

Assam government would request a fast-track court at Gauhati High Court

Zubeen Garg death case

Guwahati, Dec 14: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma declared on December 12 that the Assam government would approach the Gauhati High Court to create a fast-track court for the Zubeen Garg death case after a thorough chargesheet against several suspects was filed. Speaking to reporters, Sarma affirmed that once the matter gets to the sessions court, the state will ask the chief justice of the Gauhati High Court for a fast-track court and appoint a special public prosecutor. “These are the steps which we have to now meticulously follow,” he said. About 12,000 pages of documentation make up the chargesheet that was submitted to the Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate.

One person has been charged with culpable homicide, while several others are accused of murder



under Section 103 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Additionally, two personal security guards are charged separately. Sarma emphasized the comprehensiveness of the investigation, pointing out that

although documents were acquired from Singapore, the prosecution has based its case mostly on evidence collected in Assam. “Even if the court says that Singapore documents are not admissible, we have filed a chargesheet in a way that the documents collected in Assam itself is sufficient to prove the charges,” he said. The chief minister said he had faith in the legal system. “Everyone respects the judiciary. We are aware of their independence. The government is currently awaiting the court’s proceedings, Sarma added. “We know about their impartiality and we know how the judiciary always gives a victim justice and fair play.” Before the government files its motions for a fast-track court and special public prosecutor, the case will move before the sessions court for committal.

In Brief

Mass bicycle scheme

Guwahati: Assam announced a plan to give bicycles to over three lakh students in class 9, taking center stage in a nationwide effort to lower school dropout rates. According to the government, the program’s goal is to make long travels easier for kids in rural and interior areas, where getting to secondary schools is still one of the biggest obstacles to continuing their education. Bicycles would be given to 3,10,031 children from government and provincialized institutions, including Adarsha Vidyalayas and tea garden model schools. There are 1,75,608 females and 1,34,432 boys among them.

Smuggler with 675 grams of spurious gold

Dhubri: Near the Gauripur railway station on Thursday, Gauripur Police and the 48th Battalion of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) conducted a well-planned joint operation that resulted in the arrest of a suspected smuggler and the seizure of a substantial amount of fake gold. Security personnel initiated a targeted operation near the station based on particular intelligence inputs regarding the circulation of counterfeit gold. 675 grams of fake gold were found in the suspect’s possession when the squad successfully stopped him. The arrested individual has been identified as Naser Ali, a resident of the Dangirchar area. He was taken into custody and immediately transferred to the local police station for further legal formalities.

Boosts air-quality vigil in meghalaya

Shillong: With Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma launching a Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring System (CAAQMS) in Ri-Bhoi district, Meghalaya has stepped up air quality monitoring in Byrnihat, which was recently identified as one of India’s most polluted towns, according to officials. Byrnihat, which is situated near the border between Assam and Meghalaya, has consistently ranked among the nation’s worst pollution hotspots in studies conducted by IQAir and the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

Tripura CM claims that PM Modi’s “blessings” contributed to the BJP’s 2023 victory

Agartala, Dec 14: Manik Saha, the chief minister of Tripura, denied that the Tipra Motha Party (TMP) played a role in the BJP’s comeback to power in the 2023 Assembly elections, claiming that Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s popularity and leadership were the only reasons for the mandate. His comments come two days after Hansajoy Tripura, a council member, and Pura Chandra Jamatia, the president of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), asserted that the BJP would not have won a second straight term if

the TMP had run candidates in 42 seats during the 2023 elections. Speaking at a party function in Sotamura, which is part of the Sepahijala district, Saha claimed that some political figures were trying to minimize the BJP’s electoral might by attributing the party’s win on Tipra Motha’s low turnout. Recalling the 2018 elections, in which the BJP ended 25 years of Left hegemony, he refuted this narrative. How did the BJP win the 2018 state elections if this was the case? During the 2018 elections, where were you? The communists were beaten by

the BJP, but you were not visible. Modi’s endorsement helped our party win the elections. “Everyone knows “Modi Hai To Mumkin Hai,” he remarked. Saha accused the CPI(M) of remotely influencing party cadres who later defected to regional outfits, stating that the BJP-led government would not tolerate any form of criminal activity. He alleged that attempts were made to disrupt the BJP’s programme in Sotamura by forcing local shops to shut down and said a list of individuals involved in criminal acts was being prepared.

In Kohima, NSF observes “North East Black Day”

Kohima, Dec 14: On December 11, the Naga Students’ Federation (NSF) joined student organizations throughout the area in protesting the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) on the anniversary of its passing in Parliament in 2019 by holding “North East Black Day” in Kohima. The North East Students’ Organization (NESO), whose member organizations staged identical protests in all northeastern states, organized the event. According to NSF general secretary Kenilo Kent, the observance represented a unified regional stance opposing laws that student organizations deemed harmful and discriminatory. “Today, we stand together in collective defiance along with the rest of the people of the Northeast,” Kent said, alleging that the CAA poses a direct threat to the identity and rights of indigenous communities. “Our homeland is not just a physical space; it is the cradle of our identity, culture and history,” he added, warning that the Act represents an existential challenge to indigenous protections.

Gaurav Gogoi promises to halt polarizing politics and accuses the chief minister of Assam of fostering a “hateful industry”

Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) President Gaurav Gogoi on Friday, December 12, launched a sharp attack on Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, alleging that the state has been subjected to an “industry of hatred” under his decade-long leadership.

Guwahati, Dec 14: Gaurav Gogoi, the president of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC), attacked Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma harshly on Friday, December 12, claiming that during his ten years in office, the state has been the target of a “industry of hatred.” Speaking at a news conference following a significant induction event at the AICC headquarters, Gogoi pledged that the Congress would prioritize real youth development and jobs while ending divisive politics. Several prominent figures from the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) formally joined the Congress as part of the induction program, which signaled a dramatic change in the political landscape. Bubul Das, Ashok Kumar Roy Pradhan, former BJP leader Gautam Dhanowar, and well-known Karbi politician Longki Tokbi were among them. According to Gogoi, the



newcomers will improve the party’s organizational base in preparation for future elections. Gogoi said that thousands of Assamese people were getting ready to travel to Delhi to attend Rahul Gandhi’s “Vote Chor Gaddi Chhor” protest event at Ramlila Maidan on December 14, pointing to the growing popular discontent with the Sarma administration. He claimed that the current climate in Assam discourages dissent, saying that individuals are more afraid to challenge authorities, take part in opposition gatherings, or openly voice their ideas on social media. In response to inquiries about the continuing Zubeen Garg murder case, Gogoi stated that the chargesheet would be reviewed through

the appropriate legal processes and that the probe must follow its legitimate path. Gogoi responded to the recent defection of the head of Congress Social Media to the BJP by characterizing it as an indication of the ruling party’s discomfort with the Congress’s growing digital power. Gogoi also criticized the BJP for how it handled the 2024 state and Lok Sabha elections, claiming that the party employed deceptive methods to win in Bihar, Haryana, and Maharashtra. AICC Assam in-charge Jitendra Singh, co-in-charges Prithviraj Sathe and Manoj Chauhan, MPs Pradyut Bordoloi and Rakibul Hussain, former MLA Satyabrata Kalita, and a number of other high-ranking officials were present.

Arunachal landslide study has reignited the need for building standards tailored to mountains

Itanagar, Dec 14: There have been new calls for India to implement terrain-specific building rules for its mountainous areas following a review of landslide hazards along the most susceptible transportation corridors in Arunachal Pradesh. This week, Dr. Pinom Ering of IIT Bombay met with the Center for Earth Sciences and Himalayan Studies (CESHS), under the direction of Director Tana Tage, at a technical meeting to discuss deficiencies in existing early-warning systems and construction standards in high-hazard areas. Dr. Ering, a member of the National Building Code committee and specialist in geotechnical engineering,

spoke with CESHS scientists on how to improve landslide early-warning systems with field-based instrumentation. Piezometers, extensometers, Electrical Resistivity Tomography, Multi-channel Analysis of Surface Waves, and drone-enabled Ground Penetrating Radar with AI and machine-learning models are among the suggested measures. According to researchers, such a framework could give a physics-based system that can deliver timely alerts along vital routes. The gathering also brought attention to the lack of Indian Standard Codes designed for building in complicated mountainous areas, which engineers



claim presents serious concerns in a state that is highly seismic and geologically unstable. According to CESHS authorities, working with national organizations like IIT Bombay could assist develop the scientific instruments and legislative strategies required to lessen the region’s susceptibility to disasters.

The documentary “Under the Longfuru Sky” by Kivini Shohe garners international attention

Kohima, Dec 14: Kivini Shohe, a filmmaker from Nagaland, gained international recognition last week when her critically acclaimed documentary “Under the Longfuru Sky” was shown at “Indigenous Cinema: South Asian Perspectives,” a three-day international event held at New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) from December 8–10, 2025.

Filmmakers, academics, and artists came together to discuss the changing landscape of Indigenous cinematic traditions throughout South Asia at the event, which was organized by the

Rights and Representation Research Forum in partnership with the NYUAD Film and New Media Programme and the Indigenous Film and Media Alliance South Asia. A carefully chosen selection of films from Northeast India, spanning from short films and documentaries to feature-length works, were shown to the public as part of the program. In-depth panel discussions on topics including identity, memory, land, resistance, and the evolving politics of Indigenous representation in film were held in conjunction with these screenings.

Manipur conspiracy suspects are granted release by the Supreme Court following extended detention

Imphal , Dec 14: The Supreme Court granted release to Moirangthem Anand Singh, who was accused of having ties to rebel organizations in Myanmar and of plotting to utilize Manipur’s ethnic turmoil to wage war against India, following a protracted pre-trial incarceration of more than two and a half years. Sandeep Mehta and Vikram Nath’s panel emphasized the prolonged detention and the lack of trial progress. Given the circumstances and the amount of time Singh had previously spent in detention, the judges stated that they were “inclined to grant bail,” noting that the co-accused in the case had already obtained bail. The order reverses a Delhi High



Court decision from April 2 that denied bail due to flight risk and worries that witnesses would be swayed by the “volatile situation” in Manipur. After a car carrying Singh and four other

people was stopped in Manipur in September 2023, Singh was taken into custody. Authorities claimed the group was dressed in camouflage at the time and had weapons, some of which were

thought to have been taken from a police armory. The case was characterized by the National Investigation Agency as a “transnational conspiracy” including organizations based in Myanmar. The Supreme Court, while allowing bail, said Singh must comply with conditions set by the trial court, and added that the order could be revisited if the accused is found delaying proceedings. The NIA opposed the bail plea, arguing the allegations were grave and part of a wider cross-border plot. Singh’s defence countered that the conspiracy charge was unsupported by evidence and emphasised that the other accused had already been released..

A district-wide review is initiated after a youngster is killed in an Arunachal fire at a school hostel

Itanagar, Dec 14: One young student was killed and a district-wide safety review was prompted by a fire that broke out at the hostel of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Awasiya Vidyalaya, Taktsang, Arunachal Pradesh, just after 12.20 am on December 11. According to authorities, an electrical short circuit most likely started the fire. Several kids were trapped inside as the fire swiftly spread through furniture and wooden planks. Many pupils were pulled to safety by dormitory warden Nima Lhamu and class VIII student Dorjee Tsomu, however Choine Tsomu, a six-year-old girl from Class I, could not be saved. She was the daughter of Yeshi Wange and Tenzin Yeton of Shocksan village in the Tawang district’s Zemithang Circle. Together with locals, school personnel, and hostel officials, soldiers from a nearby Army unit battled the fire with water and extinguishers until it was contained. The hostel sustained



significant damage. On the morning of December 11, senior district officials, including Tawang Deputy Commissioner Namgyal Angmo, Superintendent of Police Dr. D.W. Thongmo, Additional Deputy Commissioner Lumla Tashi Dhondup, DDMO Genden Tsomu, and DDSE Tawang Hridar Phuntsok, visited the scene to evaluate the damage and speak with the grieving family. The child’s body has been sent for judicial proceedings and a post-mortem. The Deputy Commissioner has ordered a magisterial inquiry, to be conducted by the Zemithang Circle Officer, and directed a safety audit of all residential schools and hostels across the district following the incident.

NATIONAL

Scam surfaced at Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam

Patna, Dec 09: Vigilance officials discovered widespread inconsistencies in the purchase of silk dupattas during a ten-year period from 2015 to 2025, leading to the discovery of a new scandal at Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam.

Officials discovered that bogus silk dupattas were supplied despite being marketed as a 100% polyester-silk combination following the Parakamani case and the contaminated laddu incident. Over Rs 54 crore was thought to have been lost as a result of the scan-



dal. Officials believe that a contractor sold over 15,000 dupattas for Rs 1,389 each, claiming they were made of silk.

Two laboratories, including the Central Silk Board, received samples for testing, which verified that the dupattas were composed of polyester rather than silk. TTD Chairman BR Naidu

responded to the pattu vastralu (silk dupatta) scandal by saying, “We have discovered that there were a few inconsistencies in the purchasing department.” We have turned over the inquiry to the ACB in light of this,” he stated.

The controversy surrounding the revered Tirupati laddu prasadam began in September 2024 when the Andhra Pradesh chief minister at the time claimed that the laddus served at the temple might contain tainted ghee or animal fat rather than pure cow ghee.

In response, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) established a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to examine the supply chain and quality of ghee provided to TTD.

The Parakamani case began on April 29, 2023, when CV Ravi Kumar, a staffer at a temple-affiliated mutt close to Tirumala, was seen pilfering donations from devotees into the “Srivari Hundi” donation box. Prosecutors claim that money obtained as offerings at the temple was implicated in this theft.

Deepavali’s Unesco tag following the Durga Puja cheer

The nomination of Chhath is ongoing

New Delhi, Dec 14: Birthday wishes overAt the 20th meeting of the Unesco Intergovernmental Committee held here on Wednesday, Deepavali was “inscribed” on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.Garba of Gujarat (2023), Durga Puja in Calcutta (2021), and Nawrouz (2024), a Central Asian festival observed by Parsis in India, have all been added to the list in recent years. This list is comparable to the Unesco World Heritage List, which honors locations and regions of historical significance. Traditional dancers and musicians from several states flocked into the hall and started performing in front of the crowd as soon as the announcement was made from the platform of the Red Fort conference tent.

Miniature Tricolours were waved by scores of officials dressed in Rajasthani safra turbans. Because of the event’s safety procedures, Bengali Dhunuchi dancers performed next to the stage away from the flaming embers. Delegates from several nations stood up to witness the Gedi dancers from Chhattisgarh perform on stilts. “We must ensure that Deepavali remains a living heritage, not a memory trapped in time,” Union Culture Minister Gajendra Shekhawat said to the assembly. Our kids need to understand not only how we light a lamp but also why we light it. They should be aware



that Ram Rajya is celebrated on Deepavali, which is a sign of good government. Jai Hind! Mata Ki Jai Bharat! Bhagwan Ki Jai, Raja Ramchandra. India has started the process of nominating the Chhath celebration for the 2027 list. Diyas in satin pouches were given to foreign delegates who welcomed Shekhawat. He was given Nora beads by Thai representatives, which are used in costumes for the dance theater of the same name, which is also listed as an intangible cultural asset. “Deepavali is very closely linked to our culture and ethos,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrote on X. It is our civilization’s soul. It personifies virtue and illumination. Deepavali’s inclusion on the UNESCO Intangible Heritage List will increase the festival’s

appeal on a worldwide scale. May we always be guided by the principles of Prabhu Shri Ram. The Unesco designation guarantees that governments provide regular reports on preserving the legacy and provides traditional cultural activities with global prominence. “Deepavali is more than just a festival – it is deeply rooted in Indian culture and celebrated across India and all around the world,” stated Tim Curtis, director and representative of Unesco’s Regional Office for South Asia. It brings individuals from all around India and the world’s diaspora together. This inscription honors everyone who preserves this legacy, from the young people who proudly and creatively carry it on to the seniors who protect and transmit it.

The first female Rafale pilot in the Air Force begins Hawk training

New Delhi, Dec 14: The Indian Air Force’s Hawk training fleet now employs Squadron Leader Shivangi Singh, the country’s first female Rafale pilot, as an instructor. This comes after Pakistan made bogus claims about her during Operation Sindoor, circulating fake information in Pakistani media that suggested she had been taken prisoner.

The IAF eventually refuted the claims. The Varanasi-born officer, who was commissioned in 2017, is one of the second group of female fighter pilots. Before joining Ambala’s Rafale squadron, she flew the MiG-21 Bison.

During high-intensity missions and significant exercises, she was recognized for her professionalism. Additionally, she recently went on a Rafale sortie with President Draupadi Murmu. Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari responded to the unfounded allegations by calling them “Manohar Kahaaniyaan,” emphasizing that Pakistan’s propaganda will not divert the IAF.

Singh’s operational credentials were further demonstrated by her recent graduation from the esteemed Flying Instructors School in Tambaram, where she successfully completed one of the military’s most



challenging aviation courses. Squadron Leader Singh will now serve as a mentor to future fighter pilots in a premier training unit, imparting her knowledge to both legacy aircraft and next-generation fighters. According to officials, her skills will be vital in training India’s next generation of combat pilots.

Due to an Aadhaar-record discrepancy, 44,208 farmers were left underpaid following crop loss

Bengaluru, Dec 14: Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda stated on Friday that around 44,000 farmers in Karnataka have not yet received compensation for agricultural losses caused by rain and flooding, primarily due to name discrepancies between Aadhaar and agriculture department data. In response to MLC Thippannappa Kamakanur in the Legislative Council, Gowda admitted that thousands of people have been left without assistance due to deficiencies in documentation.

Approximately 3% of farmers have not been compensated. The names do not match, which is the cause.

The names in the agriculture department and Aadhaar did not match, he claimed. 44,208 farmers are still underpaid. “Money will be deposited



into their bank accounts once they correct these errors. Gowda informed the Council, “We have started their payments as well, but they need to make some corrections.”

He asked farmers to make sure Aadhaar is connected to bank accounts and to update their data.

According to Gowda, the State Disaster Response Fund has disbursed Rs 250.97 crore for agricultural losses on 3.23 lakh hectares in the Kalaburagi area alone. He stated that the government has also provided an extra Rs 247.75 crore in relief. “A total of 498.76 crore has

been given to affected farmers in Kalaburagi for crop loss,” the minister explained. Statewide, he said, 14.21 lakh farmers are affected and that Rs 1,216 crore has been given under SDRF norms, supplemented by the government’s additional grant of Rs 1,033 crore.

Regulator CCI is investigating if IndiGo broke rules governing competition: Official

New Delhi, Dec 14: A senior official stated on Friday that the country’s largest airline, IndiGo, is under regulatory examination due to major flight disruptions, and that the fair trade watchdog CCI is investigating whether the airline breached competition norms. Thousands of passengers suffered when IndiGo, which has a domestic market share of more than 65%, canceled hundreds of flights beginning on December 2. However, things are finally stabilizing.

In addition to increasing its supervision of IndiGo’s operations, the aviation safety regulator DGCA is looking into the flight interruptions. However, some people are worried that the airline’s dominating position may have also played a role. The senior official informed PTI that the Competition Commission of India (CCI) is investigating if IndiGo broke competition laws internally. The official stated that a number of factors will be investigated, including the overall dominant position,



dominance in specific routes, and the possibility of misuse of dominance. The person stated that the CCI is investigating if competition laws have been broken suo motu and that there has not

yet been a formal complaint against IndiGo. The Competition Act’s Section 4 deals with abuses of power that may be discriminatory or exploitative. Excessive pricing is considered exploitative,

whereas lack of market access is classified as exclusionary. In order to determine if there is prima facie evidence of competition norm violations, CCI first conducts a thorough analysis of the material at hand.

The regulator will only order an investigation into the case if there is prima facie evidence of wrongdoing. Being dominant does not make an entity anti-competitive; nonetheless, when dominance is abused, competition standards are broken. A major contributing element to the operational problems at IndiGo, among from other factors, is the lack of adequate preparation in the implementation of the new set of flight duty standards from November 1. CCI promotes ethical corporate practices and aims to stop anti-competitive behavior in the marketplace. The regulator has the authority to impose penalties and cease-and-desist orders in order to curb unfair commercial practices in many industries.

The Center has not provided Jal Jeevan Mission grants since October 2024 Maharashtra

Mumbai, Dec 14: Maharashtra’s efforts to increase access to tap water in rural areas have encountered a financial obstacle. The state government informed the legislature on Friday that it has been depending on its own resources to carry out continuous work for the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) since October 2024 due to a lack of central funding. The government revealed the information in a written response during the winter session, stating that some projects have slowed down due to the halt in central funding. In order to guarantee clean drinking water throughout the nation, JJM seeks to supply every rural household with functioning tap water connections. 25,429 of the 51,560 schemes that have been approved under the program are still in operation, according to Water Supply and Sanitation Department Minister Gulabrao Patil. He told the Lower House that in order to maintain these projects, the state had contributed Rs 2,483.58 crore in 2024–2025 and Rs 2,103.25 crore in the current fiscal year. The response stated that a number of obstacles, including a lack of land, opposition from locals, permissions needed from many departments, and contractor-related problems, were linked to delays. According to the government, 67 contractors in various Zilla Parishad initiatives have been placed on a blacklist and fined Rs 12.8 crore. In addition, 188 contractors’ contracts have been terminated. Additionally, 76 project management consultants, 17 third-party inspection authority, 70 junior engineers, 149 deputy engineers, and 12 executive engineers have all received show-cause warnings. The statement added that seven engineers have been suspended. In schemes undertaken through Maharashtra Jeevan Pradhikaran, 233 contractors have been fined Rs 55.84 crore, underscoring the scale of action the state has taken to address delays and lapses.

Following bomb threats, six schools in Amritsar have declared a holiday

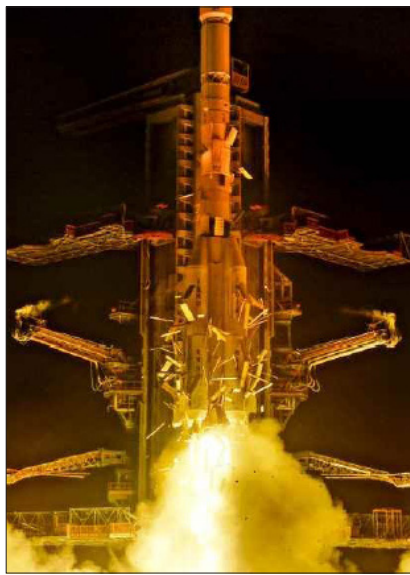
Amritsar, Dec 14: Bomb threats were sent to six schools in Amritsar, causing a great deal of anxiety. The school administration called parents to come home with their children and proclaimed a holiday. The parents were greatly alarmed by the occurrence because most of them had no idea what was happening. A guy who went to his son’s school to bring him home told, “I got a call from my son’s school and was asked to take him home.” I inquired as to why, but I did not receive much clarification. “I received a message from my son’s school, talking about some safety drills,” said another woman who experienced identical outcomes. I complied with their request to bring my son home. “Some schools across the city and rural belt have

received a suspicious email,” the Amritsar Police Commissionerate wrote on Twitter in response to the problem. Every school has a Gazetted Officer on duty, and anti-sabotage checks are in progress. The source of the mail is being investigated by the Cyber Police Station. A few kids have already been found guilty of such misbehavior. The Commissionerate stated, “There’s no need to panic—police are on duty and fully alert.” Following the incident, senior police officer Dalwinderjit Singh told India Today, “Around six schools in Amritsar district received threat mails. After consultation with schools, we have advised them to declare a holiday in the school. Also, the police have deployed anti-sabotage teams to ensure that all stays well.”

By 2033, India’s aerospace, drone, and space-tech industries are expected to generate USD 44 billion

New Delhi, Dec 14: According to a report published on Friday by Adecco India, government reforms, private investment, and foreign partnerships could propel India’s aerospace, drone, and space technology sector to grow more than five times to USD 44 billion by 2033. According to the report, the field, which was previously mostly driven by research, is now developing into a full-fledged industry, generating new demand for business experts, engineers, researchers, and data scientists. during 2 lakh new occupations are predicted to emerge during the next ten years. According to the research, India’s long-term space objectives are increasingly centered upon new-age positions, such as Space Policy Analysts, Robotics Engineers, Avionics Specialists, and GNC (Guidance, Navigation, and Control) specialists. The results are based on information from over

100 Adecco customers and are enhanced by more extensive market research. “India is positioned to become a global space hub with a strong government vision and a vibrant startup ecosystem, which will create a wave of opportunities for talent across engineering, research, data, and business domains,” stated Deepesh Gupta, Director and Head of General Staffing at Adecco India. Wages for specialized positions in avionics, cryogenics, ATDC, remote sensing specialists, and space habitat engineers are expected to be 20–30% higher than those in technical fields in places like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, Ahmedabad, and Pune. Central to this growth are reforms such as the Indian Space Policy 2023, a thriving base of 250+ space startups, and a landmark Rs 1,000 crore VC fund under IN-SPACE to fuel innovation and private-sector par-



ticipation. “Diversity will be a cornerstone of India’s space workforce. Initiatives such as the WISE Fellowship, Vigyan Jyoti Programme, ISRO Young Scientist Programme (YUVIKA), and the SAMRIDH Scheme are already enabling more women to enter technical fields, research, and entrepreneurship. Upcoming milestones that are likely to accelerate talent demand across the ecosystem include the Gaganyaan mission, India’s participation in the Axiom-4 ISS program, and the development of the country’s own space station. Currently, the Indian space economy is contributing about 2 per cent to the global market. The government has set an ambitious target of scaling this to USD 44 billion by 2033, including USD 11 billion in exports, positioning India to command 7-8 per cent of the global space economy, as per the report.

President Murmu’s first two-day visit to Manipur

Imphal, Dec 14: Amid increased security and a shutdown call from militant groups, President Droupadi Murmu started a two-day visit to Manipur on Thursday, her first visit since taking office. Her visit comes more than a year after ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kukis caused protracted turmoil in the state, and three months after Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s September visit. After arriving in Imphal, the President went to a polo match hosted by the Youth Affairs and Sports Department at Mapal Kangjeibung (Imphal Polo Ground), a historic location within a short distance from Lok Bhavan. According to the temple board, preparations are being made for her to offer prayers at the Shree Govindajee temple, one of the most respected Vaishnavite shrines in Manipur, later in the day. Murmu will spend the night at Lok Bhavan after attending a civic banquet at the City Convention Center in the eve-



ning. She is expected to take part in the yearly Nupi Lan celebration on Friday, which honors the women-led uprisings against British colonial policy in 1904 and 1939. In the Senapati district, where Naga people predominate, she is also anticipated to participate in another program. Tight security measures were in place in the state capital throughout the visit.

Normal life in the Imphal Valley will be disrupted by the Coordination Committee (CorCom), a group of prohibited militant groups, announcing a shutdown from 1 am Thursday until the President’s departure. There was little traffic, and markets and schools stayed closed. Arambai Tenggol (AT), a Meitei organization, released a statement at the same time

urging the President to address the predicament of internally displaced people (IDPs), who continue to live in difficult circumstances despite the existence of central assistance programs. The organization stated that displaced families “look to the nation with trust” and that their faith must be respected, and it urged the government to guarantee the fair and transparent distribution of benefits to these families. Along with raising concerns about “unregulated cross-border movement,” Arambai Tenggol advocated for more robust verification procedures, like as the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Manipur. Since ethnic conflicts between Meiteis in the Imphal Valley and Kukis in the nearby hill areas broke out in May 2023, more than 260 people have died and many have been displaced. The state is still dealing with unresolved conflicts and humanitarian issues, therefore Murmu’s visit is being closely monitored.

Arunachal landslide study pushes renewed call for mountain-specific building codes



Itanagar, Dec 14: A recent review of landslide risks in Arunachal Pradesh has once again brought attention to the urgent need for building rules designed specifically for mountain regions. Experts say that existing construction standards followed across the country do not fully address the unique geological and environmental challenges faced by hill states like Arunachal Pradesh.

The issue came into focus during a technical discussion held this week, where scientists from the Centre for Earth Sciences and Himalayan Studies (CESHS) examined landslide hazards along some of the state’s most vulnerable transport corridors. These routes are critical for daily travel,

supply of essential goods, and emergency services, yet they remain highly exposed to landslides, especially during the monsoon season. The CE-SHS team, led by its Director Tana Tage, held detailed discussions with Dr Pinom Ering, a geotechnical engineering expert from IIT Bombay and a member of the National Building Code committee. The meeting focused on two major concerns — the limitations of current landslide early-warning systems and the lack of construction guidelines suited for steep, fragile mountain terrain. Experts pointed out that many landslides in Arunachal Pradesh are triggered not only by heavy rainfall and seismic activity, but also by road cutting, slope modification, and

construction practices that do not consider local ground conditions.

As a result, buildings, roads, and other infrastructure often become unsafe within a short period of time. During the interaction, Dr Ering shared suggestions on improving landslide monitoring by using more field-based scientific instruments. These include tools such as piezometers to measure underground water pressure, extensometers to track ground movement, and advanced techniques like Electrical Resistivity Tomography and Multichannel Analysis of Surface Waves. The use of drones equipped with Ground Penetrating Radar was also discussed as a way to study unstable slopes without putting human lives at risk. Scientists explained that when these instruments are combined with artificial intelligence and machine-learning models, they can help develop a more reliable and physics-based early-warning system. Such a system, they said, could provide timely alerts to authorities and road users, especially along landslide-prone highways and hill roads that frequently get blocked.

Seven Assembly seats are demanded by the Adivasi union



Guwahati, Dec 14: The Barak Valley Adivasi Union organized an important conference at Subang Tea Garden in the Cachar district on December 11 to discuss the ongoing difficulties that tea garden workers confront. Stronger political representation was demanded by the union’s leadership, who reaffirmed their call for Adivasi candidates to run in each of the Barak Valley’s seven Assembly seats. The gathering, which took place in the garden’s dance hall, brought together a sizable number of workers to discuss urgent socioeconomic issues, according to the Cachar district committee of the Barak Valley Adivasi Union.

These included persistent problems with drinking water, health, education, and general developmental gaps in the tea estates. Speaking to the crowd, union officials claimed that tea garden workers had been exploited for a long time and that the community’s lack of education had been exploited to deny them access to a number of government benefits. The speakers also emphasized the Adivasi community’s rich cultural heritage and urged the government to maintain and promote them. The conference focused on a memorandum that was sent to the government on November 20 and called for the recognition of Adivasis as a Scheduled Tribe, equal pay for workers in the Barak Valley compared to those in the Brahmaputra Valley, and land ownership rights for tea garden workers.

NORTH EAST Guwahati complex fire is still out of control

33 hours of multi-agency response

Berhampore, Dec 09:

A senior official stated on Thursday that despite the efforts of more than two dozen fire tenders to put out the big fire that started at a business complex in Guwahati, the fire remained uncontrolled for more than 33 hours. Around 12:30 a.m. on Wednesday, the Swagata Square Complex in ABC Point caught fire. The multi-story structure is home to SBI’s premium banking branch, commercial branch, zonal office, and “Sohum Emporia” shopping center. For almost 33 hours, more than 25 fire tenders have been having difficulties.

The NDRF was called in to help with their advanced smoke reduction system, and water tenders from the Indian Air Force, Indian Army, and Guwahati Refinery joined the operations to put out the fire. In addition to Guwahati, fire tenders arrived from the districts of Morigaon, Kamrup, and Nalbari; other trucks were en route from Darrang. “The sixth-floor fire is still going strong. A senior Fire & Emergency Services (F&ES) officer told PTI, “We are attempting to douse it.” He noted that smoke is



also rising from the second story, where the fire started in the mall’s godown.”The building’s rear is currently on fire. However, fire tenders are unable to reach the back because safety regulations were not followed during building, according to another official. He said that in approving a commercial building of this size, the relevant authorities failed to implement necessary safety regulations. Only one firefighter has been treated at Gauhati Medical College and Hospital for a minor injury thus far. “On Wednesday, after midnight, our troops reacted to the fire call and arrived at the scene in fifteen minutes. The F&ES officer stated, “We could prevent the fire from spreading.” “The fire originated at

the godown of the mall on the second floor, where a lot of inflammable materials and clothes were stored,” he stated. Firefighters are working to contain the fire and keep it from spreading to lower floors, according to a statement from the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA). “Due to zero visibility and heavy smoke, the fire could not be controlled effectively in the initial stage. The building premises and surrounding areas have been secured. Evacuation protocols were initiated for safety,” it added. ASDMA said that preliminary observation suggests significant damage to the affected floors, but a detailed assessment will be done once the fire is fully controlled.

Final Panchayat election preparations are reviewed by the Papum Pare administration

Itanagar, Dec 14:

Vishakha Yadav, DC-cum-DEO (PR) Papum Pare, presided over a Poll Day Preparatory Review Meeting at the DC Conference Hall in Yupia as part of a thorough assessment of election readiness. The discussion concentrated on important



aspects of election management, such as communication systems, security provisions for strong rooms and counting centers, the deployment of police officers, the evaluation of vulnerable voting places, and poll-day logistics. Officials talked on how to make sure everything runs smoothly and

how to prepare for any obstacles. The DC asked officials to collaborate closely in order to guarantee free, fair, and peaceful elections throughout the district, emphasizing the necessity of strong cooperation among all stakeholders. SP Papum Pare Taru Gusar, SP ICR Jumar Basar, all Returning Officers (ROs) and Assistant Returning Officers (AROs), ADC Tame Yajum, and nodal officers involved in various parts of election management were present at the review meeting.

Manik Saha, the chief minister of Tripura, on reviving the Kalyanpur massacre case

Agartala, Dec 14: Manik Saha, the chief minister of Tripura, has declared that his government will petition the high court to revive the Kalyanpur massacre case, citing it as an essential step to bring about justice almost thirty years after the killings. Speaking on December 12 at a program commemorating the attack’s anniversary, Saha stated that the BJP-led government was determined to take legal action in relation to the December 12, 1996, massacre at Kalyanpur Bazar Colony in Khowai district, where armed insurgents shot and killed 26 people. The chief minister declared, “Our government will appeal to the high court, seeking permission to reopen the Kalyanpur massacre case to ensure justice.”

In Tripura’s history, the attack continues to rank among the bloodiest militant incidents. At night, armed men encircled the area and started



shooting at the sleeping villagers. The victims were members of the Bengali Hindu community and included men, women, children, and the elderly. The 29-year-old incident “shocked the entire nation,” according to Saha. He remarked, “I seek their blessings to give me the strength to fight for justice,” after presenting flowers to the deceased. Everyone knows who was at fault.

The chief minister launched a scath-

ing political attack on the party, accusing the then-CPI(M)-led administration of failing to stop the attack. He expressed amazement at the CPI(M)’s ongoing presence in the state parliament and claimed that communists were connected to repression and violence.

“I feel bad that CPI(M) still has 10 MLAs in the assembly. It is stunning that they still manage to get elected. They never talk about the people; they only talk about their cadres,” he said. Saha also claimed that 69 people were killed in South Tripura district alone during the CPI(M)’s tenure in power. Highlighting the current government’s security record, the chief minister said peace had largely returned to the region after the BJP came to power. He pointed to 12 agreements signed by the Centre aimed at bringing insurgent groups into the mainstream.

The Meghalaya government is working to resolve long-standing land issues in Tura

Shillong, Dec 14: In an important move to settle long-standing conflicts over encroached government land, the Meghalaya government has started transferring land pattas under long-term lease agreements to eight localities in Tura Town.

According to Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma, the action resolves problems between locals and the General Administration Department (GAD) that have existed for decades. Over the years, a number of government buildings and offices in Tura have been encroached upon, resulting in protracted legal proceedings, eviction notices, and several law-and-order disputes. “Happy to give land

pattas through long-term leases to eight localities,” Sangma stated, characterizing the choice as a workable resolution to a challenging issue. The project is based on a model that was successfully adopted in Williamnagar two or three years ago, according to the administration.

The area will remain government revenue land under the new arrangement, but households that now occupy it will be granted leases based on “specific, transparent criteria.” The chief minister claims that the strategy aims to avert future conflicts while giving residents and the administration clarity and security. “This approach is designed to prevent future



disputes and bring clarity and security to both the government and the public,” he said.

The first phase covers localities that have already agreed to the process. These areas have undergone surveys, drone and digital mapping, as well as public hearings over the past two years. Localities that have not yet consented will be taken up in a second

phase, with the government emphasising that participation will remain voluntary and that “no area will be compelled to participate”. The decision is being seen as a significant step towards planned and orderly urban development in Tura Town, while balancing state ownership of land with the realities faced by long-settled residents.

NEC gives Nagaland Rs 4.78 crore for activities related to culture, tourism, and skills

Kohima, Dec 14: According to an official statement released on December 9, Nagaland received Rs 4.78 crore in November from the North Eastern Council (NEC) to support various developmental programs, including as tourism marketing, youth and sports infrastructure, and indigenous cultural projects. The money was a component of NEC’s monthly payment for the execution of projects throughout the northeastern states. According to the Ministry of Development of the North Eastern Region (DoNER) and the NEC Secretariat in Shillong, all eight states

received Rs 56.22 crore in November to fund research and innovation-led projects, infrastructure development, livelihood assistance, cultural initiatives, seminars, and research. Infrastructure, agriculture, tourism, culture and heritage, education, skill development, and livelihood promotion are just a few of the vital sectors that the NEC prioritized supporting for Nagaland. In order to guarantee significant results, the council reaffirmed its dedication to timely finance flow and tight coordination with state entities. To promote regional events and academic interac-



tions, Rs 14.89 crore was allocated to various central agencies and cultural organizations in addition to state grants. During the month, important NEC-backed initiatives included community development for indigenous groups, animal feed production facilities, scientific pig breed-

ing facilities, infrastructure for the piggy value chain, documentation of traditional medical knowledge, and the expansion of teleeducation through smart virtual classrooms. Sports infrastructure development in Manipur was also supported under the same tranche.

The chief minister of Meghalaya opens The Tri Hills Ensemble, vows to safeguard Khasi, Garo and Jaintia heritage

Shillong, Dec 14: On December 10, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma opened the fourth Tri Hills Ensemble at Ward’s Lake, highlighting the government’s dedication to preserving the state’s original cultural character. The event honors the craftsmanship and artistic traditions of the Jaintia, Garo, and Khasi communities. Sangma officially began the celebrations that would stretch to Umngot for the customary boat race by giving oars to boatmen in a ceremonial gesture. “Tri Hills stands as a proud celebration of the vibrant tribal heritage and the distinctive arts and crafts of our Khasi, Garo and Jaintia communities,” Sangma added, describing the group as “a living testament to the spirit and identity of our people.” The Meghalaya Arts and Heritage Awards and the Meghalaya Culture and Cuisine Awards were handed by the chief minister during the opening ceremony. In addition, he published a report on the CM’s Research Grant and a number of publications written by regional authors. For the Nongkrem Dance, one of the most important traditional ceremonies in the state, Sangma separately opened cultural and tourism facilities in Lum Pomblang and Madan Syiem in Smit. The chief minister recalls seeing the intricate traditions



of the dance when he visited the hallowed location three and a half years prior. “Despite decades of statehood, the cultural identity of our tribal community had not been fully safeguarded,” he said. “We resolved then to change this, to ensure that the rituals, practices, and heritage that define our people receive the respect, support, and recognition they deserve.” The programs are part of the state government’s larger plan to safeguard Meghalaya’s tribal legacy while fostering local cultural tourism.

BUSINESS

India's IPOs reached a record Rs 1.77 lakh crore due to rising demand and growing overvaluation risks

Mumbai: According to a Bloomberg report, initial public offerings (IPOs) in India have reached a record ₹1.77 lakh crore (\$19.6 billion) as businesses scramble to meet the growing demand from investors for new shares. According to figures published by Bloomberg, the proceeds exceeded the peak of ₹1.73 lakh crore from the previous year. The value is expected to increase further as five more offerings, including the \$1.2 billion agreement with ICICI Prudential Asset Management Co., are slated to conclude on or around December 16. The increase shows

how India's capital markets have developed into a significant hub for fundraising, propelled by a growing number of individual investors and consistent institutional demand despite the decline in secondary stocks. India has been making it easier for businesses to list, and the wave of high-profile transactions demonstrates how businesses are taking advantage of strong demand to secure finance before circumstances around the world tighten. Foreign institutional investors, lured by the growth outlook and relatively stable policy backdrop, remain active participants

in IPOs even as they sell an almost record amount of Indian equities. That has allowed companies across sectors, including mid-sized manufacturers and tech-led businesses, to raise capital at elevated valuations. But this euphoria comes with risks. Excessive valuations for some companies have led to some weak performance after the debut. About half of the more than 300 firms listed so far this year — including Tata Capital, JSW Cement and WeWork India are trading below their offer price, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Growth in earnings is expected to increase equity returns in 2026

Kotak MF

Mumbai: Kotak Mutual Fund (MF) stated in its equity outlook on Wednesday that the domestic equities market is projected to perform better in calendar year (CY) 2026 as corporate earnings are predicted to resume double-digit growth. According to Nilesh Shah, managing director of Kotak Mahindra AMC, “equity returns in CY 2026 are likely to be anchored in earnings growth, with India Inc. expected to deliver double-digit growth in the coming financial year.” Despite the brighter outlook, he advised investors not to overinvest in stocks. “To navigate changing market dynamics, investors are advised to moderate return expectations and adopt a balanced, diversified approach across asset classes,” he continued. The fund firm looks for possibilities in industries and topics such e-commerce, healthcare, financial services, and consumer. It stated that credit growth is picking up in the financial services industry. Additionally, it believes that margin pressures are lessened and profitability is supported by the closing gap between loan and deposit growth. According to Kotak MF, healthcare spending is rising due to aging populations and an increase in chronic illnesses, but consumption is expected to bounce strongly because to GST reforms, rising earnings, and holiday demand. Given the favorable demand-supply dynamics and encouraging economic fundamentals, the asset management stated that it has a positive outlook on fixed income as well. Fixed income is expected to contribute significantly to portfolios in light of changing market conditions by providing stability and aiding in risk management. With a formal decision anticipated in January 2026 and possible inflows

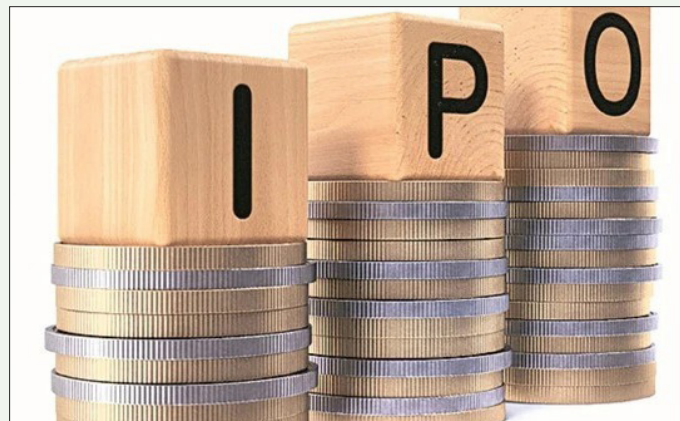


of about \$25 billion, India's chances of joining the Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index have also improved, the report stated.

Sebi approves the IPOs of LEAP India, Eldorado Agritech, and three other companies

New Delhi: Up to five businesses, including supply chain asset pooling company LEAP India and Eldorado Agritech, have received Sebi's approval to raise capital through initial public offerings (IPOs), according to a Tuesday update from the regulator. Molbio Diagnostics, supported by Temasek and Motilal Oswal Private Equity; Foodlink F&B Holdings (India), a chain of food stores and caterers; and Technocraft Ventures, a supplier of wastewater treatment systems, are further companies that have been granted regulatory approval. According to the report, between November 25 and December 5, all five businesses who submitted their preliminary IPO papers between June and September received the regulator's observations.

According to Sebi, getting observations is the same as getting the go-ahead to move on with a public issue. However, on December 5, two businesses, Inox Clean Energy and Sky Alloys and Power, withdrew their respective IPO documents. After obtaining almost Rs 5,000 crore in a pre-IPO investment round, Inox Clean Energy withdrew its preliminary filings and temporarily withdrew its draft papers, according to industry sources familiar with the matter. However, they stated that after adding the most recent funding information to its financials, the company is anticipated to refile its IPO documents. According to its draft documents, Sky Alloys & Power had suggested raising money through its first public offering (IPO) of 1.79 crore equity shares. According to the draft documents, LEAP



India's Rs 2,400-crore inaugural public offering consists of both a new issue of shares up to Rs 400 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of shares valued at Rs 2,000 crore by Vertical Holdings II Pte. Ltd and KIA EBT Scheme 3. The Rs 300 crore in proceeds from its recent offering would be used to pay down debt, with the remaining amount going toward working capital needs. A new issue of equity shares valued at Rs 340 crore and OFS of shares totaling Rs 660 crore by founders are part of the Rs 1,000-crore initial public offering (IPO) of Eldorado Agritech, which is well-known for its trademark Srikr Seeds. The Telangana-based supplier of seed-to-harvest solutions intends to use the Rs 245 crore from the new offering for debt repayment and other business needs. A new issue of shares of Rs 200 crore and an OFS of 1.25 crore shares by current shareholders comprise Molbio Diagnostics' IPO. The company intends to set up infrastructure for a new R&D center, a Center of Excellence, and associated office space using Rs 99.3 crore

from the net proceeds. The initial public offering (IPO) of Foodlink F&B Holdings consists of a combination of newly issued equity shares valued at Rs 160 crore and an OFS of more than 1.19 crore shares sold by investors and promoters. The business plans to invest in its substantial subsidiary, Foodlink Global Restaurants & Catering Services, to open four new casual dining restaurants and use the funds from the new issuance to establish two new centralized kitchens. Through its major brands, including India Bistro, Art of Dum, China Bistro, and Glocal, it runs thirty casual dining establishments and cloud kitchens in India and the United Arab Emirates. In Technocraft Ventures' initial public offering (IPO), promoter Kartikey Constructions would issue up to 95.05 lakh equity shares and an OFS of 23.76 lakh shares. Proceeds from the fresh issue to the tune of Rs 138 crore will be utilised to fund the working capital requirements of the company and the balance for general corporate purposes, according to the draft papers.

Mehli Mistry leaves the NCPA board, and Vijay Singh of Tata Trusts takes his position

Swiggy's board approved plans on Nov. 7 to raise up to ₹10,000 crore through a qualified institutional placement, subject to shareholder and regulatory approval

New Delhi: Mehli Mistry, who was recently kicked off the influential Tata Trusts board due to disagreements with important trustees, has now resigned from the National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA) governing council in Mumbai. According to persons with knowledge of the situation, Vijay Singh, a trustee of the Tata Trusts, has taken Mistry's place on the NCPA council, according to Moneycontrol.com. As a nominee of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Mistry served on the NCPA council alongside members from other Trusts, such as Pramit Jhaveri and Jehangir H. Jehangir. The longtime Tata group associate has lost another important institutional role with his withdrawal from the NCPA, which comes shortly after his departure from the Tata Trusts. K. N. Suntook, Chairman and Member-in-Charge, Noel Tata, Vice Chairman, Brinda Kahtau, and a number of Maharashtra state government candidates are among the other members of the NCPA council.

J R D Tata, the chairman of the Tata group at the time, took the initiative to establish the National Centre for Performing Arts in Mumbai in 1969 with backing from prominent art patrons and the Tata Trusts. Conceived as a world-class performing arts complex, the NCPA was formally inaugurated in 1970 and has since grown into one of India's most prominent cultural institutions. Emails sent to Mehli Mistry, Vijay Singh, the NCPA and the Tata Trusts seeking comment remained unanswered till the time of publication. As reported earlier by Moneycontrol, Mistry was removed as a trustee of the Tata Trusts following differences with a section of the current leadership. His reappointment was blocked by a group of trustees, including Noel Tata, Vijay Singh and Venu Srinivasan, follow-



ing which Mistry stepped down from the Trusts. The Tata Trusts together hold a majority stake in Tata Sons and play a decisive role in the governance of India's largest business group. Mistry's exit had drawn attention due to his long association with the Trusts and his close relationship with the late Ratan Tata.

Following his removal from the Trusts, Mistry also resigned from the board of the Small Animal Hospital Trust, a charitable initiative founded by Ratan Tata focused on advanced veterinary care. In his resignation, Mistry indicated that since he was no longer associated with the Tata Trusts, it would not be appropriate for him to continue in that role. His exit from the NCPA now completes his withdrawal from three high-profile Tata-linked institutions

within a short span. For decades, Mistry was regarded as a trusted lieutenant of Ratan Tata and served on several philanthropic and institutional boards linked to the Tata ecosystem.

His association spanned both business-adjacent roles and charitable initiatives supported by the Trusts. Following Ratan Tata's passing last year, changes in the governance structure of the Trusts gathered pace, with Noel Tata assuming the chairmanship and a reconfiguration of trustee roles soon after. The decision not to renew Mistry's term as trustee emerged from this transition. The latest development effectively marks the end of a long chapter of Mehli Mistry's involvement in some of the most influential philanthropic and cultural institutions linked to the Tata group.

The chairman of IndusInd Bank will resign in January as part of an organizational reform

New Delhi: According to two people with firsthand knowledge of the situation, Sunil Mehta, the chairman of India's IndusInd Bank, will resign when his term ends in January. This is the most recent change in leadership at the private lender.

Following a \$230 million damage to its books due to governance and accounting issues that led to the retirement of previous CEO Sumant Kathpalia and Deputy CEO Arun Khurana earlier this year, the bank recorded its largest-ever quarterly loss in the three months that ended on March 31. Investors have criticized the board of IndusInd Bank for oversight deficiencies and the bank's delayed disclosure of accounting errors in its derivative portfolio, which caused the bank's accounts to suffer. The sources, who wished to remain anonymous because the decision has not yet been made public, stated that Sunil Mehta, who has served as IndusInd's chairman since January 2023, has notified the board of his intention to resign at the conclusion of his tenure. Mehta was previously chairman of the state-owned Punjab National Bank, which was the victim of a \$1.8 billion fraud, and Yes Bank, which underwent reorganization in 2020. A representative for



IndusInd Bank told Reuters that the lender will “continue to make necessary disclosures in accordance with applicable laws and at the appropriate stage” and that the bank's chairman and board “remain fully committed to leading the organization in line with its strategic priorities.” The largest stakeholder in IndusInd Bank, the Hinduja family, is based in the UK. A.P. Hinduja, a member of this family, told the Economic Times last week that the board was going through a restructuring process and that new directors will be appointed. Aki Krishna Kumar is another board member whose tenure expires next year. Reuters was unable to ascertain whether her imprisonment would be prolonged. Since senior banker Rajiv Anand

became CEO of IndusInd Bank in August 2025, the bank has been going through an organizational transformation.

Ganesh Sankaran was named head of wholesale operations by the lender this week. A new chief financial officer, a chief human resources officer, and several other top executives have been appointed by the bank in the past three months. Anand told Reuters last month that the organization's deficiencies will be filled and accountability for the accounting inconsistencies will be fixed by the start of the following fiscal year. The lender will grow at a pace faster than the banking system and is aiming to move towards a return on assets of 1% over the next 12-18 months, he said.

Berger Paints might shine brighter

New Delhi: The brokerage firm Geojit's analysts are still optimistic about Berger Paints India. They have revised the target price and upgraded their rating from “Hold” to “Buy,” citing prospects of increased profitability, improved margins, and overall sales growth. The competitive environment in the industry has stabilized, according to the brokerage, and demand is expected to increase in the upcoming months due to better weather and the release of pent-up demand. According to the brokerage's analysis, “we upgrade our rating on the stock to ‘Buy,’ with a revised target price of ₹628, based on 55x FY27E adjusted EPS,” the brokerage reiterated in its report.

based on 55x FY27E adjusted EPS.” At 01:50 PM on Wednesday, Berger Paints shares were trading 1.27 percent higher at ₹546.80 per share on the NSE. With 12 strategically placed manufacturing facilities and a nationwide distribution network of more than 25,000 dealers, Berger Paints India (Berger) is the second-largest paint manufacturer in the Indian market. Due to a strong monsoon and ongoing competition, consolidated revenue increased by a meager 1.9% year over year (YoY) to ₹2,827 crore in Q2FY26. Geojit noted that despite the bad weather, Berger's volume increased by 8.8% year over year in

Q2FY26, while its value increased by 1.1% year over year thanks to a greater contribution from tile adhesives. Due to increased sales costs and other expenses, the company's profits before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (Ebitda) decreased 18.9% year over year to ₹352 crore, with the Ebitda margin falling 310 basis points to 12.5%. Geojit went on to say that management is still optimistic about a better second half, pointing to the revival of demand as a major factor. “Benign raw material prices and an improving product mix are expected to help improve gross margin,” the brokerage stated. The



extended monsoon season had an impact on Berger's revenue growth

during the quarter, leading to only slight increases. Increased expendi-

tures and expenses also put pressure on margins and profitability. Nonetheless, the business kept growing its retail reach by opening new locations. “The sector's competitive landscape has stabilised, and demand is expected to pick up in the coming months, driven by improved weather conditions and the release of pent-up demand. This is expected to contribute to the company's overall revenue growth, margins, and profitability. Therefore, we upgrade our rating on the stock to ‘Buy,’ with a revised target price of ₹628, based on 55x FY27E adjusted EPS,” the brokerage reiterated in its report.

SRK was listed as one of the 67 Most Stylish People by The New York Times

New Delhi: One of the New York Times’ 67 Most Stylish People of 2025 is Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan. Shah Rukh Khan’s participation in the list, which was made public earlier this week and includes well-known worldwide superstars, is a major honor for the Indian film industry. The 60-year-old actor received recognition for his eye-catching Met Gala debut, when he wore a custom black ensemble designed by Sabyasachi Mukherjee along with a ‘K’ pendant adorned with crystals. His attendance at the event has been widely regarded as a significant fashion moment for the actor as well as the increasing prominence of Indian designers on international stages. Global celebrities like Sabrina Carpenter, Doecheii, ASAP Rocky, Vivian Wilson,



Nicole Scherzinger, Walton Goggins, Jennifer Lawrence, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Cole Escola, and Noah Wyle have joined Shah Rukh Khan on the New York Times list. The selection showcases people whose fashion choices have had a big influence over the last 12 months. Shah Rukh Khan is the only Bollywood actor to be included in this year’s selection because of his daring and elegant Met Gala presentation. The actor’s look at the Met Gala was a bespoke creation by Sabyasachi Mukherjee,

comprising an all-black menswear ensemble. The outfit was complemented by a crystal-studded pendant shaped as the letter ‘K’, which became a focal point of his look. Photographs from the event circulated widely on social media, further amplifying the attention his appearance received. A note about Khan in the New York Times feature read: “Known by his army of fans simply as SRK, Bollywood’s biggest star and one of the world’s most famous actors brought the Met Gala into his orbit as a first-time guest. (He wore a design by Sabyasachi Mukherjee.” Khan’s participation at the Met Gala has been interpreted as a milestone for Indian representation at one of fashion’s most high-profile events.

The Ba***ds of Bollywood became the most watched Indian online series in 2025

New Delhi: IMDb revealed that romance drama Saiyaara topped the platform’s list of the most popular Indian films of the year, while Aryan Khan’s directorial debut The Ba***ds of Bollywood emerged as the most popular Indian web series of 2025. According to IMDb, page views from its more than 250 million monthly users worldwide decide the rankings, placing the list as a gauge of global audience interest and engagement across movies and streaming entertainment. ”

Seeing the show at No. 1 feels exactly like what we wanted to do - shake the room and own the conversation,” Aryan Khan remarked in response to the top spot. Memes, fan edits, disputes, and obsession—that’s a show that’s evolving into culture, not just something to watch on the weekends. On IMDb’s list of the Top 10 Most Popular Indian Series of 2025, director Vikramaditya Motwane’s Black Warrant came in second, while Sudip Sharma’s Paatal Lok Season 2 came in third. Fourth place went to Panchayat Season 4.

The most recent seasons of The Family Man and Criminal Justice completed the top ten, while psychological thrillers Mandala Murders and Khauf came in fifth and sixth, respectively, ahead of Special Ops Season 2 and Khaakee: The Bengal Chapter. Saiyaara,



which was directed by Mohit Suri and produced by Yash Raj Films, topped IMDb’s list of the Top 10 Most Popular Indian Movies of 2025. Newcomers Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padma star in the movie.

Zeenat Aman criticizes Amitabh’s condescending attitude when recalling the Dostana scene



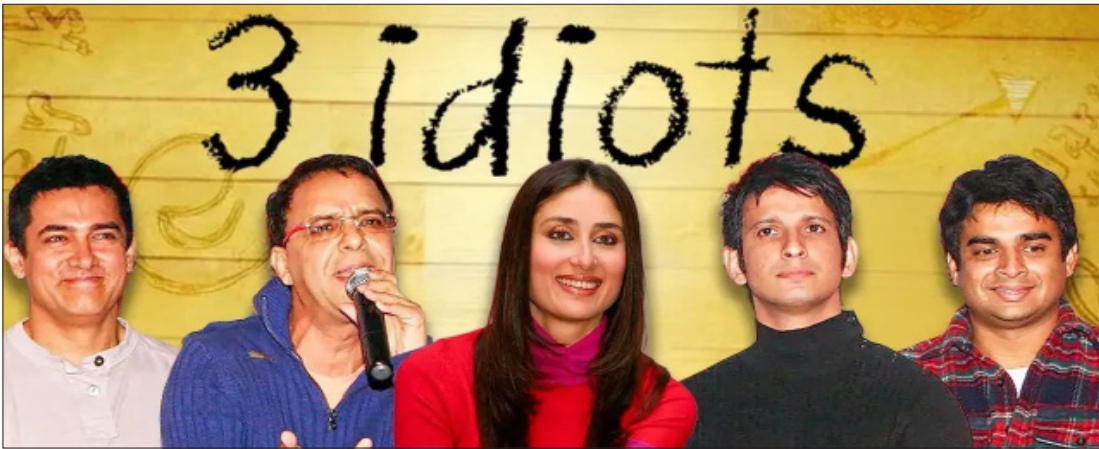
New Delhi: By posting a clip from the 1980 movie Dostana on social media, veteran actor Zeenat Aman has started a conversation on societal perceptions of women in movies. The patriarchal mindset of the time is highlighted in the video when Aman’s character Sheetal faces harassment on a beach and leads the perpetrator to the police. Aman analyzed how these attitudes influenced movies from her era, pointing out the long-lasting impact these representations had on ideas of gender roles. She noted that although certain attitudes still exist, there has been advancement in the way these problems are handled now. “Every now and then, I’ll find myself flipping through clips from my old movies, in search of something to share with you,” Aman posted on Instagram. I discovered two today: one from Don and one from Great Gambler. The algorithm then presented me with this. A scenario that made me go crazy because it was so perfect for societal satire! “When one is young, one thinks the moralities of the time are set in granite,” she added in reference to the development of social standards. Absolute and uncompromising; at best, to be weakened by one’s own futile actions of defiance. As the years pass, you eventually look up from your screen and realize, “Wow, everything changed.” Well,

maybe not everything. The story has undoubtedly advanced, but the moral police are undoubtedly still on guard today. The scene shows Inspector Vijay, played by Amitabh Bachchan, questioning Sheetal about her attire and suggesting she dress more modestly. Sheetal challenges his opinion and asserts her right to choose her clothing, underscoring the clash between tradition and autonomy. Aman addressed female viewers of the clip: “If you’re a woman who watched this clip, let me make a few guesses. You were infuriated by the eve-teasing and resonated with Sheetal’s discomfort and anger, having probably experienced such a thing firsthand. You loved that she dragged her harasser to the police station, a triumph you probably never felt. And then you were incensed by our hero, Inspector Vijay’s, condescending opinion and tone! Am I right? Well that opinion and tone were par for the course back in the day.” She pointed out that reactions have changed over time. Aman noted, “Back in the day your average woman would think Vijay to be a mighty upstanding gentleman because Sheetal deserved a reprimand just as much as her harasser. But the young woman I showed it to earlier today? She sneered at the poor Inspector and said ‘What a loser.’ I had a good laugh at that.”

The “3 Idiots” sequel starring Rajkumar Hirani will be released in 2026

New Delhi: According to media sources, Rajkumar Hirani’s 2009 comedy drama 3 Idiots will make a comeback with a sequel fifteen years after its initial release. Aamir Khan, Kareena Kapoor Khan, R. Madhavan, and Sharman Joshi will all be back together in the sequel, according to a Pinkvilla report. It is anticipated to begin construction in the latter part of 2026. “The team is quite thrilled for the script, which has been locked. A source close to the project told Pinkvilla. “They feel the magic of the first film has returned and is as funny, as emotional, and as meaningful as the first part.”

The insider added, “The story will be a continuation, picking up nearly 15 years after the characters parted ways in the climax scene and reunited for a new adventure.” 3 Idiots, an adaptation of Chetan Bhagat’s book Five Point Someone, debuted in the-



aters on December 25, 2009. It tells the tale of three engineering students who get along well and deal with the demands of Indian academic life. Aamir Khan and Rajkumar Hirani, who were set to collaborate on a biopic of Dadasaheb Phalke, have reportedly put the project on hold, giving

Hirani time to focus on the 3 Idiots sequel. “He dedicated time to expand the 3 Idiots sequel into a full-fledged screenplay. Hirani always had a seed of an idea for 3 Idiots 2, but he wanted it to be perfect and something that would stand up to the legacy of the original,” the source added. 3 Idiots

won three honours at the 57th National Film Awards, including the Best Popular Film Award. It also became the first Indian movie to cross the Rs 200-crore mark. Produced under the banner of Vinod Chopra Films, 3 Idiots also starred Mona Singh, Achyut Potdar and Boman Irani.

KJo is the Asian Academy Awards for Traitors’ Best Host

New Delhi: For his performance in The Traitors, filmmaker Karan Johar won the Asian Academy Creative Awards’ best host prize. According to reports, the reality competition’s second season will debut in March 2026. “I am so honored to have won best host for The Traitors at @asianacademycreativeawards in Singapore due to my prior commitment at the @marrakech-filmfestival,” Karan posted on Instagram to express his appreciation. Although I was unable to attend, I would like to express my gratitude to the Academy for this nod. “I want to express my gratitude to @primevideo in the technical, on-site, and non-fiction creative teams of TRAITORS India for making me seem amazing! “I am grateful to Nikhil Madhok and Gaurav Gandhi for providing me with this wonderful opportunity,” he continued. Social media star Uorfi Javed and professional poker player Nikita Luther emerged victorious from the inaugural season of The Traitors. They outlasted other



competitors due to their gameplay, notably Harsh Gujral, who was eliminated prior to the final. Uorfi and Nikita split the Rs 70.5 lakh award as winners. The social media influencer made the noteworthy decision to

give Nikita her portion of the award money. Uorfi claimed that she could have grabbed the full sum if she had needed the money. Uorfi expressed her feelings about her journey on her Instagram account. She wrote, “From losing Bigg Boss (being the first one to be eliminated) to winning The Traitors. The journey wasn’t easy, how many times I’ve cried, I’ve had so many breakdowns, wanted to give up, wanted to leave everything and run away. Being called names, getting death, rape threats, the online hate, the offline hate but I never stopped. Maybe the universe knew I needed this (sic).

She further reflected, “When I lost Bigg Boss, I thought I had lost my last chance at success or at having a good life, had taken udhaar (loan) from friends to get clothes to wear on Bigg Boss. At that time, I didn’t even know if I would ever be able to repay that udhaar (loan).” “People have always doubted me, even right now, but this still won’t stop me.

Why Dhurandhar is different from other Bollywood espionage movies

New Delhi: “Ladies and gentlemen, you are not ready for this” is the opening line of Dhurandhar’s title tune. It initially sounds like the kind of high-adrenaline hype line that typically comes before a stylized, action-packed spy show. This expectation is reinforced by the teasers, songs, and trailers, which promise high-octane thrills through violence, scale, real-life inspiration, and a celebrity cast. However, the movie does so in a very different way. We weren’t prepared for a popular Hindi espionage movie that requires viewers to endure more than three and a half hours of slow-burning infiltration before revealing half the tale, nor were we prepared for the intensity of its violence or the weight of its world-building. Dhurandhar is not eager to make an impression. It refuses shortcuts, commits fully to its genre, and does something rare in Bollywood espionage cinema: it treats spying not as fantasy, but as prolonged psychological confinement. On paper, Dhurandhar begins with a setup Hindi cinema knows well: repeated terror attacks on India, intelligence agencies tracing the roots to Karachi, and a single undercover operative sent into Lyari to infiltrate the ecosystem believed to feed this violence. But Aditya Dhar refuses to treat this as an action framework. Instead, he stages it like a political chessboard, where every move is delayed, observed and tested. Hamza does not arrive in Lyari as a spy or as a hero. He comes in as a body that must endure hardship, deterioration, and survival. The film’s purpose is brutally revealed in the opening scene of his arrival. Making spy work appear cool is not the film’s goal. It desires a sense of danger. Importantly, the objective is not the sole driving force behind the movie.

More narrative space is devoted to Lyari’s internal hierarchies, gangs, discussions, and power struggles. The movie functions as a mass drama about a nobody rising up the ranks of a violent underworld, gaining terror, authority, and survival inch by inch, even if one crucial detail—that Hamza is an Indian spy—is removed. That rags-to-power arc, deeply embedded in Indian commercial cinema, runs parallel to the espionage plot and gives Dhurandhar its mass appeal. By allowing politics, struggle and interpersonal dynamics to overpower action, Dhurandhar becomes two films at once: a grounded spy thriller and an underworld rise narrative that separates it from standard Bollywood spy narratives. Dhurandhar’s handling is where it really declares its aspirations. Aditya Dhar is a director who is eager to indulge while maintaining control. With the help of a chapter-by-chapter framework, recurrent on-screen text, and extended periods

of waiting and talking, nearly three and a half hours take place mostly in the same geographical and emotional environment. The impulse to run from one high moment to the next is resisted in the movie. Unlike previous espionage movies, this one doesn’t hop around like a travel advertisement. The film’s identity is defined by the tension it creates as it alternates between documentary-like realistic grit and mass swagger. Instead of bombastic spectacle, the world is conveyed with assurance in tone, texture, and rhythm. This attitude is best expressed in the red-screen scene. Dhar chooses to use disorientation for a moment that mainstream film would typically bring to life with slow motion, swelling music, and visual polish. Emotion emerges as impact rather than images, color fades, and clarity breaks. Dhurandhar chooses discomfort in a setting that is fixated on romanticizing trauma. Here,



style is about conveying a story rather than decorating. With Dhurandhar, Dhar created a distinctive directing style that is now uncommon in Bollywood. In Dhurandhar, Lyari is a living area rather than a backdrop. You can feel the filth, heat, perspiration, and desperation. The streets, homes, warehouses, and interrogation rooms all feel worn down by time and brutality in this compulsive production design. Nothing appears to be staged. Everything seems to be inhabited. This reality is enhanced by the music. Generic Middle Eastern signals are frequently used in Hindi spy movies to indicate Pakistan. That shorthand is rejected by Dhurandhar. In order to unnervingly rather than exoticize the environment, composer Saswath Sachdev incorporates unexpected textures throughout the story, such as vintage qawwali strains, retro Bollywood tunes, Punjabi folk, and disco echoes. Dhurandhar understands a simple truth many spy films forget: espionage works

best when characters drive the world, not the other way around. Ranveer Singh approaches Hamza with striking restraint. His stillness is tactical, his restraint calculated. The film understands that an undercover operative in hostile territory cannot afford emotional release. When violence finally erupts, it lands because it has been held back for so long. The film reinforces this by stripping away familiar patriotic comforts. There are no speeches, no domestic safe zones, no promise of recognition. Hamza operates by the unforgiving rules of espionage: if he is caught, the country cannot claim him; if he dies, the mission simply disappears with him. This anonymity isn’t ideological. It’s procedural. Akshaye Khanna provides the film’s emotional and moral anchor. His performance balances suspicion, authority and empathy, grounding the narrative with quiet control. The violence in Dhurandhar is raw and often difficult to watch. But unlike stylised action films, it is never aspirational. It reflects the documented brutality of Lyari’s gangland history, where violence is routine rather than exceptional. Instead of choreographing action like a ballet, Dhar presents it with minimal filtration. The discomfort is intentional. In most Bollywood spy films, violence thrills. Here, it leaves a mark. Brutality is treated as context and consequence, not as spectacle designed for applause. Perhaps Dhurandhar’s boldest choice is its patience. Real intelligence work is not constant adrenaline; it is long stretches of observation, compliance and waiting, punctuated by moments of terror. The film embraces that rhythm. This is why the runtime feels demanding but honest. Dhurandhar is less about missions and more about what missions do to people – how identity thins out, how trust corrodes, how survival becomes the only measurable success. That alone sets it apart from the Bollywood spy template. Dhurandhar does not redefine the spy genre by being louder or more patriotic. It does so by refusing to dilute the reality it steps into. Masculinity here is not swagger or chest-thumping heroism; it is about survival – the kind required to endure humiliation, violence and constant threat. Violence is not a spectacle, but a consequence. It isn’t a flawless film. The love track weakens the narrative and the length demands patience. But its conviction never wavers. In an industry crowded with stylised espionage fantasies, Dhurandhar stands apart because it refuses comfort. It doesn’t soften brutality or hand out easy heroism. Many of the film’s most criticised choices are also its most deliberate ones. The violence reflects a documented gangland ecosystem rather than shock value.

Avocado Milkshake Recipe, A No-Fire Cooking Idea At-Home

Avocado milkshake has become a favourite and healthy choice for people who want a healthy breakfast and no-fire cooking recipes without much preparation. Avocado has a long historical connection to Central and South America, where it was cultivated thousands of years ago for its ability to provide steady energy. Over time, it gained popularity across continents, and now it is loved and appreciated for its natural creamy texture, which makes it ideal for blending into smoothies. Research shows that avocado is known for its healthy fat, fibre, and minerals that help maintain fullness and support digestion. This makes an avocado milkshake a helpful option for people searching for low-calorie food ideas or smoothie recipes that don't rely on processed ingredients. The fruit's high nutrient density also contributes to stable energy levels, making it suitable for breakfast, mid-day hunger, or evening refreshment. Its mild

flavour pairs well with milk, curd, or plant-based alternatives, making the recipe adaptable to dietary needs. Avocado's rise in popularity has led to different regions developing their own versions of the milkshake. South-east Asian cafes often blend with condensed milk, while Middle Eastern versions lean towards dates and nuts for natural sweetness. In India, the avocado milkshake recipe is often kept simple to highlight the natural creaminess of the fruit while keeping the calorie count reasonable. This flexibility allows the drink to fit into daily meal plans without needing special techniques or equipment. The growing interest in avocado calories and nutrition has inspired many households to include this shake in no-fire cooking routines. Its ease of preparation, nutrient balance, and long global history make it a reliable recipe for anyone.

Simple and No-Cook Recipe To Prepare An Avocado Milkshake At Home

This avocado milkshake recipe



transforms a nutrient-rich fruit into a quick, no-fire drink. Avocado has roots in Central and South America, where it was valued for its energy-boosting

fats. Its creamy texture blends easily, creating a low-calorie food option that fits into smoothie recipes and everyday no-fire cooking routines.

Instructions
Slice the avocado, remove the seed, and scoop the pulp into a blender. Add milk, honey or jaggery, va-



nilla (optional), and ice cubes. Blend until smooth and thick. Adjust sweetness or milk quan-

tity as needed. Pour into glasses and serve immediately.

Vegetarian Pizzas That Make It Easy to Eat Your Veggies

We'll just go ahead and say it: We love pizza. How many other dishes can you eat for any meal of the day?! You can top pizza with just about any ingredient you're craving and enjoy it year-round. Easily customizable, pizza can be made vegan, vegetarian or piled with meaty options. And the rise of at-home pizza ovens has made it even easier to whip up a pie. (Check out these crust recipes to get started.) When you're in the mood to cook outside, a grilled pizza is a delicious choice. Make a quick sauce to spoon onto your homemade dough, then top with sliced mozzarella and charred vegetables. This recipe calls for bell peppers and red onions, but you can really use whatever looks good at the store..

Barbecue Mushroom Pizza
The key to this meatless version of BBQ chicken pizza is to get the mushrooms nicely browned and crisp before adding the BBQ sauce. Be sure to cook them undisturbed for the first five minutes to initiate the browning. This will keep the mushrooms from being soggy and will create a meaty, crispy topping for the pizza.

Pepperoni Pizza and Anti-past-NO Meat Salad
No, this deep-dish pizza isn't topped with pepperoni — that's zucchini! And there's actually another layer of delicious veggies under the cheese.

Verdura Pizza
Pizza in under 30 minutes that isn't from your freezer is pos-



sible, thanks to premade pizza dough. Dress it up with your favorite jarred sauce and crumbled goat cheese, then bake. Top the finished pizza with greens, marinated artichoke hearts, roasted red peppers and olives for a truly impressive and quick meal.

Cauliflower Pizza Crust
Instead of putting veggies on top of your pizza, use them to make the crust. The secret to the best cauliflower crust is to be sure you drain all the excess moisture out of the cauliflower after it has been steamed. A kitchen towel can help you get the job done.

Mushroom Lovers' French Bread Pizzas
This is a great supper for meat-free and meat eaters alike because it is hearty — mushrooms are

so beefy and delicious. A loaf of French bread helps cut down on prep time and provides a sturdy base for lots of shredded cheese and sauteed mushrooms.

Healthy Whole-Wheat Pizza with Arugula Parsley Pesto
This nutrient-packed pesto is made with arugula for a snappy change of pace. Just a little perks up a hearty whole-wheat crust but you'll quickly find other uses for it too.

Margherita Pizza
An easy homemade tomato sauce — made with olive oil, garlic, fresh herbs and canned whole tomatoes — and simply fresh buffalo mozzarella make this pizza unforgettable.

Curry Cauliflower Pizza
Curry roasted cauliflower, a

creamy fondue sauce and naan bread — that alone sounds amazing, but a quick apricot chutney and fried curry leaves really help make this dish sing!

Spinach-Artichoke Pizza Bagels
You love spinach-artichoke dip, and you also really love pizza bagels. Putting them together just makes sense. Use a few shortcuts (like store-bought bagels and frozen spinach) to get this dish on the table in just 40 minutes.

Avocado Toast Pizza
This pizza is like a mashup of avocado toast and white pizza, and we're not angry about it. The creamy three-cheese sauce provides a flavorful bed for the sliced avocado; while this pizza makes a great dinner, we see no reason not to invite it to brunch too.

Palak Keema: A Winter Special Comfort Dish

Winter cravings are predictable in the best possible way. The air feels heavier, evenings arrive early, and the body leans naturally towards food that feels warm, filling, and dependable. This is also the season when spinach is at its best and keema-based dishes return to regular dinner rotations. Palak Keema sits right at that intersection of nutrition and indulgence. It is rich without being greasy, hearty without being overwhelming, and familiar without ever feeling boring. The green of the spinach brings freshness to the depth of the minced meat, while the spices quietly do their job in the background. Whether paired with rotis, parathas, or simple rice, Palak Keema behaves like a winter staple that never needs justification. It feels seasonal, practical, and comforting in a way few dishes manage.

Why Palak Keema Works So Well In Winter
What makes Palak Keema especially suited to colder months is not only its warmth but how efficiently it nourishes the body. Spinach brings iron, fibre, and antioxidants that support immunity when seasonal illnesses are common. Keema contributes protein and slow-release energy, making the dish satisfying for long hours. The spices used are balanced rather than aggressive, which keeps the dish suitable for regular home meals. There is also a flexibility built into this recipe. It can be cooked mild for everyday lunches or adjusted for those who prefer a little more heat. The texture stays creamy and comforting, while the aroma remains gently spiced. This ability to adapt without losing its identity is what keeps Palak Keema relevant year after year.

Ingredients For Palak Keema
1/2 kg keema
1 kg spinach
1 onion, chopped
1 tomato, chopped
2 green chillies, chopped
1/2 cup curd
1 tsp coriander powder
1/2 tsp red chilli powder
1/2 tsp garam masala
Salt to taste
2 tbsp kasuri methi
3 tbsp oil

How To Make Palak Keema At Home
1. Preparing The Spinach Base
Spinach needs proper cleaning to avoid any grit in the final curry. Wash it thoroughly, blanch it briefly, then blend it into a paste. Some prefer a coarse texture for a more rustic finish, while others opt for a smooth puree. Both work equally well and only change

mouthfeel, not flavour.

2. Building The Flavour Base
Heat oil in a pan and add cumin seeds. Once they begin to crackle, add the chopped onions along with ginger and garlic if used. Cook until soft and lightly golden. This stage decides how deep and rounded the final curry tastes, so it is worth giving it time.

3. Cooking The Keema Properly
Add the minced meat and break up all lumps carefully. Cook on medium heat until the keema changes colour and the raw aroma disappears. This step allows the meat to absorb the base flavours rather than sitting on top of them.

4. Developing The Masala
Add chopped tomatoes, salt, turmeric, coriander powder, and red chilli powder. Cook until the tomatoes soften fully and oil begins to separate. At this point, the masala stops tasting raw and starts carrying real depth.

5. Bringing Spinach And Keema Together
Add the prepared spinach paste and mix slowly. Let it simmer so the spinach blends naturally into the masala and the keema. The colour deepens and the texture begins to look like a cohesive curry rather than separate components.

6. Adjusting The Texture
If the curry feels too thick, add a little water and let it simmer again. The goal is a consistency that coats the spoon but still flows easily.

7. Final Spicing And Aroma
Add garam masala in the final minute, followed by crushed kasuri methi. These two ingredients lift the aroma without dominating the spinach and meat.

8. Resting Before Serving
Allow the Palak Keema to rest for five minutes off the heat. This short pause lets flavours settle and makes the final dish taste more balanced and rounded.

Serve hot with rotis, parathas, or rice. It works equally well for weekday lunches and slow weekend dinners.

Why This Dish Remains A Winter Favourite
Palak Keema survives trends because it makes sense. It is seasonal, nutritionally balanced, adaptable, and deeply comforting. It does not demand extravagant ingredients or complicated steps. What it offers instead is consistency, warmth, and a sense of familiarity that feels especially welcome during winter. In many homes, it is not just a recipe but a routine.

13 Best Chocolate Cake Recipes

Chocolate is everyone's favourite. It has to be. And so are chocolate cakes. They never fail to lure you with the irresistible aroma that captures you when you pass a bakery. The super soft and moist slabs of sponge with oozing molten middles or a chocolate ganache frosting can easily sweep you off your feet. Chocolate cakes are a real crowd pleaser, and these chocolate cake recipes are something to drool over, definitely. They are perfect treats for any celebration.

1. Nigella Lawson suggests that you should take all the ingredients out of the refrigerator and bring them to room temperature before baking. Everything, especially butter, should be at normal room temperature so that the batter doesn't become lumpy.
2. Measure, weigh and bake away. Things will be simpler if you're accurate with the ingredients and weights as stated in the recipe. For this, use table spoons to ensure accuracy.
3. After mixing the ingredients and making the batter, allow the mixture to get some air. It will help to avoid lumps and increase the volume of the cake. Don't whisk the batter vigorously because it will chuck the air out of the batter.
4. Stick to cooking timings. You don't want your cake to be under- or overcooked. Do check your cake with a skewer before you take your cake out. Insert the skewer into the cake, and if it comes out dry and clean, that indicates that the cake is cooked. And if the cake isn't cooked, cover the top with a dampened greaseproof paper to avoid the crust of the cake from burning.
5. We know it's hard to wait, but don't forget to cool down your cake. This gives the cake a

chance to finish baking from within and bring itself to room temperature.

1. **Flourless Chocolate Cake**
If you're going to bake for the first time, this recipe is perfect for you. It requires only five ingredients and is ready in a few simple steps.
2. **Gluten-Free Chocolate Cake**
A decadent dark chocolate cake that uses ground almonds instead of flour. Finish with a creamy homemade ganache. Gluten-free cakes can also be ordered online using a food delivery app.
3. **Chocolate Cake in a Pressure Cooker**
No oven? No problem! We got you. Delicious and spongy, this chocolate cake is a keeper for days when you are craving cake but have no power! Here's how to bake a cake in a pressure cooker.
4. **Sour Cream Chocolate Cake**
Never tasted a chocolate cake with sour cream? Quick and gooey, try this one and you won't regret it. We promise. This easy recipe is a blessing if you have kids at home; this will be your go-to recipe for a quick cake party for them!



Sadhguru reveals how honey affects your energy, digestion, and overall health

Honey has become a topic of renewed curiosity as people look for natural substances that offer both nutritional value and physiological support. Its complex composition, which includes antioxidants, organic acids, trace minerals and simple sugars, has made researchers increasingly interested in how it interacts with the human body. Public discussions often highlight claims about its influence on energy, circulation and metabolic comfort, prompting readers to examine whether traditional views align with current scientific understanding. Meanwhile, the work on the honey's biochemical activity is gradually unveiling how different varieties cause different effects in the body. The combination of cultural fascination and scientific investigation has made the honey a household word in a way that is simultaneously old and new. Sadhguru's widely shared post brought into the limelight a new aspect of the debate by suggesting that honey's chemical makeup is almost identical to human blood, therefore its effect varies with the manner of its consumption. He argued that it is forbidden to cook honey or to put it in boiling water because heat can change its natural properties. Honey drunk with warm water, in his view, can assist haemoglobin levels, relieve circulatory disorders and give a feeling of more energy. The guru also opined that yogis might find it useful to have honey in their regimens as it helps to keep the blood chemistry balanced and supports physical vibrancy. However, these concepts are just among many others encompassed in the research. An article published in Pharmacognosy Represents honey as a source of antioxidants, exhibiting mild antimicrobial properties, and containing bio-compounds that may have an impact on metabolic disorders. These features serve as a more organized framework for grasping some of the notion of the product and its effect. Although honey is not a magic medicine, researchers have detected that their comfort or energy is improved when honey is used appropriately. Most individuals experiment with various methods of eating honey based on culture, preferences, or digestive comfort. A lot of people decide to combine a little with warm water and drink it in the morning because it is gentle on the stomach and provides constant energy.

Doctor’s Perspective on Sedentary Living



Working officials often spend the majority of their office hours sitting at their desks while working on their computers, leading a sedentary lifestyle. With hectic work schedules, some people do find time to go to the gym. However, most of their time throughout the day is spent sitting, and this could lead to increased health risks. Dr Jayanti Khura, consultant-internal medicine, Manipal Hospital Bhubaneswar, talked about how a sedentary lifestyle increases disease risks, what you can do to be more active apart from hitting the gym, and how a lack of body movement affects our health. Dr Khura explained, “A sedentary lifestyle, which includes more sitting and less movement throughout the day, increases various health risks.

It is as harmful as smoking, even if you are not a smoker.”According to the expert, our bodies are designed for movement. Therefore, when we deny them that essential activity, “we not only reduce our physical health but also interfere with vital bodily functions like metabolism, circulation, and digestion.” Even people who go to the gym regularly but remain seated for the rest of the day are not fully protected from the risks of a sedentary lifestyle. It’s important to integrate frequent, light activity throughout the day to keep the body active and the mind alert,” Dr Khura stated. Dr Khura also highlighted what a sedentary lifestyle leads to: Obesity: A sedentary lifestyle can lead to obesity, due to a lack of movement, which results in low calorie

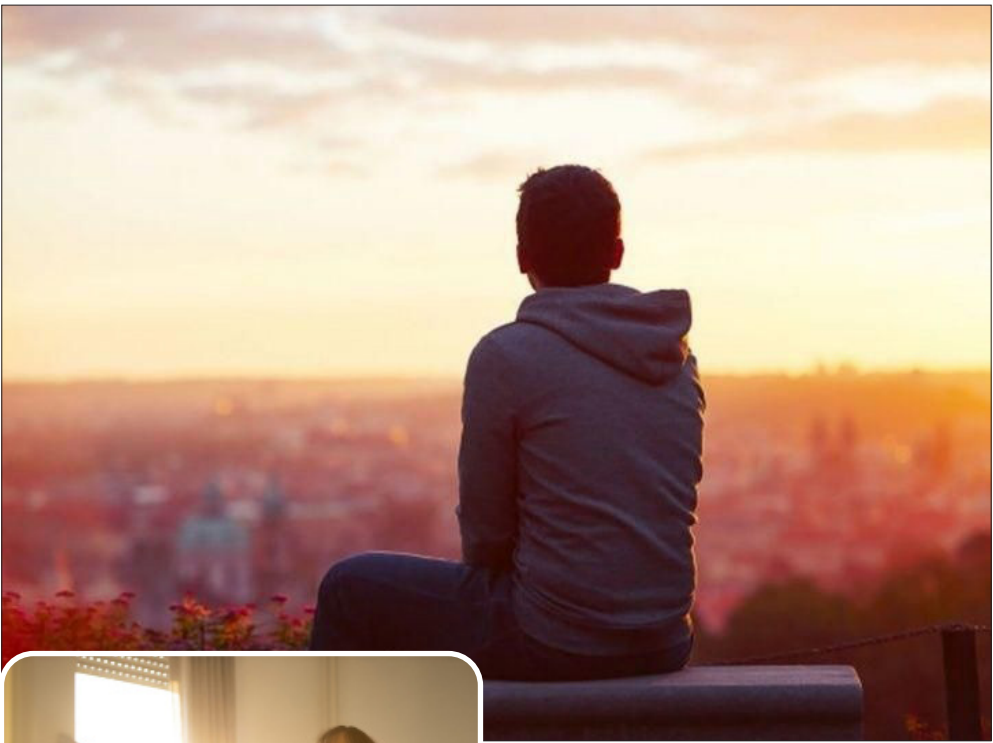
burning and, as a result, fat deposition. All these can lead to decreased insulin sensitivity and increased risk of diabetes. High blood pressure: A sedentary lifestyle can also cause an increased risk of high blood pressure and heart disease. Cancer risk: It has also been seen that cancer risk goes up with prolonged sitting hours. Bone health: A sedentary lifestyle takes a toll on our bones, making them weaker. Because our bone needs movement to stay strong. Poor posture: Prolonged sitting also causes back pain and neck pain due to poor posture. Depression and anxiety: Your mental health also gets affected because of a sedentary lifestyle. It can lead to depression and anxiety.

Humans need solitude

How being alone can make you happier

In Wim Wenders’ recent film Perfect Days, the main character, a Tokyo toilet cleaner, spends many of his hours in solitude; watering plants, contemplating, listening to music and reading. While more characters are introduced as the film develops, for many viewers its earlier moments are, indeed, perfect; described by the BBC’s own Nicholas Barber as a “meditation on the serenity of an existence stripped to its essentials”, it really struck a chord. No wonder. Thoughtful and positive outlooks on solitude have been taking up more and more space on our screens, bookshelves and smartphones, from podcasts to viral TikToks. Seemingly, there’s never been a better time to be alone. In the past couple of years, several titles on the topic have been released, with a few more in the works. Solitude: The Science and Power of Being Alone, and Solo: Building a Remarkable Life of Your Own hit the shelves in 2024, and Nicola Slawson’s Single: Living a Complete Life on Your Own Terms was published in February. Then last month saw the release of Emma Gannon’s much-anticipated novel Table For One; having made her name with non-fiction books questioning traditional ideas of success and productivity, Gannon is now reconsidering modern relationships, in a love story focusing on a young woman finding joy in being alone, rather than with a partner. Later this year, two more self-help guides, The Joy of Solitude: How to Reconnect with Yourself in an Overconnected World and The Joy of Sleeping Alone, are coming out, as well as a paperback, English translation of Daniel Schreiber’s Alone: Reflections on Solitary Living, which originally came out in Germany in 2021.

Packed with keen observations and helpful tips, this new wave of books aims not only to destigmatise solitude, but also to make a case for its benefits and pleasures. Such a powerful stream of publications might come as a surprise, at first, to everyone who has lived through the pandemic and inevitably heard of – or got a bitter taste of – the so-called “loneliness epidemic”, a term popularised in 2023 by then US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy. “Post pandemic, there [was] a huge focus on loneliness, for a really good reason,” says Robert Coplan, a professor in psychology at Carleton University in Ottawa and au-



thor of The Joy of Solitude: How to Reconnect with Yourself in an Overconnected World. But because of the concerns about the effects of loneliness, he says, solitude ended up “with a bit of a bad reputation – throwing the baby out with the bath water, so to speak”. Now, though, the discourse is course-correct-

ing itself. The distinction between loneliness and solitude, according to Coplan, is an important one, and many writers echo this sentiment. “While loneliness is a serious and harmful problem for some people, it is a subjective state very different from solitude, that someone has [actively] chosen for positive reasons,” says journalist Heather Hansen. In 2024, she co-authored the aforementioned Solitude: The Science and Power of Being Alone with Netta Weinstein and Thuy-vy T Nguyen. Hansen had watched the media telling us we’re very lonely for a while; but as a counter to this narrative, she says, “people are reflecting on their own lives and recognising that they are choosing solitude for various reasons that benefit them”. “I have a theory that since the pandemic we’ve been able to clearly understand the difference between loneliness and chosen solitude,” says Emma Gannon, who is also a big proponent of “slow living”.

Inside Jyotika and Suriya’s holiday in ‘paradise’ Seychelles

Suriya and Jyotika, two actors, recently shared a video on Instagram of their holiday in the Seychelles, a tropical paradise known for its pristine beaches, turquoise waters, and lush landscapes. The archipelago, located in the Indian Ocean off the eastern coast of Africa, comprises 115 islands, each offering a unique experience. The actors’ Seychelles getaway was unforgettable, featuring relaxing activities and breathtaking views. They took a private helicopter ride above the turquoise waters and emerald islands, while also relaxing in a luxurious infinity pool overlooking the Indian Ocean. The Seychelles is known for its picturesque rock formations and shallow, calm waters, and the actors explored them by hiking to panoramic sea views and trying local cuisine and tropical fruits. They also shared a romantic beach getaway with powdery white sands and encountering free-roaming giant tortoises in a natural reserve. Jyotika also shared candid photos of herself sipping fresh coconut water and lounging in their luxury hotel room. The Seychelles offers a perfect blend of adventure, relaxation, and romance for couples, offering a perfect blend of thrilling experiences, serene moments, and cultural immersion.

Why ‘doing nothing, intentionally’ is good for us

How does the idea of doing nothing for a year sound? No work, no emails, no career progression, no striving or achieving or being productive. For many of us, such a thought might once have brought its own anxiety attack – surely, work is status, earning money is achievement, and being busy is a brag? But these days, a year of nothing is more likely to sound dreamy, even aspirational – there has been, as they say, a vibe shift. Millennials are embracing the concept of #SlowLiving – the hashtag has been used more than six million times on Instagram (despite posting on Insta being fairly antithetical to its principles of a mindful, sustainable lifestyle, with much reduced screen-time). Gen Z, meanwhile, have pioneered quiet quitting and “lazy girl jobs”, where one does the minimum at work to preserve your energy for the more meaningful parts of your life, be that hobbies, relationships, or self-care. And people across the generations are united to wanting to work less: in the UK, the concept of the



four-day week is gaining serious traction. To be facetious about it: hustle is out, and rest is in. And this is something Emma Gannon knows all about: the prolific author, podcaster, and Substack entrepre-

neur published A Year of Nothing – her account of taking an entire 12 months off – earlier this year. It quickly sold out when published earlier this summer, and has proved so popular it will now be re-

printed and available to buy in November. Not that it was, initially, a lifestyle choice: Gannon suffered such extremely bad burnout, she had no choice but to stop working. Her account of her year of rest and recuperation is now published in two small, sweetly readable volumes by The Pound Project, charting her journey back to health via gentle activities such as journaling, watching children’s TV, bird-watching, and the inevitable cold-water swimming (which Gannon knowingly acknowledges is a cliché for “Millennial writers with their bobs and tote bags”, but comes to love anyway). Having been fully on-board with the girl-boss culture of the 2010s, Gannon had already stepped away from that with her last book, The Success Myth: Letting Go of Having It All, which explored how relentlessly striving for success rarely brings true happiness. But it was experiencing complete burnout that forced her to really confront the importance of rest. “Looking back, there were lots of red flags – feeling very confused, pulsating headaches, not being able to focus on things in the room, quite

scary stuff. But I over-rode it, [thinking]: ‘I’m busy, I’ve got to crack on’,” she recalls. Suddenly, in 2022, her body went into a forced shut-down mode. “Couldn’t look at a phone, couldn’t look at a screen, couldn’t walk down a street without feeling fragile. It was the feeling that, ‘oh you can’t muddle your way through this – you have to stop’. Many people with chronic burnout have to get to that point before they’ll take time off [work], because we’re so conditioned in this society to push through at all costs. “But we were designed to have naps, and [walks in] the park. To go for a swim, and look at the sky. That stuff’s really important,” Gannon insists. And she’s determined to carry the lessons from her burnout, and her recovery, into a slower, more spacious life. “Nothing is worth your health.” But she’s far from ploughing a lonely furrow, here – a scan of the self-help or pop philosophy sections of your local bookshop, or indeed a glance at the list of recommended reading at the back of A Year of Nothing, reveals a flourishing crop of books encouraging us to slow the heck down.

Social Media Loves Vitamin D3: Expert Share What You Need To Know About It

Social media and so-called wellness experts are constantly touting new supplements and remedies online. They create a sense of urgency and fear among people, making them believe that a deficiency can take a terrible turn. The latest wellness trend that is doing the rounds online is the addition of vitamin D3 supplements to one’s diet. When most people hear about vitamin D, they think of strong bones,

milk commercials, or maybe the advice to “get some sun”. But science and ancient wisdom now tell us there’s far more to this essential nutrient than meets the eye. In particular, vitamin D3, the form our body produces from sunlight, has emerged as a powerful player in immune function, inflammation control, heart health, metabolism, and even mental well-being. But is there even a need to consume this supplement? Which group of people needs to have vita-

min D3? And what exactly is it? Deepika Rathod, Chief Nutrition Officer at Luke Coutinho Holistic Healing Systems, tells us everything you need to know about vitamin D3. Vitamin D3 is the bioactive form of vitamin D that the human body synthesises naturally when skin is exposed to midday UVB sunlight. Unlike its plant-derived counterpart, D2, vitamin D3 is synthesised in the skin when UVB rays from sunlight hit the skin and is more efficiently absorbed and utilised

by the body, explains Deepika. Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin, which means it is stored in your liver and fat tissue, your body’s long-term pantry, so to speak. Once produced, D3 is stored in fat and liver tissues, where it supports everything from calcium and phosphorus metabolism to immune regulation, cardiovascular integrity, and even emotional resilience. In essence, it’s not just a vitamin; it’s a critical hormonal ally for long-term health.



Genelia Deshmukh Channels Vintage Bollywood Glam In A Rose-Toned Anavila Saree

In a fashion landscape dominated by spectacle and excess, Genelia Deshmukh’s latest Indianwear appearance feels refreshingly intentional. The actor taps into a gentler kind of glamour – one rooted in mood, memory and materiality – proving that nostalgia doesn’t need to shout to be felt. Her look draws from the visual language of old Hindi cinema, where elegance unfolded slowly and femininity was expressed through softness rather than spectacle. At the centre of this moment is a deep rose saree by Anavila, chosen not for immediate impact but for its emotional depth. It’s the kind of piece that rewards a second glance, revealing its beauty in

layers. Crafted in a blend of organza and mulberry silk, the Anavila saree moves with an almost weightless fluidity. Its surface is adorned with a baroque-inspired rose motif rendered within a single colour family, lending the drape a sense of cohesion and restraint. The monochromatic approach keeps the design refined, while subtle pink sequins are scattered sparingly, catching light in fleeting, understated glimmers rather than overt shine. A slim silk border frames the saree neatly, offering quiet structure to an otherwise ethereal fabric. It’s a thoughtful detail that grounds the look, preventing it from tipping into overt romance and keeping it firmly



in the realm of modern classicism. Balancing the saree’s delicacy, Genelia Deshmukh paired her ensemble with a fitted blouse. The blouse came with a quilted, embroidered finish.

The silhouette is sculpted, lending definition and strength to the overall look. This contrast, between fluid drape and structured tailoring, adds a contemporary edge, ensuring the ensemble feels styled rather than styled-up. Genelia’s jewellery stays loyal to the sari’s timeless mood. A multi-layered kundan necklace takes centre stage, its traditional craftsmanship echoing the vintage undertones of the look. Paired with classic kundan studs, the jewellery doesn’t compete – it converses, enhancing the sari’s old-world charm while maintaining elegance. You May Like Her makeup mirrors the cinematic reference with restraint and intention.

Seven colors dominate ethnic clothing and provide flair and flare to accessories

Pastels are the show-stoppers that turn heads with their soft-spoken, sorbet-like shades. The pastel style is the quiet sister of dopamine dressing, flattering both in person and on camera, with soft colours bringing in the sweet charm. Ethnic wear is now seeing pastels take up space, from brunches and weddings to festive functions and everything in between. While fuchsia, hot pink, parrot green, scarlet, tangerine, or navy blue once ruled the celebration scene with their dramatic flair, pastels are for those who seek a refreshing

alternative, quiet yet beautiful. Pastels may not dominate the frame the way brighter, more vibrant colours do. **Mint:** A mint green sharara with mirror work is ideal for a daytime function. It appears fresh, flirty, and photogenic in bright sunlight. **Blush pink-** Blush pink lehenga is a go-to for main character energy because of the romantic hue. Pair it with pearl jewellery to look regal. **Lilac:** Lilac is a dreamy and soft colour. It has a luxurious vibe to it, making you stand out. A lilac anarkali looks good for functions. **Ice baby blue:** A powder

blue kurta set with chikan-kari embroidery evokes understated elegance. Add silver jhumkas with a potli for added grace. **Peach:** Peach is a versatile shade. A peach saree is perfect for all kinds of functions. Go for a blouse with a contrasting colour. **Sage:** Sage green co-ord sets with light threadwork are perfect for haldi skin and brunch vibes. Style your hair in messy curls with co-ords. **Buttercream:** A butter yellow palazzo brings warmth and brightness to a festive gathering. Add some oxidised silver jewellery as accessories.

SPORTS

Salah was left off of Liverpool’s Champions League roster against Inter

New Delhi: Following the Egyptian forward’s vocal criticism of the team and head coach Arne Slot, Liverpool has decided not to include Mo-hamed Salah in their traveling squad for the Champions League match against Inter Milan. Salah, whose name was not included in the 19-player roster released on Monday, seemed upbeat during training in England but will not play when the team travels to Italy for the piv-otal group-stage game.Following his previous remarks about his relationship with the club and Slot, Salah was dropped out of the starting lineup for the third straight game over the weekend.

The forward said he has “no relationship” with Slot and that it “seems like the club has thrown me under the bus.”

These comments have increased conjecture about his position in the team, especially as the January transfer market draws near. Alisson, Gomez, Van Dijk, Konate, Kerkez, Wirtz, Szoboszalai, Isak, Mac Allister, Bradley, Jones, Ekitike, Mamardashvili, Robertson, Woodman, Gravenberch, Nyonli, Ngumoha, and Lucky are among the Liverpool players selected to play Inter Milan. Given Salah’s impact on the club in prior seasons and at a crucial juncture in Liverpool’s European campaign, his exclusion is noteworthy. Salah is not present because he is getting ready to play for Egypt in the Africa Cup of Nations,



which starts later this month. His future at Anfield has been questioned due to his international obligations and his exclusion from the Liverpool squad, especially since the transfer window is scheduled to open in January. Both the football community and supporters are keeping a close eye on the situation. Salah has become as a key player during his eight years at Liverpool, where he has won the Champions League and two Premier League crowns. He most recently agreed to a two-year contract extension in April, right before

receiving his second Premier League Player of the Season title. His leadership and goal-scoring record have been instrumental in the club’s recent successes. The decision to leave Salah out against Inter Milan comes at a time of uncertainty for both player and club. With Liverpool seeking to secure their progression in the Champions League and Salah set to represent Egypt in a major international tournament, the coming weeks could prove decisive in shaping the future of one of the Premier League’s most prolific talents.

The Australian Open doubles wildcard goes to Niki Poonacha

New Delhi: India’s Niki Kaliyanda Poonacha has taken the biggest leap of his tennis career, winning a coveted main-draw wildcard for the 2026 Australian Open men’s doubles after lifting the Asia-Pacific Wildcard Playoff title with Thailand’s Pruchya Isaro on Friday. Throughout the week in Chengdu, China, the pair performed with assurance and poise, and in the final, they defeated Seita Kusuvara and Katsuki Nakagawa of Japan 6-4, 6-3 to secure their spot at Melbourne Park. For Poonacha, the achievement represents his long-awaited entry into a Grand Slam main draw. The 30-year-old Indian has spent much of his professional experience grinding through the ATP Challenger and ITF circuits, steadily earning his reputation as a dependable doubles specialist. A former world No. 98 in doubles with six Chal-lenger titles to his résumé, Poonacha has been banging on the door of elite tennis for years. He now has an opportunity to display his skills on one of the most prominent platforms of the sport thanks to the Australian Open wildcard. Isaro and Poonacha exhibited outstanding chemistry



throughout the playoff, employing their strong serving patterns, crisp net play and confidence under duress to outplay more experienced regional rivals. Their victory adds another bright Indian name to the increasing pool of Grand Slam-bound dou-bles players — a space in which India has traditionally experienced success. The triumph has also earned Poonacha recognition back home. The Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLTA) on Saturday announced a cash reward of 1 lakh to honour his milestone achievement. The association’s secretary, Maheshwar Rao, praised Poonacha’s consistency and highlighted his contribution to continuing the state’s strong tennis legacy. “We at KSLTA are extremely thrilled at Niki Poonacha’s performance at Chengdu, where he won the Australian Open wild card qualifying event along with his partner, Pruchya Isaro,” Rao said. “We are happy and proud that he continues the legacy of Rohan Bopanna, who just retired. We wish Poonacha and Pruchya Isaro all the very best in Australian Open 2026 and we are sure he will make our state and nation proud.”

Steve Smith and Venkatesh Iyer lead the top prize bracket



New Delhi: It’s understandable why the Rs 2 crore category has taken center stage in the IPL 2026 auction. Forty players who feel they are worth every penny of the league’s premium valuation are at the top of the reserve-price pyramid. Cameron Green, a multifaceted all-rounder whose batting range and seam bowling make him the main attraction, particularly for big-purse sides like KKR and CSK, stands out among them as the one teams are anticipated to chase hardest. However, Green is not the end of the high-value drama. After an uneven 2025 season, Venkatesh Iyer, who was earlier acquired by KKR for an incredible Rs 23.75 crore, is back in the auction pool. One of the more interesting subplots is his re-entry at the highest base price. Adding further character to this Rs 2 crore ensemble is Australia stalwart Steve Smith, who has made a surprise comeback to the auction list after being absent from the league since 2021. His decision to list himself at the top bracket hints at unfinished T20 ambitions and injects a nostalgic twist into this year’s proceedings. Together, these names contribute to a top tier that is more colour-ful, unpredictable and star-studded than usual.

R Praggnanandhaa’s victory in the FIDE Circuit qualifies him for the 2026 Candidates

India’s chess prodigy has gone on to win the FIDE Circuit 2025 tournament, securing his position in the upcoming edition of the Candidates tournament, set to begin in 2026.

New Delhi: After winning the FIDE Circuit 2025, Indian chess prodigy Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu formally secured his spot in the Candidates Tournament 2026. This milestone was confirmed on Monday, December 8. With the confirmation, a year in which he has been India’s best performance comes to a dramatic and crucial conclusion. Following a last-minute decision to attend the London Chess Classic Open, the 19-year-old’s qualification was thrillingly sealed. That action proved to be crucial, guaranteeing his victory in the FIDE Circuit rankings and removing any reliance on the forthcoming Rapid and Blitz events. It was a well-thought-out risk that paid off flawlessly. Anish Giri, Fabiano Caruana, Matthias Bluebaum, and Javokhir Sindarov were among the elite names who had already clinched their Candidates spots. At the London Chess Classic Elite, Nodirbek Abdusattorov made a fierce late drive that resulted in 19.62 circuit points and one of the highest Tournament Performance Ratings in recent memory. However, Praggnanandhaa’s overall total remained at the top despite that remarkable



leap. His path to the Candidates was paved with incredible victories on several continents. He won the International Chess Masters Tournament in Uzbekistan to cap off his incredible run after winning the renowned Tata Steel Chess Masters and the Superbet Chess Classic. These successes came on the back of adversity too, including a premature fourth-round exit from the 2024 FIDE Chess World Cup — making his resurgence all the more compelling. The stakes now rise further. The winner of the Candidates Tournament will earn the right to challenge reigning world

champion D Gukesh for the ultimate crown in chess — the FIDE World Championship title. With it increasingly likely that Praggnanandhaa will be India’s lone representative at the Candidates, expectations will be immense. As Gukesh navigates a difficult spell of form, the young challenger will quietly believe that the stage is set for him to emulate legends like Viswanathan Anand. The journey is far from over, but with momentum firmly on his side, Praggnanandhaa has already written one of the defining stories of modern Indian chess.

Cole Palmer was rested for Chelsea’s Champions League match against Atalanta

New Delhi: Cole Palmer, who recently recovered from an injury, will be sidelined for Chelsea’s Champions League match against Atalanta on Tuesday. In Saturday’s goalless Premier League draw at Bournemouth, the England forward started for his team for the first time since September. During his pre-match press conference on Monday, Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca stated, “Cole is in part of his



process in this moment.” He can’t play two straight games in three days, thus he’s not available. That was something we had

planned, and it’s only to keep him safe. Palmer’s return was delayed by a toe injury after he was first sidelined by a groin issue.

Liam Delap is also absent after the striker injured his shoulder at Bournemouth, but Maresca had a positive update on him. “Liam, fortunately, (there) is not any fracture so that is good news,” the Italian said. “In terms of how long he will be out, we are not sure at this stage.” Chelsea is seventh in the Champions League standings, having beaten Barcelona 3-0 at Stamford Bridge last time out.

Pooja Tomar promises to the mentor India’s upcoming warriors

New Delhi: Pooja Tomar’s ascent to become the first Indian woman to win a UFC bout has been influenced by both skill and perseverance. Growing up in the small Uttar Pradesh village of Budhana, she lacked mentors, a training program, and a road map to help her understand what a fighter’s career should include. Driven by a need to establish her value in a setting where girls were rarely encouraged to dream beyond the commonplace, she made her way through every step of the martial arts journey alone. Her vision is still shaped by her early years, which were charac-



terized by scant exposure to sports and few resources. Tomar, an international mixed martial arts competitor, is committed to making sure that the following generation does not face the same

uncertainty. Her focus has shifted from personal milestones to building pathways for others , a commitment rooted deeply in the challenges she faced. Speaking to India Today’s sister channel Sports Today, Tomar said her priority is to create the structural support she never had during her formative years. Her story is a reflection of what happens when talent meets perseverance without guidance. She recalls training wherever space existed, learning techniques from fragmented sources, and feeling her way into a sport that had no ecosystem in India.

Junior World Cup makeover in Madurai gives hockey aspirants a chance to dream

New Delhi: Tamil Nadu’s southern areas have traditionally been the state’s hockey players’ birthplace. Since 2019, the districts of Madurai and Ramanathapuram, along with the Sports Hostel of Excellence (SHE) in Kovilpatti, have provided around 10 players to the State hockey squad annually. Nonetheless, Chennai, the state capital, had the exclusive right to hold international matches. The FIH Junior Men’s World Cup 2025 defied convention by scheduling the lower-level classification matches and three Pool matches in Madurai, the cultural hub. The few hundred athletes posing as volunteers, hoping that one day they too could wield their sticks for their country on the international stage, were the true beneficiaries of the tournament held at the Madurai International Hockey Stadium, despite the throngs of school-children and a scattering of ardent hockey fans. These aspiring hockey players are enrolled in the sports hostels and academies run by the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT) around the state. They have been able to undergo a free crash course in elite field hockey thanks to hosting the World Cup. In Tamil Nadu, Madurai is a hockey hotspot. [The home World Cup] is inspiring the next generation. In front of their eyes, they are observing all these stars—future stars. Before India’s league stage match against Switzerland, its only match in the temple town, P.R. Sreejesh, head coach of the Indian junior men’s team, told reporters, “They will understand the standard of hockey at the international level right now.” “Madurai. Kovilpatti. These are areas where there are a lot of talented youngsters who play this game for fun, but they never imagine anything beyond that. There is a professional route. You can be part of the national team. You can think about the Olympics. When you are witnessing these tournaments



in front of your eyes, you start to build up dreams,” the double Olympic bronze medalist added. Take the examples of A. Hari Balaji, S. Karthikeyan and S. P. Aravind, aged 17 to 18. The three friends had got together to join the Ellis Nagar Academy during the COVID-19 pandemic. From playing hockey to kill time and reduce weight, the trio are now witnessing the high-est standard of hockey in the age group just above them, with a realistic chance of getting there in three-four years. They want to stop the opponent immediately. They are a lot more aggressive. Their physicality is so much better than ours,” Aravind said, explaining how different international junior hockey was in comparison to their level. “Even their push feels like a slap,” Hari Balaji added. “Irrespective of what we teach on the ground, players will understand a lot more when they watch and learn,” said N. Muthukumar, a hockey coach at the SDAT SHE in Kovilpatti. “How players in each position play, how they keep the ball. There is an opportunity for them to improve individually.” The SHE was created to ensure a steady passage of hockey players from Tamil Nadu into the Indian hockey team. Selvam Karthi made the step to the national side after sharpening his skills in the centre. Three more players, Arun, Manimaran and Vishal, have now been called up for a national team camp in Bengaluru, according to

Muthukumar. An event of this calibre will only ensure that more players will manifest tracing the same path in future. A few members of the SDAT Madurai and Kovilpatti hostels also participated in a warm-up match against Malaysia on the eve of the tournament start. After holding the international team to 2-2 at the half-time break, the hostellers eventually went down 2-4. “As a forward, I noticed that they do a lot more skills. They are much quicker than we are and progress the ball a lot faster,” said S. Anbuchelvan, recounting his experience from participating in the game. The younger kids from the Ellis Nagar Academy also got a taste of the action, serving as ball patrol during the competition. Around 60 students have enrolled at the academy, out of whom 30 are under the Khelo India bracket. From the current batch, two members have represented the State in age-group tournaments, while eight have represented Madurai in inter-district tournaments. The refurbished Madurai stadium now has a world-class astro-turf in place of the earlier green turf, which the boys at the SDAT hostel can now use for their training. The quality of the pitch was always something the players had to adjust to when they went to other parts of the country to play in School Games Federation of India (SGFI) tournaments or the junior nationals.

At the Junior Women’s World Cup, India defeated Ireland 4-0

New Delhi: India defeated Ireland 4-0 in Santiago on Friday to cap off their Pool C campaign at the FIH Junior Women’s World Cup. In a performance characterized by control, pace, and persistent pressure, forward Purnima Yadav led the charge with a well-taken brace, while Kanika Siwach and Sakshi Rana each scored a goal.

Within the first 12 seconds of the game, India earned a penalty corner, demonstrating their purpose from the beginning. The early burst set the tone for a quarter that was played nearly exclusively in Ireland’s side, even though the opportunity was not completed. In the tenth minute, a second penalty corner also went unscored, but India was unfazed by the lost chances. After Sakshi made an accurate pass inside the circle two minutes later, Kanika Siwach was able to easily get past the Irish goalkeeper and score into an open net.

Ireland’s goalie Lucy McGoldrick made two excellent saves from consecutive penalty corners in the 17th and 23rd minutes, despite India controlling the most of the possession. The Indian goalkeeper easily stopped Ireland’s first significant attempt in the twenty-fourth minute. India led just 1-0 at the interval after earning their fifth



penalty corner in the 28th minute. The third quarter saw India tighten their grip further, stretching Ireland’s defensive line and dictating the rhythm of the contest.

Manisha nearly doubled the lead in the 40th minute, her shot sailing just over the goal. Two minutes later, India finally capitalised from a penalty corner.

A crisp pass from Sakshi Shukla found Purnima at the far post, and she expertly deflected the ball in to make it 2-0. Ireland pushed back early in the fourth quarter, with Eabha Curran breaking through and shooting toward the bottom corner.