence of the central government. In everyday terms, the DGCA decides whether an airline can fly a particular aircraft, whether pilots are properly trained and rested, how maintenance is done, and whether safety systems at airports and airlines are up to the mark. It also publishes accident and incident data and runs a surveillance programme that inspects airlines,



maintenance organisations and training institutions. The DGCA is headquartered opposite Safdarjung Airport in New Delhi and is currently headed by Faiz Ahmed Kidwai, an Indian Administrative Service officer, designated as Director General of Civil Aviation.

Under the Director General sit multiple specialised technical directorates, including airworthiness, air safety, air transport, operations, flight crew licensing, flight crew training, aerodromes, air navigation services, cabin safety, medical and drones, among others. These divisions draft and enforce detailed technical rules, issue approvals and conduct inspections.The DGCA also operates regional airworthiness and air safety offices around the country to monitor airlines and maintenance facilities, and runs online platforms such as eGCA for pilot and operator services and Pariksha for examinations.

On paper, the Aircraft (Amendment) Act and related documents make the lines of authority clear. The DGCA is a statutory body, headed by a Director General appointed by the central government. The Act states that “the administration of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation shall vest in the Director General,” but also that the “superintendence” of the DGCA rests with the central government, which can issue directions in public interest.That creates a layered chain of command.

Under ECMS, the center approves 22 additional investment proposals totaling 42K crore

New Delhi: The government cleared 22 more applications with investment proposals worth ₹41,863 crore under the Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS) on Friday. With these approvals, the total number of companies that have received the government’s nod under the ECMS has now reached 46, with a cumulative investment of ₹54,567 crore.

The companies that have received approvals in this round include TDK India, BPL, Wipro Hydraulics, Motherson Electronic Components, Tata Electronics, Foxconn arm Yuzhan Technology, Samsung Display, Dixon, and Hindalco, among others.Companies which received the go-ahead on Friday will make components such as capacitors, Lithium-ion cells for electronic devices, copper-clad laminates, enclosures, anode material, connectors, display, and camera module sub-assembly.After distributing approval letters, Union Electronics and Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw reiterated his stance that all firms should set up in-house design teams, no matter the cost or effort involved.“Even if you have a couple of employees in the design team, the team should be there. If there are big teams, that is most welcome,” Vaishnaw said.

The Union minister also suggested that all the firms that have received approvals so far should come together with industry bodies to develop standardised design facilities at educational institutes, so that other companies can benefit from them. Vaishnaw also asked companies and their respective industry associations to come up with a definitive plan within six weeks, detailing the inputs on the



tools, software, and hardware required to set up indigenous electrical, electronics, and mechanical design centres.Electronics and semiconductor manufacturing companies in India should also strictly adhere to Six Sigma standards to ensure the products coming out of their plants are of the highest quality and can compete globally, Vaishnaw said.To ensure there is sufficient uptake of raw materials, electronics and semiconductor components being made in India, the government has also encouraged companies to procure as much as possible from domestic vendors, Vaishnaw said, adding that his ministry, in coordination with other ministries, will organise vendor-buyer meetings wherever such meetings are feasible.Speaking about the proposed changes to the revised Design Linked Incentive (DLI) scheme, the minister said the government is likely to provide funding support only to companies and startups whose designs are validated by the market and consumers.

ITC stock was lowered due to concerns about volume growth and an increase in excise duties

New Delhi: Analysts have sharply cut cigarette maker ITC’s earnings estimates over the next two years, fearing a significant dent in the company’s profitability and margins. This is owing to a steep hike in excise duty on tobacco by the government.Besides a downward revision in earnings estimates, brokerages have also slashed ITC stock rating and share price targets.

This comes as they see the imposition of higher duties as a major shift in the benign-duty-structure stance of the government.While lower taxes on tobacco products over the past few years resulted in volumes shifting to organised players, analysts believe the latest development is “detrimental to the interests of the industry and its growth prospects” in the coming years.

According to analysts at PL Capital, the government’s decision to revive and expand the central excise duty regime for



cigarettes and other tobacco products will possibly widen the price gap between tax-paid cigarettes and illicit products, which can be sold at steep discounts.“The risk is most acute in the mid-price segments that account for a large part of ITC’s volumes.

Here, consumers are more price-elastic and likely to downgrade to smuggled or counterfeit sticks rather than exit consumption,” the brokerage said. For Motilal Oswal Financial Services (MOFSL), ITC had been very active on new product launches in cigarettes

given the stability in taxes recently, supporting a positive product mix.“However, given the sharp price hike requirement, the mix will be weaker, going forward,” it said. ITC share price declined 5.1 per cent (₹345.35) intraday, before closing 3.7 per cent down

at ₹350.15.

The stock has fallen 13.11 per cent in two days. By comparison, the BSE SENSEX index ended 0.67 per cent higher. On January 1, 2026, the finance ministry notified that the rate for non-filter length ≤65 mm will be ₹2,050 per 1,000 sticks, and >65–70 mm will be ₹3,600 per 1,000. For filter segments, the rate for 65 mm and >65–70 mm will be ₹2,100 and ₹4,000 per 1,000 sticks, respectively. “Other” cigarettes will be priced at ₹8,500 per 1,000 sticks.

Notably, the government had announced double-digit tax hikes for the tobacco industry over FY13-18. It, however, kept taxes stable over FY19-26, with only one double-digit increase in FY21.Analysts believe the tax hike on cigarettes suggests the Centre’s intent to align taxation with World Health Organization (WHO) norms, which allow it to levy taxes at 75 per cent on maximum retail price (MRP).



How Young Diabetics Can Avoid Early Retinal Damage

Diabetes is emerging as a significant health concern in India, increasingly impacting the younger demographic. The ICMR–India Diabetes 2024 study indicates that one in every six diabetic adults in India is below the age of 40. The early onset of this disease is linked to various long-term health risks. Among the most frequently neglected complications is retinal damage, clinically referred to as diabetic retinopathy. This occurs when fluctuations in blood sugar levels damage the small blood vessels in the retina, the light-sensitive part of the eye causing bleeding, swelling, or even the formation of abnormal new blood vessels. If left undetected, the condition can progress silently to the point of total vision loss. This is particularly concerning for young diabetics, who, due to the longer duration of their disease, are exposed to the risk for a much longer period. According to Dr. Rohan N. Dedhia, Retina, Cataract and Refractive Surgeon, Ojas Maxivision Eye Hospitals, “The retina is one of the most sensitive and intricate structures in the eye, but sadly, it’s also the one that gets affected by diabetes first. Diabetic retinopathy progresses without any visible symp-

oms. High blood sugar levels weaken the walls of the tiny vessels supplying the retina, causing damage that is often irreversible. Young diabetics must realize that the earliest retinal changes may remain hidden for years, regular eye check-ups and strict blood sugar control are essential. If we save the retina today, we preserve good vision for tomorrow.” Why Retinal Damage Happens Early For the retina to function properly, it requires a constant supply of oxygen and nutrients. Continuous high glucose levels weaken the retinal walls and block the capillaries, reducing the oxygen supply to the light-sensitive cells. According to the All India Ophthalmological Society (AIOS) 2025, about 12–15% of Indians under 40 with diabetes already show early signs of retinopathy. The damage begins subtly often without noticeable symptoms and by the time vision becomes blurry, much of the harm is already permanent. Modern lifestyle habits add to the risk: irregular meals, processed foods, prolonged screen time, and chronic stress all increase oxidative stress in the retina. Co-existing conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking further aggravate retinal vessel damage.

Preserving Sight Through Daily Habits Preventing retinal damage primarily requires good blood sugar control and a disciplined lifestyle. Maintaining HbA1c levels below 7%, adhering to prescribed medication, and avoiding sudden spikes in blood glucose can significantly delay complications. Diet plays a major role: green leafy vegetables, citrus fruits, fish, flaxseeds, and walnuts provide antioxidants, omega-3 fats, and vitamins that help repair retinal tissue and protect it from free radicals. Replacing refined carbohydrates with whole grains and millets supports better glucose metabolism and stabilizes sugar levels. Preventive Monitoring Regular physical activity promotes better blood circulation, ensuring oxygen and nutrients reach the retina effectively. Staying hydrated and getting 7–8 hours of quality sleep each night helps reduce vascular strain. Most importantly, annual retinal examinations should begin immediately after a diabetes diagnosis. Early retinal changes can be detected through fundus photography or OCT scans, allowing timely intervention. Treatments such as laser therapy or anti-VEGF injections can halt disease progression and preserve vision.

The Impact of 30 Minutes of Daily Cardio on Brain Health and Emotional Well-Being

Cardiovascular exercise is frequently perceived merely as a means to maintain fitness or lose excess weight; however, its advantages extend well beyond physical well-being. Research indicates that engaging in just 30 minutes of moderate cardiovascular activity daily – whether through brisk walking, cycling, or dancing – can significantly benefit your cognitive function. This form of exercise enhances memory and concentration, elevates mood, and alleviates stress, positioning cardio as one of the most straightforward and effective strategies for improving mental health. “When you do cardiovascular exercises, your heart pumps more blood to your brain, improving oxygen and nutrient delivery. This helps new brain cells grow, especially in the hippocampus – the part of the brain responsible

for learning and memory,” explains Dr. Amit Chaurasia, Chief Cath Lab & TAVI (Unit I) at Artemis Hospitals. The increased circulation supports neurogenesis – the growth of new neurons – and strengthens neural connections, enhancing clarity, creativity, and decision-making. According to Dr. Sanjeva Kumar Gupta, Consultant, Dept. of Cardiology at CK Birla Hospital, Delhi, “Regular aerobic movement also promotes the release of mood-enhancing hormones such as endorphins, serotonin, and dopamine, helping to lower anxiety, depression, and stress.” Mood, Memory, And Mental Clarity The feel-good hormones released during cardio exercises aren’t just a temporary rush. Over time, they help regulate mood and reduce the risk of depression. “As people get older, those who work out regularly tend to think

more clearly, pay attention better, and remember things more effectively,” adds Dr. Chaurasia. Cardio also helps balance stress hormones, promoting deeper sleep and an overall sense of calm. Kushal Pal Singh, Fitness and Performance Expert at Anytime Fitness, adds, “As soon as you move, your body begins to release a rush of feel-good chemicals like serotonin and endorphins, which instantly lift mood and reduce stress. Over time, this daily habit strengthens your brain’s ability to focus, remember, and stay resilient under pressure.” Even better- these benefits don’t demand high-intensity workouts. “A 30-minute brisk walk or light jog five days a week can significantly uplift mood, improve sleep, and maintain mental clarity,” says Dr. Gupta. It’s less about intensity and more about consistency.



Your brittle nails could indicate more than merely a bad habit.

It starts with a slight annoyance; one nail breaks while doing the dishes, and another fractures while using a laptop. If this occurrence is becoming more frequent than it once was, you are not the only one. Research conducted in dermatology clinics indicates that over 20% of individuals encounter brittle nails at some stage in their lives, with women being reported as more affected than men. This situation prompts a question that transcends mere cosmetic concerns: could your nails be providing a visible indication that there is a more significant issue within your body? Are Brittle Nails A Result Of Nutritional Deficiency? Brittle nails are often associated with deficiencies in key micronutrients, particularly iron, biotin, vitamin B12, and zinc. A landmark study published in The Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology discussed how nutritional imbalance is one of the most common systemic causes of nail fragility. Iron deficiency, especially in the form of anaemia, is one of the most established links. The nails can become thin, fragile, and may even take on a spoon-like shape, a condition known as koilonychia. Another common culprit is low levels of biotin, a B-complex vitamin that supports keratin infrastructure, the protein that forms hair, skin, and nails. In a small study, women who took biotin supplements for onychoschizia noticed a 25% increase in nail thickness after six months. This does not mean every chipped nail is screaming for supplements. The deficiency link is valid, but the body has a hierarchy of needs, and nails are at the bottom of it. More serious symptoms such as fatigue, hair loss, or persistent weakness often precede changes in



nail structure. A blood test is the safest route to rule out deficiency. Can Brittle Nails Develop from Everyday Habits? In many cases, everyday routines are harsher on nails than people realise. Frequent exposure to water, use of acetone-based nail polish removers, harsh detergents, and overuse of artificial nails all weaken the nail plate over time. The repeated cycle of wetting and drying causes keratin layers to pull apart, creating dry, frayed ends. Even weather plays a role- cold, dry air dehydrates nails, just as it does to skin. That is why nail splitting is more common in winter than in monsoon or summer. Just as moisturising is essential for skin, nails need similar care. Some habits seem harmless but are not. Biting nails or picking at the cuticle disrupts the nail’s protective barrier. This can trigger trauma and expose the nail bed to fungal or bacterial infections.

Left untreated, these infections can worsen nail brittleness. Is Brittle Nail Syndrome a Real Medical Condition? Yes brittle nail syndrome is a real medical condition but it is often misunderstood. Brittle nail syndrome is an umbrella term for nails that split, peel, or break easily. Dermatologists diagnose it when nails show repeated lamellar splitting where layers separate horizontally. Research shows that this condition is more prevalent among people with chronic health issues such as hypothyroidism, peripheral vascular disease, and autoimmune disorders like lupus. In these cases, brittle nails are not standalone but part of a larger clinical picture. There is also an age-related element. As people grow older, nail growth rate slows, and hydration levels decrease. In women, hormonal changes during menopause can further influence nail thickness and texture.

Purchasing an Air Purifier? Here are the Key Considerations, as Explained by an Expert

Air purifiers are increasingly becoming a vital component of households as air quality deteriorates, especially in urban regions of northern India. India hosts many of the most polluted cities globally, and with AQI levels soaring to hazardous heights due to geographical factors and wind patterns, health hazards are escalating. The State of Global Air 2025 report indicates that mortality rates in India attributed to air pollution are nearly ten times greater than those in high-income nations. Considering that we spend more than 90% of our time indoors, it is essential to comprehend how air purifiers can assist in addressing the growing AQI levels. “We’ve witnessed a strong 5X increase in air purifier demand compared to typical days, with Delhi-NCR seeing a sharp 20X surge,” says K.N. Srikanth, Director, Home, Kitchen and Outdoors, Amazon India. “The growth spans across our selection the economy range (below ₹10,000) has grown 75% YoY, the mid-range (₹10,000–₹20,000) is up 70% YoY, and the premium segment (above ₹20,000) has surged 150% YoY, reflecting strong customer preference for solutions that improve indoor air quality,” adds Srikanth. Dr. Ken Armstrong, Research Director, Dyson, shares key insights on how to choose the right air purifier for your needs. Here are a few important



things to consider before making a purchase. 1. Ability to remove fine and ultrafine particles While this may seem fundamental, it’s important to understand the invisible enemies we face in our homes. PM0.1 particles, also known as ultrafine particles, can penetrate deep into the lungs and may even enter the bloodstream. The recently launched Dyson Purifier Cool PC1 – TP11 features advanced filtration technology that captures 99.95% of ultrafine particles as small as 0.1 microns. It also includes an activated carbon filter to remove odours, gases, VOCs, and NO₂. Additionally, it offers fully sealed filtration, which blocks any potential leak points through which

dirty air could re-enter the machine. 2. Area of coverage and air circulation Choose an air purifier based on the size of your room and its ability to distribute clean air evenly. Many air purifiers release air in only one direction either singular or upward which can reduce their overall effectiveness. 3. Size and weight For smaller spaces such as bedrooms, lightweight purifiers are ideal. However, for larger rooms, you may need bulkier models with higher capacity, though these can be harder to move between rooms. 4. Noise level Air purifiers are most effective when they run continuously. Since they operate 24/7, it’s important to choose one that’s both quiet and efficient. No one wants a noisy fan interrupting their sleep or daily activities. For instance, the Dyson Purifier Cool PC1 – TP11 operates at just 44 dBA in night mode, maintaining a peaceful sleep environment while effectively capturing pollutants. A built-in sleep timer can automatically turn the purifier off after pre-set intervals of 1, 2, 4, or 8 hours. 5. Smart features Many air purifiers now include intelligent functions such as auto mode, which automatically adjusts purification levels according to air quality. This ensures continuous protection without manual intervention.

The Significance of Posture and Spinal Health in Contemporary Living

The spine serves as the main support framework of the human body. It consists of a series of vertebrae, nerves, and muscles that enable us to carry out fundamental bodily activities like standing straight, bending, and twisting. Additionally, it safeguards the spinal cord, which plays a crucial role in relaying signals between the brain and the remainder of the body. Dr. Ilavarasan S, M.B.B.S, D.ORTHO, Dip.N.B (Ortho), Apollo Spectra Hospital, Chennai, shares all you need to know: Life, in general, has become increasingly stagnant for everyone. Technological advancements have made tasks easier, leading to a noticeable decline in physical activity. Food and grocery delivery apps, convenient commute options, and online shopping have all contributed to a seden-

tary way of living. What once required a 100–200 meter walk to the grocery store has now been replaced by a 10-minute delivery, no effort, no movement.

Simple habits such as keeping your shoulders aligned while walking and avoiding high heels for long durations can help maintain good posture. Our dietary choices

problems, it is important to follow a balanced diet rich in vitamins and nutrients that enhance bone health and strengthen muscles. Posture and spinal wellness should never be taken for granted. A healthy spine ensures proper coordination between the spinal cord and the brain, supporting vital functions such as movement, sensation, breathing, and digestion. However, prolonged inactivity can exert pressure on the spine, increasing inflammation and leading to chronic pain and a sedentary lifestyle. Adapting to a modern lifestyle is not inherently harmful, but it is essential to make conscious efforts to stay active. Incorporating movement into daily routines and maintaining proper posture are key to keeping the spine healthy and ensuring overall well-being.



Good posture and spinal health go hand in hand. Maintaining proper posture reduces strain on the spine, muscles, and ligaments. Neck sprain, back pain, and structural changes in the spine are common problems caused by poor posture.

also have a direct impact on spinal health. Consuming foods high in sugar and unhealthy fats promotes weight gain, which places additional pressure on the spine. This can lead to back pain and other spinal issues at any age. To prevent such

6 Delicious Indian Curries That Go Perfectly With Butter Naan



If there is one match made in food heaven, it has to be hot butter naan paired with a rich, flavour-packed curry. Few things in life compare to the comfort of that combination: the naan with its soft, slightly chewy layers and golden, buttery edges, and the curry packed with spices that warm the soul. From creamy paneer butter masala to spicy chicken curry, every bite feels indulgent yet familiar, just like a taste of home. Making these recipes at home is simple, but when it comes to festive gatherings or casual dinners with friends, no slip-ups are necessary. Your favourite food delivery app can come to the rescue and deliver lip-smacking food to your doorstep with just a couple of taps. For those who enjoy cooking and are unsure what to serve with this universal favour-

rite, here are some options that pair beautifully with butter naan.

6 Indian Curries That Taste Incredible With Butter Naan

1. Paneer Butter Masala Recipe A favourite among vegetarians, paneer butter masala is a creamy, tomato-based curry with chunks of soft paneer. The velvety gravy wraps around each bite of naan, offering the perfect balance of tangy, buttery, and mildly spiced flavours. It is indulgent without overwhelming the taste buds, ideal for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians seeking a comforting curry.

2. Dal Makhani Recipe Few vegetarian dishes are as iconic as dal makhani when paired with butter naan. Slow-cooked overnight using whole

black lentils and kidney beans, dal makhani is a Punjabi classic. Its richness from cream and butter mirrors the buttery naan, making each bite feel indulgent. Serve it with a sprinkle of fresh coriander for extra flavour.

3. Chicken Tikka Masala Recipe Globally loved, chicken tikka masala features smoky, charred chicken pieces in a spicy, tangy gravy. The richness of butter naan balances the spiciness while adding a touch of sweetness. For a filling and vibrant meal, this combination is hard to beat. Add a swirl of cream on top to make it restaurant-style.

4. Rogan Josh Recipe Originating from Kashmir, Rogan Josh consists of tender mutton slow-cooked in a yoghurt and spice base. Its strong flavours, deep red colour, and aromatic spices pair perfectly with the mild taste of butter naan. Together, they create a truly indulgent experience. Garnishing with freshly chopped coriander elevates both presentation and aroma.

5. Chhole Recipe This spicy, tangy chickpea curry is a North Indian staple that pairs wonderfully with naan. The slight chewiness of butter naan complements the hearty chickpeas, creating a satisfying, protein-rich meal. Found at roadside dhabas and restaurants alike, this pairing is a classic.

6. Kadai Mushroom Recipe For vegetarians seeking an alternative to paneer, kadai mushroom is a perfect choice. Earthy mushrooms absorb the masala of onions, peppers, and tomatoes, creating a smoky and spicy flavour that works beautifully with butter naan. Lighter than cream-based gravies, it is ideal for an everyday indulgent meal. Garnishing with freshly chopped coriander enhances the flavour and presentation.



Pot Pie Recipes the Whole Family Will Love

From classic chicken pot pie to hearty beef pot pie, these one-pot meals are the definition of hearty comfort food. Pot pie is always delicious—it’s comforting and full of complex textures. Filled with hearty meat (like chicken, beef or turkey) and packed with nutritious vegetables, it’s a full dinner all in one, and pie crust or puffed pastry adds buttery flavor and flaky texture. Regardless of how you make it, this filling dinner is the definition of family-friendly comfort food. Better yet? It’s a classic one-pot meal that cuts down on cleanup. These recipes, which range from traditional to twists on the classic (pretzel topping, anyone?) all share one thing in common: they’re sure to satisfy the whole family. This classic dish is as hearty and wholesome as it gets. It’s creamy and meaty with bold flavor from fresh thyme, bay leaves and black pepper. Mushrooms, peas, carrots and pearl onions add fresh, vegetal flavor to help round out the rich filling. A buttery, crunchy topping gets baked until golden and

crispy. Prepare the crust. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough with a floured rolling pin into a 12-inch square. Transfer to the prepared baking sheet, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate while you make the filling. Cook the chicken. Combine the chicken broth, peppercorns, thyme sprigs, bay leaves and quartered onion in a large pot over high heat. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer 30 minutes. Add the chicken to the pot. Increase the heat and return to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer until the chicken is just cooked through, 10 to 15 minutes. Using tongs, transfer the chicken to a plate to cool. Strain the stock through a fine-mesh sieve. You’ll need 2 1/2 cups for the filling; reserve the rest for another use. When the chicken is cool to the touch, cut it into bite-size chunks and set aside. Make the filling. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medi-

um heat. Add the pearl onions and carrots and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the mushrooms and peas and cook until softened, another 5 minutes. Stir in 5 tablespoons flour and cook, stirring, 1 more minute. Add 2 1/2 cups chicken stock and the milk, stirring constantly. Cook until thickened, about 5 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat. Add the chicken and chopped thyme; season with salt and pepper. Form the pot pies. Set out four 2-cup ovenproof bowls or ramekins. Transfer the pastry to a floured surface. Using a paring knife, cut out 4 rounds of dough that are slightly larger than the mouth of the bowls. Place the bowls on a baking sheet and spoon in the filling. Place 1 dough round on each pot pie, pressing the pastry against the side of the bowl to seal. Brush the dough with the beaten egg using a pastry brush. Cut a slit or hole in the center of the dough to vent. Bake until the pastry is puffed and dark golden brown, about 35 minutes.

Breakfast Recipes That Make It Easy To Rise and Shine

Start your day right with delicious options like waffles, omelets, granola and more. Maybe it’s just us, but the thought of syrup-drenched pancakes (and some bacon and eggs on the side!) make it so much easier to spring out of bed and tackle the day. So, it’s no wonder that we’ve got more than a few great ideas for your morning meal. You’ll find something for everyone in this roundup, from healthy breakfasts that’ll keep you full and fueled to ones that you can make on the fly and enjoy as you’re running out the door. With easy recipes for muffins, French toast, breakfast casseroles and more there’s no reason you should ever have to skip breakfast again. Wondering where to start? Try a chaffle. A chaffle is a low-carb, cheese-and-egg-based waffle that’s taken the world by storm. One look at its fluffy texture and crispy edges and it’s easy to see why. Preheat a waffle iron to medium-high. Whisk the eggs in a large bowl until well beaten and smooth. Whisk in the Cheddar, scallions, parsley, 1/4 teaspoon salt and a few grinds of pepper. Coat the

waffle iron with nonstick cooking spray, then ladle a heaping 1/4 cup of batter into each section. Close the lid and cook until well browned and fluffy, 4 to 5 minutes. Use a small offset spatula or tongs to transfer the chaffles to a serving plate. Repeat with the remaining batter. Top each chaffle with a pat of butter and drizzle with maple syrup. **Blueberry Coffee Cake Muffins** Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Place 16 paper liners in muffin pans. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. With the mixer on low speed, add the eggs 1 at a time, then add the vanilla, sour cream, and milk. In a separate bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. With the mixer on low speed add the flour mixture to the batter and beat until just mixed. Fold in the blueberries with a spatula and be sure the batter is completely mixed. Scoop the batter into the prepared muffin pans, filling each cup just over the top, and bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until the muf-



fins are lightly browned on top and a cake tester comes out clean.

Kids can eat healthy tiffin options like idli and chapati.



Parents always struggle to pack the proper school lunch. It must be easy to consume in between classes, nutritious, and satisfying. Idlis and chapatis are two popular options in Indian homes. While both are vital, which is the superior school tiffin? Let’s make a comparison. A fermented batter of rice and urad dal is used to make idli. It is easy to digest, light, and fluffy. Probiotics that are good for the gut are produced through fermentation, which also improves nutrient absorption. Idli is a good option for kids who require a mild yet stimulating supper because a typical serving is low in calories and fat. Chapati, on the other hand, is made from whole wheat flour and is rich in complex carbohydrates and fibre. It provides slow-releasing energy, keeping children full longer and preventing mid-morning hunger pangs. Chapatis are also a good source of iron and B vitamins. For school lunches, practicality matters. Idlis are bite-sized, non-messy, and easy for children to eat quickly without the need for extra accompaniments. Chapati usually requires a curry or sabzi, which may spill or turn soggy in the lunchbox, though dry curries or a roll-style chapati can work well. While chapati is more filling, it may feel heavy for some children, especially if eaten in a rush. Idlis, being steamed and soft, are lighter on the stomach and easy to digest even when eaten cold. For very active kids who need sustained energy, chapati might be more suitable, but for younger ones, idli is often the easier choice. Both idli and chapati have their place in a healthy school lunch. If you want a light, gut-friendly, quick-to-eat meal, idli is the winner. But if your child needs a filling, energy-packed option to stay full till afternoon, chapati works best. A smart way is to alternate between the two. Pack idlis with chutney or podi for one day and chapati rolls with vegetables the next. This not only balances nutrition but also keeps your child’s tiffin exciting.

Cucumber Raita Vs Boondi Raita: Which Is Lighter On The Stomach?

For many of us, raita is a daily staple that complements Indian meals perfectly. It’s a great way to balance the spiciness and richness of curries, biryanis and parathas. The best part? There are several different varieties of raita to choose from. Among the many options, cucumber raita and boondi raita are two popular choices. Whether you make them at home or order them via an online food delivery app, they’re a great addition to meals. Both have unique flavours and textures, but when it comes to being gentle on the stomach, there are differences worth noting.

Is Cucumber Raita Good For Health?

Cucumber raita is a simple and healthy side dish that combines the freshness of cucumber with the creaminess of curd. Here’s why it’s good for you: **High Water Content:** According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), cucumbers comprise approximately 96% water, making them one of the most hydrating fruits. This high water content helps keep the body hydrated and supports overall health.

Low In Calories: Cucumber raita is naturally low in calories and fat, making it a lighter choice for those looking to manage their weight. **Aids Digestion:** Additionally, cucumbers are rich in fi-

bre, which aids in smooth digestion and prevents bloating. The cooling effect of cucumber raita on the stomach makes it an ideal side dish, especially after spicy or heavy meals.

Is Boondi Raita Good For Health?

Boondi raita, made by adding fried boondi to yoghurt,

which can be beneficial for overall health. However, the deep-frying process may reduce some of the nutritional benefits. To make healthier boondi, consider baking or air-frying instead of deep-frying them.

Potential Digestive Issues: The combination of fried boondi and yoghurt can cause slight indigestion or bloating in sensitive stomachs. While yoghurt helps balance some of the heaviness, boondi raita may not be as easy to digest as other raita options.

Cucumber Raita Or Boondi Raita? Which Is Lighter On The Stomach?

From the info above, it’s clear that between the two, cucumber raita is definitely lighter and easier to digest. Its high-water content, low calorie profile and cooling nature make it ideal for meals or for people with sensitive digestion. Boondi raita, while delicious, is comparatively heavier due to the fried boondis, making it better suited for occasional indulgence rather than daily consumption. So, if you’re looking for a guilt-free side dish, cucumber raita is the way to go! Ultimately, whether you choose cucumber raita or boondi raita, the key is to enjoy these delicious side dishes in a way that suits your taste preferences and dietary needs.



pletely different texture and taste. Here’s a look at its nutritional benefits and considerations:

Higher Calorie Content: Boondi raita is higher in calories due to the deep-fried boondi, which adds extra oil and fat to the dish.

Protein-Rich: Boondi provides a good amount

Akshaye Khanna nearly missed Dhurandhar, according to Mukesh Chhabra

Mumbai: In a cast full of celebrities like Ranveer Singh, R Madhavan, Sanjay Dutt, and Arjun Rampal, Akshaye Khanna’s eerily controlled performance as Rehman Dakait is the talk of the town in Dhurandhar. His turn—quiet, twisted, and eerie—has become one of the most unforgettable parts of the movie. The fact that Dhurandhar almost didn’t have Akshaye Khanna at all makes this even more amazing. Mukesh Chhabra, the casting director, recently disclosed the year-long battle to persuade him to participate in the project. Ranveer Singh was locked in by the time Mukesh joined, which frequently causes other actors to hesitate. Director Aditya Dhar was first skeptical about Chhabra’s unwavering dedication to each role. Convincing Akshaye was reportedly difficult. Chhabra said, “I hadn’t even watched Chhaava back then.” “As soon as I called



him, he reprimanded me. “Paagal ho gaya hai kya?” he asked, “Have you gone crazy?” Akshaye’s reputation for being extremely choosy and discreet turned out to be accurate. However, Mukesh persisted, asking only that he hear the screenplay before declining. Reluctantly agreeing,

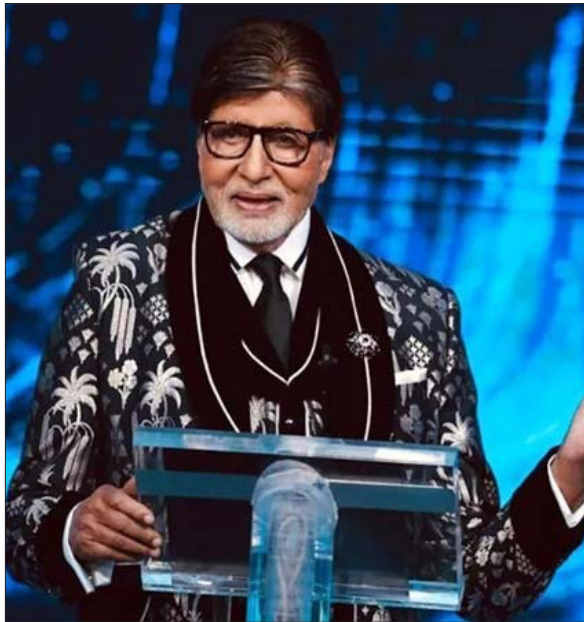
Akshaye inquired about the meeting’s specifics because he lived distant from Mumbai’s typical film circuit. The meeting ended up lasting longer than anticipated. For almost four hours, Akshaye sat with Mukesh and Aditya, smoking sometimes and silently taking in the story. Khanna broke the

stillness at the conclusion of the tale with an unexpected response: “F**k, it’s very good.” Aayega bada maza. (It’s excellent. This will be a lot of fun. Uncertainty persisted for two tense days following this, until Mukes received the call. “Let’s do it, bro,” he urged. That was it.

Viewers cry as Amitabh Bachchan bids KBC 17 farewell

Mumbai: During the Season 17 finale, Amitabh Bachchan broke down in tears as he said goodbye to Kaun Banega Crorepati. This was yet another moving moment in his two decades of association with the renowned quiz show. Viewers were moved when the seasoned actor, who has represented KBC since its founding, talked about the close relationship he has with the audience. Speaking to the audience from the hot seat, Bachchan found it difficult to contain his tears as he discussed the journey he had taken with millions of people over the years. He noted that working on the program for more than one-third of his life was a blessing and that even after years of being together, these kinds of events made endings feel abrupt. Bachchan highlighted the common feelings that have characterized KBC while thanking viewers for their steadfast support. He claimed that crowds greeted

him warmly each time he returned to the concert and that their tears and laughter reflected his own. He acknowledged that the show’s continued existence is due to its audience. “Sometimes we live a moment so deeply and get so lost in it that when it reaches its final point, it feels like it had just begun, and yet it is ending so soon,” he remarked. Everything seems to have happened only yesterday. I am going to start the final day of this game as I experience these feelings. It has been a huge blessing for me to spend more than one-third of my life with each of you.” “You have welcomed me with open arms whenever I have said from the bottom of my heart that I am coming,” he continued. You laughed with me when I laughed, and you also cried tears when I started crying. From the start to the finish, you have been my traveling companions. All I can say to you is that this game exists if



you are here, and we exist if this game exists.

I really appreciate it. Bachchan’s lengthy musical performance was one of the finale’s highlights. The actor sang a mix of his well-known songs, including “Rang Barse” (Silsila), “Hori Khele Raghuvra”

(Baghban), “Chalat Musafir” (Teesri Kasam), and “Mere Angne Mein” (Laawaris), for more than thirty minutes. Bachchan’s 32-minute uninterrupted singing was later confirmed by the production crew, who described it as a unique and historic occasion for the show.

Varun Dhawan on Operation Sindoor at the Border 2 Song Launch Event



Mumbai: At the release of Border 2’s anthem, Ghar Kab Aaoge, in Jaisalmer, actor Varun Dhawan talked extensively about Operation Sindoor and his own relationship with Border. Speaking to the audience, Varun discussed how the original 1997 movie influenced how a whole generation saw the military. Varun mentioned Sunny Deol, saying that Border had a similar effect on him as a child, just as Sunny had previously talked about seeing reality and wanting to make a movie about the armed forces. Varun revealed that watching Border had a profound effect on him and made him want to play a character associated with the military in the future. He claimed that Sunny Deol and the influence of Border were major contributors to the spirit of bravery and emotional determination that swept the nation at the time. Varun went on to say that he never thought he would be involved in Border 2 or that a sequel would be developed. As he came on stage to dis-

cuss the event’s surroundings, Varun noted that Operation Sindoor posters could be seen everywhere. “Our country cherishes peace, but it is equally important to produce films like Border that show the youth we have the power to strike back against any threat,” he stated, adding that a forceful reaction is required whenever someone dares to view the country’s territory with malicious intent. He emphasized that this is crucial for the nation’s children to comprehend, which is why movies like Border are still relevant. Varun honored the soldiers who died in Operation Sindoor last year. He posted pictures of the fallen soldiers, including Jawan Murali Naik, BSF SI Md Imteyaz, Gunner Dinesh Sharma, Sepoy Sachin Yadav, Airman Kamal Kamboj, Sepoy Amit Chaudhary, IAF Sergeant Surendra Mogra, and Sepoy Suraj Yadav, along with the caption, “We are here only because of u,” on Instagram. Following a terror assault that killed 26 civilians in Pahalgam, Kashmir,

in 2025, Operation Sindoor was initiated. Coordinated missile and drone attacks on terror infrastructure connected to Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu & Kashmir were part of the operation. According to Indian authorities, the strikes only targeted insurgent installations and were carried out without any land incursion. After international mediation, the military action was resolved in a matter of days. Sunny Deol, Varun Dhawan, Diljit Dosanjh, and Ahan Shetty play the main parts in Anurag Singh’s film Border 2, which also stars Mona Singh, Medha Rana, Sonam Bajwa, and Anya Singh. The movie, which will be released in theaters on January 23, 2026, is produced by Gulshan Kumar and T-Series in collaboration with JP Dutta’s J.P. Films. The 1999 Kargil conflict between India and Pakistan is anticipated to serve as inspiration for Border 2, the sequel to Border. In the meantime, Varun is working on his father David Dhawan’s film, Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai. Mrunal Thakur, Mouni Roy, Chunky Panday, Pooja Hegde, Maniesh Paul, Jimmy Shergill, Rakesh Bedi, Ali Asgar, Kubbra Sait, Rohit Saraf, Rajeev Khandelwal, Nitish Nirmal, and Sreeleela are among the ensemble cast members of the film, which is produced by Ramesh Taurani under the Tips label. A well-known song from David Dhawan’s 1999 movie Biwi No. 1 is the source of the title.

Pratibha Ranta and Siddhant Chaturvedi Speak Up About the Dear Comrade Hindi Remake



Mumbai: Siddhant Chaturvedi has clarified his position on remakes and refuted rumors that he and Pratibha Ranta were being considered for the Hindi version of Dear Comrade.” Just

to clarify guys - This isn’t true” is how the Dhadak 2 actor responded to the rumors on his Instagram Stories. He added that he now wants to avoid remakes. “Even though I adore

the original movie and the actors, I no longer support remakes. “Thank you,” he continued. Siddhant stated that he would like to collaborate with Pratibha Ranta in the future, but only on an original project, while putting an end to the remake rumors. In any case, I would adore working on something unique with the incredibly gifted Pratibha. “Looking ahead,” he wrote in his message. Through her Instagram Stories, Pratibha also responded to the rumors, asking media outlets to refrain from spreading unverified material. The actress from Laapataa Ladies stated, “With due respect, I kindly request all media pages to please refrain from posting or circulating any unverified infor-

mation and wait for an official announcement.” She added that she has previously been the target of similar rumors. “I have been dealing with a number of initiatives that I am not involved with for a while now, which frequently causes needless confusion. I sincerely appreciate your cooperation, understanding, and ongoing support in this subject,” she continued. Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna played the main roles in the first Dear Comrade, which was written and directed by Bharat Kamma. The Telugu movie, which was produced by Mythri Movie Makers and Big Ben Cinemas, was a box office hit and still has a devoted following years after its premiere.

Bollywood is being criticized by Tisca Chopra for “being afraid to take a chance”

Mumbai: Actress Tisca Chopra has discussed why some Bollywood movies don’t connect with viewers. The 52-year-old claims that the industry still relies on cliched plots and is scared to take artistic chances. She emphasized that in order to create original and significant information, excellent “writing” must be prioritized. “The problem is that we are watering the fruits and not the roots, which is writing,” Tisca disclosed during a conversation. “We almost got divorced writing it,” the actress revealed in a conversation with Mid-Day. Thus, the script’s yin and yang worked well together. Even though we were initially told to stop recording it, we nevertheless did so. After that, we had to change the title. Censorship doesn’t sit well with me. Speaking candidly about her first experience as a director, she

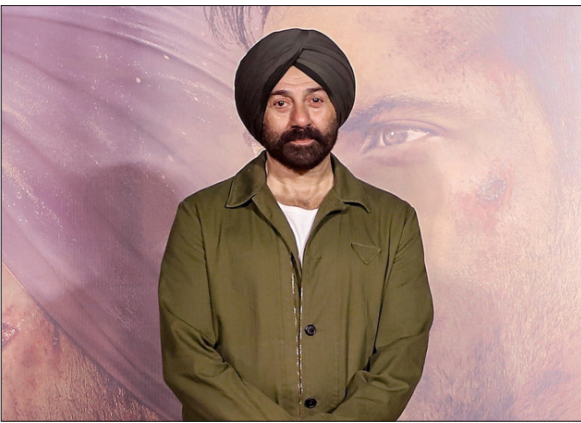
same thing. It is no longer amusing the audience. People accept new ideas when they are presented with conviction. Tisca just made her directorial debut with Saali Mohabbat. She is well renowned for her performance in Aamir Khan’s 2007 film Taare Zameen Par. On December 12, 2025, the movie, which she co-wrote with her husband Sanjay Chopra, debuted on Zee5. Tisca discussed the project and how her writing style differed from her husband’s. “We almost got divorced writing it,” the actress revealed in a conversation with Mid-Day. Thus, the script’s yin and yang worked well together. Even though we were initially told to stop recording it, we nevertheless did so. After that, we had to change the title. Censorship doesn’t sit well with me. Speaking candidly about her first experience as a director, she



remarked, “Directing is a mother-of-god hard job.” It simply never ends. Your day begins with a barrage of inquiries. How big should the car’s license plate be? Is it appropriate for the actor to shave his chest? They’ll assume you’re not thinking clearly

if you don’t respond. Therefore, you must make a choice, even if it is incorrect. After that, you choose wisely. Radhika Apte, Anurag Kashyap, Divyendu Sharma, Sauraseni Maitra, and Anshuman Pushkar play significant parts in Saali Mohabbat.

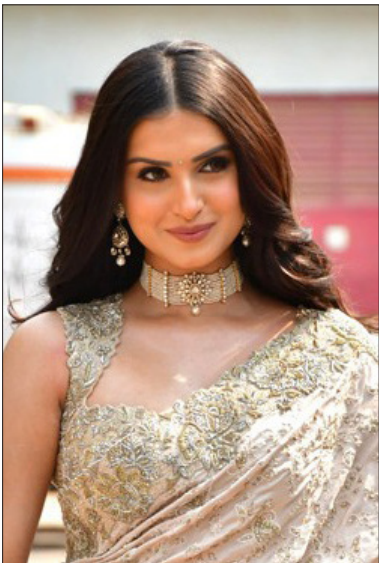
Sunny Deol claims that the death of Father Dharmendra has “shaken” him



Mumbai: Sunny Deol talked about his current situation following the passing of his father, renowned actor Dharmendra, at the song launch of Ghar Kab Aaoge from the upcoming movie Border 2. “Main zyada kuch nahi bol paaunga, mera dimaag hila hua hain,” the actor remarked while attending the song’s debut in Jaisalmer on Friday. (I’m a little shaken, so I won’t be able to say much.) The actor was alluding to the recent passing of his fa-

ther, Dharmendra, who passed away on November 24 at the age of 89. Sunny Deol mentioned at the occasion that he saw Dharmendra’s film Haqeeqat before working on the original Border (1997). “I have been a part of your family ever since I did Border,” he declared. I watched my father’s film Haqeeqat, which is why I did Border. When I was younger, I really enjoyed it. I chatted with JP Dutta sahab when I started acting, and we both agreed to make a film about the Battle of Longewala, which is a subject that all of you hold dear. “Wherever I go, I didn’t know that we would give so much confidence to so many youths that people would join the Army after watching Border,” he went on. Every soldier I encounter wherever I go says, “We decided to join the Army after watching your film.” Sunny Deol, Varun Dhawan, Diljit Dosanjh, and Ahan Shetty play the main parts in Anurag Singh’s film Border 2, which also stars Mona Singh, Medha Rana, Sonam Bajwa, and Anya Singh. The movie, which will be released in theaters on January 23, 2026, is produced by Gulshan Kumar and T-Series in collaboration with JP Dutta’s J.P. Films. The 1999 Kargil conflict between India and Pakistan is anticipated to serve as inspiration for Border 2, the sequel to Border.

As Rebecca, Tara Sutaria is armed and powerful



Mumbai: On Saturday, the first glimpse of Tara Sutaria from Geetu Mohandas and Yash’s Toxic: A Fairy-

tale for Grown-Ups was made public. The ad identifies her as Rebecca and depicts her brandishing a rifle while wearing a serious expression. The appearance is consistent with the movie’s retro theme. By posting the poster on social media and stating, “Introducing Tara Sutaria as REBECCA in - A Toxic Fairy Tale For Grown-Ups,” Yash presented Tara as Rebecca in Toxic. “She wields power—and guns—like her birthright- Introducing Tara Sutaria as Rebecca from Yash’s Toxic: A Fairytale for Grown-Ups,” reads the press release for the movie. When Tara first appears, she is wearing a strapless dress, lace gloves, and thick hair. She has a gun aimed at someone and a serious expression on her face. After introducing Kiara Advani as Nadia, Huma Qureshi as Elizabeth, and Nayanthara as Ganga from the movie, Yash revealed her first glimpse. Like

Tara, all the women were dressed in vintage attire. Geetu is the director and Yash is the writer of the period drama gangster movie Toxic. Venkat K. Narayana and Yash are producing it under the names Monster Mind Creations and KVN Productions. It stars Yash, Nayanthara, Kiara Advani, Tara Sutaria, Huma Qureshi, Rukmini Vasanth, Akshay Oberoi, and Sudev Nair. The movie debuted in 2024 after being announced in 2023. It was filmed concurrently in Kannada and English, and on March 19 for Ugadi, it will also be released in Hindi and other South Indian languages. Unofficially, the movie has been in development since 2018. Many were taken aback by the movie’s initial appearance, which took place in a casino and differed from Geetu’s other films, Moonthon in Malayalam and Liar’s Dice in Hindi.

The air quality of Delhi is improved by strong surface winds

New Delhi, Jan 03: New Delhi: Thanks to strong surface breezes that had significantly improved Delhi's air quality the day before, the Capital's air quality remained in the "poor" category on Saturday morning. According to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the city's air quality index (AQI) was 235 (bad) at 8am, while the 24-hour average AQI was 236 at 4pm on Friday. After reading 380 (extremely poor) at 4 p.m. on Thursday, Delhi's air quality improved by more than 100 points on Friday. As a result, on Friday night, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) lifted stage-3 measures of the Graded Response Action Plan (Grap) in the National Capital Region (NCR) with immediate effect. The Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS) for Delhi predicts that the air quality may worsen during the coming days."On Saturday, the air quality is probably going to be in the poor category.

From Sunday through Monday, the air quality is probably going to be in the extremely bad range. According to the AQEWS bulletin, "the air quality is likely to be in the very poor category for the next six days." When the AQI is between 101 and 200, it is categorized by the CPCB as "moderate," between



201 and 300 as "poor," and between 301 and 400 as "very poor." Air quality is considered "severe" when it exceeds 400. For the purposes of Grap, if the AQI is predicted to exceed 400, stage-3 measures take effect. In the meanwhile, if the AQI is predicted or surpasses 450, Stage-4 may be implemented. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has anticipated that the region's present cold northwesterly winds will cause the minimum temperature to decline in the next days. Additionally, a yellow signal has been issued by the Met department for Sunday, alerting residents to the possibility of significant fog in the late evening. Saturday's minimum temperature was 8.1 degrees Celsius, which was one degree below the previous day and 1.2 degrees above the average. According to Met authorities, this

is expected to further drop by a few degrees over the weekend and should remain between 6 and 8°C for the next several days. The highest temperature was 17.4°C on Friday, and it is predicted to stay between 17 and 19°C on Saturday. On Saturday morning, there were at least 150 flight delays at the Delhi airport. According to airport officials, this was mostly caused by the impact at other airports, notably a number in north India where visibility completely disappeared. For the next five to seven days, the IMD predicts that dense to extremely dense fog conditions will persist across Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Odisha. For the following four to five days, it is anticipated to occur in parts of Jammu, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, north Madhya Pradesh, and Northeast India.

Simon Taufel advocates for a significant T20 rule reform



New Delhi: Former ICC Elite Level Umpire Simon Taufel advocated for a significant T20 cricket rule adjustment that would restore the bat-ball balance. The 54-year-old stated that authorities should think about permitting one bowler to bowl five overs in a Twenty20 match because the shortest format has completely changed

in favor of the hitters over the past few years. Every bowler is now only permitted to bowl a maximum of four overs, but Taufel believes that if one player is granted the opportunity to bowl five overs, the game may take on new dimensions and provide fans with something to look forward to. According to Taufel, in a format where bowlers are

constantly under tremendous strain, it is only just that they be granted some indulgence if a batter can bat for the entire twenty overs."Look, I've personally made a few recommendations to a few different leagues, but they haven't received any attention yet. In an interview with Cricbuzz, Taufel stated, "But I'd love to see—I'd love to see again—bat and ball be more equalized in limited-overs cricket." One bowler bowling a fifth over in Twenty20 cricket would be fantastic. We're restricting all bowlers to four overs if a hitter can score 100 from ball number one during the entire inning. Is it possible to offer one bowler an extra over in an attempt to balance out a dominant bowler versus a dominant batter? That kind of thing, you know. He said, "I just want to see if we can slightly rebalance the scales."

Before the fourth T20 World Cup in five years, R Ashwin raises a red flag

New Delhi: The top teams in the world will compete in the ODI World Cup, T20 World Cup, or Champions Trophy every year between 2021 and 2031, with a few World Test Championship finals thrown in. 2026 marks the sixth consecutive year that the senior men's teams in international cricket will gather for a white ball ICC tournament. At the highest level, international cricket has deliberately changed to become less bilateral and more tournament-oriented. International cricket benefits financially from this, but it may also be a drawback. Every ICC tournament that comes after feels less important, especially since this is the fourth T20 World Cup since October 2021—a span of just over four years. Additionally, there will be more teams if the tournament format is expanded, which is beneficial for the sport's growth but may not necessarily draw viewers. Ravichandran Ashwin brought up this issue on his YouTube channel, explaining that the 20-team World Cup format in India and Sri Lanka will find it difficult to get traction in the early going."This time, nobody will watch the ICC T20 World Cup. Ashwin cautioned, "India vs. USA and India vs.



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Namibia are games that will literally pull you away from the World Cup." World Cups used to take place once every four years. Consequently, the interest is utilized for development. It used to be much more enjoyable for India to play Sri Lanka or England in the opening round," he added. The T20 World Cup has a rotating two-year schedule, although the ODI World Cup and the Champions Trophy continue to follow their customary four-year cycle. When I was in school in 1996, 1999, and 2003, the World Cup was held once every four years. We produced timetables, gathered World Cup cards, and bided our time. "That anticipation used to build naturally," Ashwin recalled, recalling his early years when Twenty20 hadn't even made it to the global arena. The notion that there is just too much cricket at the top level is only strengthened by the expectation that the next T20 World Cup will get more intense as the competition progresses and the top countries compete in the most important matches.

A pregnant woman dies after walking 6 km from the village to give delivery

New Delhi, Jan 03: According to an official on Friday, a pregnant woman died after walking six kilometers since her village in Gadchiroli is shut off from the main road and lacks medical services for childbirth. According to him, Asha Santosh Kiranga, a 24-year-old native of Aaldandi Tola in the Gadchiroli district's Etapalli taluka, was nine months pregnant."Her hometown of Aaldandi Tola hamlet lacks delivery services and is isolated off from the main road. On January 1, the sufferer and her husband traveled six kilometers through bush pathways to her sister's house in Petha in the hopes of receiving prompt assistance. But her body suffered as a result of the hardship during her heavy, advanced stage of pregnan-



cy," he stated. "She started having excruciating labor pains early on January 2. An ambulance took her to Hedri's Kali Ammal Hospital.

Despite the surgeons' decision to perform a cesarean section, it was already too late. The unborn child had already perished in the womb. The woman also died shortly after due to elevated blood pressure, according to the official. Dr.

Pratap Shinde, the Gadchiroli District Health Officer, responded that the woman had been registered by the ASHA employees."Walking probably caused the abrupt labor pains and difficulties. Despite their best efforts, doctors were unable to save her.

The Taluka Health Officer has been asked to provide a comprehensive report, and the issue will be looked into," he stated.

After being mistaken for a Bangladeshi, a man was beaten up in Bihar

New Delhi, Jan 03: According to authorities, a man who was mistakenly believed of being a Bangladeshi was beaten up in the Madhubani area of Bihar. When a video of the event went viral on social media, showing a man getting beaten up by two young people who thought he was an illegal immigrant from Bangladesh, police intervened. Yogendra Kumar, Madhubani Superintendent of Police, stated on Friday that "the social media cell of the police immediately investigated the matter and found that the incident took place in Chakda in the Rajnagar police station area." Residents of Rajnagar have been identified as the two people who were observed abusing the victim.

He stated, "The victim, a mason, lives in Birpur in the Supaul district. He continued, "A case has been filed under the section that deals with attempt to murder." "To apprehend both people, raids are being carried out. "Those who propagate such rumors and make such videos viral will face severe consequences," he declared.



Mahayuti wins 68 seats in the Maharashtra civic elections with no votes cast



New Delhi, Jan 03: In the much anticipated Maharashtra civic elections, the BJP-led Mahayuti has already won a sizable early advantage, with 68 candidates elected without opposition ahead of the January 15 vote. The results came after a number of candidates from opposing parties withdrew from the race on Friday, when the nomination withdrawal deadline closed. The withdrawals made it possible for numerous urban local bodies to win without opposition. The BJP has 44 seats out of the 68 unchallenged victories. With seats

from Pune, Pimpri Chinchwad, Panvel, Bhiwandi, Dhule, Jalgaon, and Ahilyanagar, the Kalyan-Dombivli Municipal Corporation in Thane district held the greatest share. After their opponents withdrew, BJP candidates Manjusha Nagpure and Shrikant Jagtap were declared elected unopposed from Pune's ward number 35. During the 2017–2022 period, both served as representatives for the same ward. Murlidhar Mohol, a senior BJP leader and union minister, claimed that the future mayor of Pune would be a member of the

BJP and characterized the unchallenged victories as a reflection of the party's governance record. "We want to have 125 seats. Mohol was quoted by the news agency as adding, "Two have already been won without opposition, leaving 123 to go." According to BJP spokesperson Keshav Upadhye, the events highlighted the party's growing influence in urban civic organizations throughout the state. Party leaders attributed the trend to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's popularity and state unit president Ravindra Chavan's electoral strategy, which they claimed had improved the BJP's standing in both major civic corporations and municipal councils. The Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray) responded to the wins by claiming that either "bribery" of the opposition candidates or "threats" from government agencies like the Enforcement Directorate were undermining democracy. "The unchallenged method of eliminating democracy in which they reach a compromise with the opposition candidates, either by buying him or intimidating him with threats from the CBI or ED. Uddhav Sena MP Priyanka Chaturvedi told reporters in Mumbai, "It is unfortunate that the Election Commission is remaining silent on their attempts to buy out their victory. On January 15, 29 municipal corporations in Maharashtra, including the politically significant Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), will hold elections. The results will be counted the next day.

Kapil Dev is dragged into Shubman Gill's 2026 T20 World Cup by Yograj Singh



New Delhi: Shubman Gill's removal from India's selection for the 2026 T20 World

Cup was criticized by Yograj Singh, the father of former Indian cricket team all-rounder Yuvraj Singh. Despite being named vice-captain last year, Yograj claimed that the selectors did not adequately support him. The BCCI chose Axar Patel to be the deputy captain for the T20 World Cup because Gill did not have a strong run of form in the sport's shortest format. Yograj even used Kapil Dev

as an example, claiming that despite going through a difficult period, Bishan Singh Bedi previously supported the renowned cricket player. "A vice-captain is Shubman Gill. Why did you decide to let him go? Just because he didn't go through four or five innings? Yograj told Ravi Bisht on YouTube, "Indian cricket players have had so many players who have barely managed to perform

in ten matches out of 100 opportunities." You already know why they continued to play. A few years ago, young Abhishek Sharma arrived. "Will you also drop him if he fails four innings?" he continued. According to Yograj, the selectors must support Gill in the same way as they did for Kapil throughout his unsatisfactory run of form. Allow me to illustrate the "great" Kapil Dev for you.

In his earlier reflection on a pivotal 2025, Gill expressed gratitude for the experiences, lessons learned, and memories as he anticipates the upcoming year. "You were really special to me in 2025. There are so many things to be thankful for, including memories, experiences, and lessons learned. Gill shared a reel on his official Instagram account and stated, "Carrying it all forward into 2026."

Significant BCCI Action Following SRK's Anger Over Bangladeshi Pacer Mustafizur Rahman of KKR

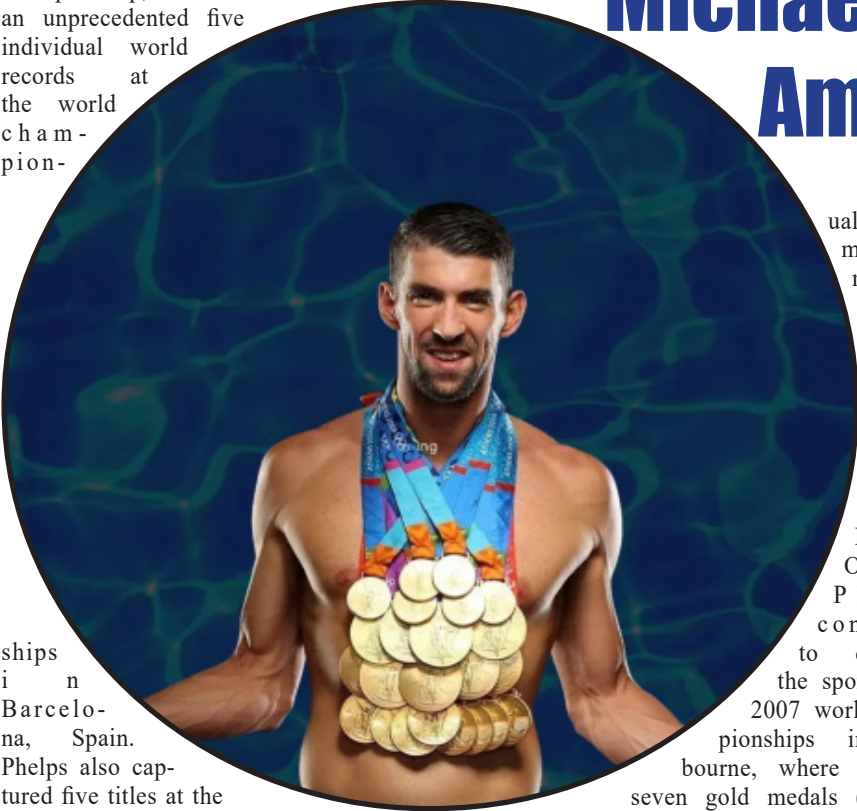
New Delhi, Jan 03: The BCCI has officially asked the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) to remove Bangladeshi speed leader Mustafizur Rahman from their lineup for the forthcoming IPL 2026 season, a momentous step that underscores the nexus between sport and geopolitics. Following a time of growing public and political pressure, BCCI Secretary Devajit Saikia made the announcement, confirming the board's directive to the franchise. Saikia stated that although the BCCI had previously adhered to a "wait and watch" strategy, the decision was made in view of "recent developments all across." This seems to be a clear allusion to Bangladesh's reported civil instability and worsening diplomatic situation, which have provoked large-scale demonstrations in India. After KKR acquired the pacer for a record Rs 9.20 crore in the December auction, making him the most costly Bangladeshi player in the league's history, the bowler lately became the center of criticism. "Due to the recent developments that are going on all across, BCCI has instructed the fran-



chise KKR to release one of their players, Mustafizur Rahman of Bangladesh, from their squad." Saikia told ANI in a conversation. Additionally, BCCI has stated that it will permit any replacement that they request. The bowler has recently come under fire after KKR bought the pacer for a record Rs 9.20 crore in the December auction, making him the most expen-

sive Bangladeshi player in the league's history." Due to the recent developments that are going on all across, BCCI has instructed the franchise KKR to release one of their players, Mustafizur Rahman of Bangladesh, from their squad." Saikia said in an interview with ANI. Furthermore, BCCI has declared that it will let any replacement that they ask for.

Michael Phelps (born June 30, 1985, Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.) is an American swimmer, who is the most-decorated athlete in Olympic history with 28 medals, which include a record 23 gold. At the 2008 Games in Beijing, he became the first athlete to win eight gold medals at a single Olympics. Phelps was raised in a family of swimmers and joined the prestigious North Baltimore Aquatic Club at age seven. He finished fifth in the 200-meter butterfly at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. At the 2001 U.S. spring nationals, he became at age 15 the youngest world-record holder in men's swimming when he posted 1 min 54.92 sec in the 200-meter butterfly. He went on that year to win his first international title at the world championships in Fukuoka, Japan. He claimed five medals at the 2002 Pan Pacific championships, including three gold (200-meter and 400-meter individual medley [IM] and 4 × 100-meter medley relay). At the U.S. spring nationals in 2003, he became the first male swimmer to claim titles in three different strokes at a single national championship, and he later broke an unprecedented five individual world records at the world championship.



ships in Barcelona, Spain. Phelps also captured five titles at the U.S. summer nationals—the most won by a male swimmer at a single championship. At the 2004 Olympic Games



in Athens, Phelps captured six gold medals (200-meter and 400-meter IM, 100-meter and 200-meter butterfly, 4 × 200-meter freestyle relay, and 4 × 100-meter medley relay) and two bronze medals (200-meter freestyle and 4 × 100-meter freestyle relay) while setting five Olympic or world records. His four individ-

Michael Phelps American swimmer

ual swimming gold medals tied a record set by American Mark Spitz at the 1972 Munich Olympics. Phelps continued to dominate the sport at the 2007 world championships in Melbourne, where he won seven gold medals (200-meter and 400-meter IM, 100-meter and 200-meter butterfly, 200-meter freestyle, and 4 × 100-meter and 4 × 200-meter freestyle

IM, the 4 × 100-meter freestyle relay, and the 200-meter freestyle—and each victory took place in world record time. On August 13 he won golds in the 200-meter butterfly and the 4 × 200-meter freestyle relay to capture his 10th and 11th career gold medals, a new Olympic record. Phelps then won his sixth gold of the Beijing Games by breaking his own world record in the 200-meter IM. He tied Spitz's record by winning the 100-meter butterfly final by 0.01 second and broke the mark as a member of the victorious American 4 × 100-meter medley relay team. All told, Phelps set world records in all but one (the 100-meter butterfly) of his eight gold medal-winning events. He followed his record-setting Olympics with five golds (100-meter and 200-meter butterfly, 4 × 100-meter and 4 × 200-meter freestyle relay, and 4 × 100-meter medley relay) and a silver (200-meter freestyle) at the 2009 world championships in Rome. At the 2012 Olympics in London, Phelps had a disappointing start, failing to medal in his first event, the 400-meter IM. However, he subsequently



won silver medals in both the 4 × 100-meter freestyle relay and the 200-meter butterfly and a gold medal in the 4 × 200-meter freestyle relay. With the latter win, Phelps captured an unprecedented 19th career Olympic medal, surpassing the record set by Soviet gymnast Larisa Latynina. He also claimed gold in the 200-meter IM, becoming the first male swimmer to win the same individual event at three consecutive Olympics; he later won the 100-meter butterfly for the third consecutive time. Phelps, who had announced that he was retiring from the sport after the London Games, captured a gold medal in his final event, the 4 × 100-meter relay. Phelps's retirement was short-lived, as he announced his return to competitive swimming in April 2014. In October of that year, he was suspended by USA Swimming for six months after he was charged with driving under the influence, his second such arrest; the first had occurred in 2004. Phelps was the American flag-bearer at the opening ceremonies of the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympic Games, which

were his fifth Games, a record for an American male swimmer. There he added to his unparalleled medal count by winning golds in the 200-meter IM, 4 × 100-meter medley relay, 4 × 100-meter freestyle relay, and 4 × 200-meter freestyle relay as well as a silver in the 100-meter butterfly. It was his gold in his signature event, the 200-meter butterfly, that captured the most international attention. The finals of that race featured South Africa's Chad le Clos, who had beaten Phelps by five-hundredths of a second in the race at the 2012 Games and who had exchanged verbal barbs with the American over the following four years. Before the race, cameras caught le Clos warming up in front of Phelps, who fixed an icy stare upon his rival that instantly became a meme on social media platforms. In the following race, Phelps eked out a victory by four-hundredths of a second and had an uncharacteristically exuberant celebration in the pool. Having completed his improbably dominant comeback at the 2016 Games, he again retired from competitive swimming.

Olympic Games

Olympic Games, athletic festival that originated in ancient Greece and was revived in the late 19th century. Before the 1970s the Games were officially limited to competitors with amateur status, but in the 1980s many events were opened to professional athletes. Currently, the Games are open to all, even the top professional athletes in basketball and football (soccer). The ancient Olympic Games included several of the sports that are now part of the Summer Games program, which at times has included events in as many as 32 different sports. In 1924 the Winter Games were sanctioned for winter sports. The Olympic Games have come to be regarded as the world's foremost sports competition.

The ancient Olympic GamesJust how far back in history organized athletic contests were held remains a matter of debate, but it is reasonably certain that they occurred in Greece almost 3,000 years ago. However ancient in origin, by the end of the 6th century bce at least four Greek sporting festivals, sometimes called "classical games," had achieved major importance: the Olympic Games, held at Olympia; the Pythian Games at Delphi; the Nemean Games at Nemea; and the Isthmian Games, held near Corinth. Later, similar festivals were held in nearly 150 cities as far afield as Rome, Naples, Odessus, Antioch, and Alexandria. Of all the games held throughout Greece, the Olympic Games were the most famous. Held every four years between August 6 and September 19, they occupied such an important place in Greek history that in late antiquity historians measured time by the interval between them—an Olympiad. The Olympic Games, like almost all Greek games, were an intrinsic part of a religious festival. They were held in honor of Zeus at Olympia by the city-state of Elis in the northwestern Peloponnese. The first Olympic champion listed in the records was Coreobus of Elis, a cook, who won the sprint race in 776 bce. Notions that the Olympics began much earlier than 776 bce are founded on myth, not historical evidence. According to one legend, for example, the Games were founded by Heracles, son of Zeus and Alcmena.

Competition and statusAt the meeting in 776 bce there was apparently only one event, a footrace that covered one length of the track at Olympia, but other events were added over the ensuing decades. The race, known as the sta-

de, was about 192 meters (210 yards) long. The word stade also came to refer to the track on which the race was held and is the origin of the modern English word stadium. In 724 bce a two-length race, the diaulos, roughly similar to the 400-meter race, was included, and four years later the dolichos, a long-distance race possibly comparable to the modern 1,500- or 5,000-meter events, was added. Wrestling and the pentathlon were introduced in 708 bce. The latter was an all-around competition consisting of five events—the long jump, the javelin throw, the discus throw, a footrace, and wrestling. Boxing was introduced in 688 bce and chariot racing eight years later. In 648 bce the pancration (from Greek pankration), a kind of no-holds-barred combat, was included. This brutal contest combined wrestling, boxing, and street fighting. Kicking and hitting a downed opponent were allowed; only biting and gouging (thrusting a finger or thumb into an opponent's eye) were forbidden. Between 632 and 616 bce events for boys were introduced. And from time to time further events were added, including a footrace in which athletes ran in partial armour and contests for heralds and for trumpeters. The program, however, was not nearly so varied as that of the modern Olympics. There were neither team games nor ball games, and the athletics (track and field) events were limited to the four running events and the pentathlon mentioned above. Chariot races and horse racing, which became part of the ancient Games, were held in the hippodrome south of the stadium. In the early centuries of Olympic competition, all the contests took place on one day; later the Games were spread over four days, with a

fifth devoted to the closing-ceremony presentation of prizes and a banquet for the champions. In most events the athletes participated in the nude. Through the centuries scholars have sought to explain this practice. Theories have ranged from the eccentric (to be nude in public without an erection demonstrated self-control) to the usual anthropological, religious, and social explanations, including the following: (1) nudity bespeaks a rite of passage, (2) nudity was a holdover from the days of hunting and gathering, (3) nudity had, for the Greeks, a magical power to ward off harm, and (4) public nudity was a kind of costume of the upper class. Historians grasp at dubious theories because, in Judeo-Christian society, to compete nude in public seems odd, if not scandalous. Yet ancient Greeks found nothing shameful about nudity, especially male nudity. Therefore, the many modern explanations of Greek athletic nudity are in the main unnecessary. The Olympic Games were technically restricted to freeborn



Greeks. Many Greek competitors came from the Greek colonies on the Italian peninsula and in Asia Minor and Africa. Most of the participants were professionals who trained full-time for the events. These athletes earned substantial prizes for winning at many other preliminary



festivals, and, although the only prize at Olympia was a wreath or garland, an Olympic champion also received widespread adulation and often lavish benefits from his home city.

Women and the Olympic GamesAlthough there were no women's events in the ancient Olympics, several women appear in the official lists of Olympic victors as the owners of the stables of some victorious chariot entries. In Sparta, girls and young women did practice and compete locally. But, apart from Sparta, contests for young Greek women were very rare and probably limited to an annual local footrace. At Olympia, however, the Herean festival, held every four years in honor of the goddess Hera, included a race for young women, who were divided into three age groups. Yet the Herean race was not part of the Olympics (they took place at another time of the year) and probably was not instituted before the advent of the Roman Empire. Then for a brief period girls competed at a few other important athletic venues. The 2nd-century-ce traveler Pausanias wrote that women

were banned from Olympia during the actual Games under penalty of death. Yet he also remarked that the law and penalty had never been invoked. His account later incongruously stated that unmarried women were allowed as Olympic spectators. Many historians believe that a later scribe simply made an error copying this passage of Pausanias's text here. Nonetheless, the notion that all or only married women were banned from the Games endured in popular writing on the topic, though the evidence regarding women as spectators remains unclear.

Demise of the OlympicsGreece lost its independence to Rome in the middle of the 2nd century bce, and support for the competitions at Olympia and elsewhere fell off considerably during the next century. The Romans looked on athletics with contempt—to strip naked and compete in public was degrading in their eyes. The Romans realized the political value of the Greek festivals, however, and Emperor Augustus staged games for Greek athletes in a temporary wooden stadium erected near the Circus Maximus in Rome and instituted major new athletic festivals in Italy and in Greece. Emperor Nero was also a keen patron of the festivals in Greece, but he disgraced himself and the Olympic Games when he entered a chariot race, fell off his vehicle, and then declared himself the winner anyway. Romans neither trained for nor participated in Greek athletics. Roman gladiator shows and team chariot racing were not related to the Olympic Games or to Greek athletics. The main difference between the Greek and Roman attitudes is reflected in the words each culture used to describe its festivals: for the Greeks they

were contests (agōnes), while for the Romans they were games (ludi). The Greeks originally organized their festivals for the competitors, the Romans for the public. One was primarily competition, the other entertainment. The Olympic Games were finally abolished about 400 ce by the Roman emperor Theodosius I or his son because of the festival's pagan associations.

The modern Olympic movementThe ideas and work of several people led to the creation of the modern Olympics. The best-known architect of the modern Games was Pierre de Coubertin, born in Paris on New Year's Day, 1863. Family tradition pointed to an army career or possibly politics, but at age 24 Coubertin decided that his future lay in education, especially physical education. In 1890 he traveled to England to meet Dr. William Penny Brookes, who had written some articles on education that attracted the Frenchman's attention. Brookes also had tried for decades to revive the ancient Olympic Games, getting the idea from a series of modern Greek Olympiads held in Athens starting in 1859. The Greek Olympics were founded by Evangelis Zappas, who, in turn, got the idea from Panagiotis Soutsos, a Greek poet who was the first to call for a modern revival and began to promote the idea in 1833. Brookes's first British Olympiad, held in London in 1866, was successful, with many spectators and good athletes in attendance. But his subsequent attempts met with less success and were beset by public apathy and opposition from rival sporting groups. Rather than give up, in the 1880s Brookes began to argue for the founding of international Olympics in Athens.