

EKSWCO seeks Chief Secretary’s direct role in land re-verification for Lada–Sarli highway

Itanagar, Jan 14: The East Kameng Social Welfare and Cultural Organisation (EKSWCO) has urged the Chief Secretary of Arunachal Pradesh to personally oversee the physical re-verification of land and property affected by the Lada–Sarli Frontier Highway project, amid allegations of irregularities in the disbursal of compensation. In a memorandum submitted on January 12, the organisation said direct supervision by the Chief Secretary would help ensure transparency, fairness and public confidence in the ongoing process. EKSWCO represents families whose land and structures fall along the proposed alignment of the Lada–Sarli Frontier Highway in East Kameng district. The organisation welcomed the state government’s decision to begin a fresh physical re-verification of land compensation claims. It also acknowledged action taken against individuals allegedly linked

to irregularities in the compensation process. However, EKSWCO said that given the seriousness of the allegations and the anxiety among affected families, higher-level oversight was necessary to prevent further disputes and to restore trust. According to the memorandum, the district administration is scheduled to start the re-verification exercise from January 14. EKSWCO said that if the exercise is carried out under the direct watch of the Chief Secretary, it would send a strong message that the government is committed to an impartial and fair process. The organisation noted that several landowners have raised concerns over incorrect assessments and unequal compensation, which have led to tension in the area. EKSWCO also reiterated the need to strictly follow the provisions of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. It specifically called for

the immediate constitution of the Rehabilitation and Resettlement Committee under Section 45 of the Act. The organisation said the committee is essential to safeguard the rights of affected families and to ensure that rehabilitation measures are properly planned and implemented. To maintain transparency during the verification process, EKSWCO nominated its chairperson Raya Flago and its general secretary and advocate Kasung Cheda Gyadom as representatives of voluntary organisations to observe and monitor the exercise. The organisation said the presence of independent observers would help avoid confusion and ensure that the concerns of landowners are properly recorded. The organisation further appealed to the East Kameng Deputy Commissioner to make the draft compensation list public before any final payment is made. It demanded that the list should clearly mention the applicable



land rates, the amount of compensation calculated for each claimant and the basis on which the assessment has been done. EKSWCO also asked the administration to provide a 30-day period for affected families to file objections or seek clarifications. Issue chairman Chopa Cheda said compensation should be released

only after all objections are carefully examined and resolved. He said this step is necessary to make sure that no eligible family is denied its rightful dues and that errors, if any, are corrected in time. He added that a hurried disbursal without addressing objections could create long-term problems and legal disputes.

Mizoram CM Launches Ginger Processing Unit At Sairang

Sairang, Jan 14: Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma inaugurated the Ginger Processing Unit at the Sairang Horticulture Centre on Tuesday, established under the Handholding Scheme of the Mizoram Agricultural Marketing Board (MAMB). Horticulture Minister C. Lalsawivunga attended as the Guest of Honour. Speaking at the event, the Chief Minister expressed satisfaction that long-standing aspirations for the state’s agricultural sector are gradually being realized. He praised the efforts of MAMB and the Horticulture Department in setting up the processing unit, highlighting that Mizoram, traditionally an agrarian state, is now gaining recognition as the “Ginger Capital of India” due to farmers’ hard work. He also noted the potential of passion fruit cultivation and said efforts would be made to promote it on a larger scale. The Chief Minister announced that ginger procurement will resume from February 2. Lo-

cally produced machines for slicing and drying ginger will be placed at collection centres to assist farmers. He emphasized the importance of organic farming as a competitive advantage for Mizoram and stressed transparency and fairness in procurement following irregularities reported last year. Farmers were urged to utilize collection centres to ensure systematic procurement. The processing unit, managed by Good Faith of Saron Veng under a five-year MoU with MAMB, was set up at a cost of ₹71 lakh, including a solar-based drying system capable of processing 2,000 kg at a time. Officials noted that the unit has undergone successful trial runs and is operational. The inauguration was attended by local MLA TBC Lalvenchhunga, Adviser to the Chief Minister Lalchhuanthanga, and several officials. Ramdiniani, Secretary of Agriculture & Farmers’ Welfare, chaired the event, stressing the importance of processing markets.

Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma to visit Tripura Sundari Temple, meet Tripura CM on January 15

Guwahati, Jan 14: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma is scheduled to visit Tripura on January 15, where he will offer prayers at the revered Tripura Sundari Temple in Udaipur of Gomati district. The visit is part of a short official and religious tour, during which the Chief Minister will also hold meetings with senior leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the state. According to sources, Himanta Biswa Sarma will arrive at Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport in Agartala at around 4 pm on January 15. From the airport, he will travel directly to Udaipur to visit the Tripura Sundari Temple, which is considered one of the 51 Shakti Peethas and holds deep



religious importance for devotees across the country. The Chief Minister is expected to perform puja at the temple and spend some time offering prayers. After completing the temple visit, Sarma is likely to re-

turn to Agartala by around 7 pm. He will stay overnight in the state capital. During his stay, he is expected to meet Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha and hold discussions with senior BJP leaders. These meet-

ings are expected to focus on organisational matters and ongoing political developments in the region. On January 16, the Assam Chief Minister is scheduled to depart from Agartala at around 10 am.

Poppy plantation destroyed in Chandel, Senapati

Imphal, Jan 14: A combined team of security forces along with Forest Department destroyed about 65 acres of poppy field at Govok hill range under Chakpikarong Police Station in Chandel district yesterday. Two temporary huts, poppy pods and poppy seeds etc. found at the site were destroyed. On the same day, a combined team of security forces, Forest Department along with Executive Magistrate also destroyed about 30 acres of poppy field at Sadim hills range under Senapati Police Station in Senapati district.

Kuki-Zo bodies demand lifting of blockade

Imphal, Jan 14: Several civil society organisations of the Kuki-Zo community have submitted a joint memorandum to the Superintendent of Police, Kangpokpi District, demanding the immediate lifting of the intermittent blockade allegedly imposed by Liangmei Naga groups along the Churachandpur–Kangpokpi route. Terming the blockade as an “uncalled and deliberate disruption” of the only remaining lifeline connecting Kuki-Zo inhabited areas, the signatories warned that continued obstruction of free movement could trigger serious public unrest in an already volatile region. The memorandum was jointly submitted by Kuki Inpi Sadar Hills (KISH), SAHILCA, Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU), Thadou Inpi, Gangte Tribal Union (GTU), Vaiphei People’s Council (VPC) and the Kuki Women Union–Sadar Hills (KWU-SH). The organisations urged the district administration

and police to act decisively within 48 hours to ensure uninterrupted movement along the vital corridor. As per the memorandum, following the outbreak of ethnic violence on May 3, 2023, roadways passing through Liangmei-inhabited areas have remained the sole means of connectivity between geographically isolated Kuki-Zo regions. Any blockade of these routes, the groups asserted, constitutes a direct threat to the community’s survival, safety and dignity. The Kuki-Zo bodies further alleged that the ongoing ethnic conflict between the majority Meitei/Meetei community and the minority Kuki-Zo people is being exploited by groups not directly involved in the conflict. The memorandum accused certain Liangmei Naga groups of acting as “frontal entities” to propagate narratives hostile to the Kuki-Zo community. Referring to recent incidents, the memorandum cited the January 8 bombing of Kharam Vaiphei

village, allegedly carried out under the pretext of illegal farming and drug-related accusations. It also recalled the January 12 travel restrictions at Ireng Naga village, terming both incidents as provocative acts aimed at escalating tensions. The Kuki-Zo organisations expressed grave concern over what they described as unverified allegations branding Kuki-Zo village volunteers as insurgent cadres. Such narratives, they warned, have emboldened armed outfits including the Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF) and Foothills Naga groups, resulting in harassment, intimidation and violence against civilians. Calling the blockade “inhumane and unlawful,” the Kuki-Zo civil bodies cautioned that failure to restore normal movement would compel the community to express public outrage. Any ensuing consequences, they asserted, would rest solely with the authorities for failing to act in time.

Meghalaya orders statewide testing of fish sold in markets after Assam contamination reports

Shillong, Jan 14: The Meghalaya government has ordered the testing of fish sold in markets across the state following reports of heavy metal contamination in fish consignments originating from neighbouring Assam, officials said on Tuesday. Health and food safety authorities in Meghalaya took the step after receiving inputs that certain fish supplied from Assam were found to contain lead and other heavy metals beyond permissible limits. Most of the fish consumed in Meghalaya is brought in from Assam, making the issue a matter of concern for public health. A senior food safety official said Food Safety Officers have been instructed to begin sample collection from wholesale fish hubs, retail markets and key entry points into the state. The samples will be sent to authorised



laboratories for detailed examination. The inspections will be carried out in a coordinated manner to ensure that all major supply routes and market areas are covered. Officials said Meghalaya depends heavily on fish supplies from Assam and Andhra Pradesh to meet daily demand, even as the state continues efforts to increase local fish production through government schemes. Given the possibility of health risks, officers have been asked to intensify routine market checks and strictly enforce provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act.

SoO Groups, Kuki-Zo Bodies, MLAs Reiterate Demand for UT with Legislature at Guwahati Meet

Guwahati, Jan 14: Representatives of Suspension of Operations (SoO) groups, the Kuki-Zo Council (KZC) and Kuki-Zo MLAs on Monday reiterated their demand for a political settlement in the form of a Union Territory with Legislature, calling on the Central government to expedite the process. The resolutions were adopted at a joint meeting held in Guwahati, where participants reviewed the current political situation in Manipur and the prevailing conditions in the region. The meeting referred to the formal political demand submitted in September 2023 and recalled the prolonged ethnic violence and targeted attacks faced by the Kuki-Zo community over the past year. The participants also took note of what they described as severe brutalities against their community, alleging active support of state agencies, and acknowledged what they termed an unprecedented de facto demographic and administrative separation that has existed for the last 32 months. According to the resolutions adopted unanimously, the meeting demanded that the Central government finalise

a negotiated political settlement under the Constitution, providing for a Union Territory with Legislature, along with adequate constitutional safeguards for the protection of land ownership. The meeting further resolved that the political settlement must be finalised and signed before the completion of the normal tenure of the current Manipur Legislative Assembly. With regard to the restoration of an elected government in the state, the participants said any new government must give a written commitment to support the negotiated settlement for a Union Territory with Legislature and ensure that the commitment is implemented within the present Assembly’s tenure. In the absence of such assurances from both the Central and State governments, the meeting resolved that the Kuki-Zo representatives would refrain from participating in the formation of an elected government in Manipur, stating that such a decision would reflect the political will of the people. The meeting also set a final deadline, resolving that a definitive political solution for the Kuki-Zo people must be achieved before the 2027 General Election.

In Brief

Poppy plantation destroyed

Imphal: A combined team of security forces along with Forest Department destroyed about 65 acres of poppy field at Govok hill range under Chakpikarong Police Station in Chandel district yesterday. Two temporary huts, poppy pods and poppy seeds etc. found at the site were destroyed. On the same day, a combined team of security forces, Forest Department along with Executive Magistrate also destroyed about 30 acres of poppy field at Sadim hills range under Senapati Police Station in Senapati district.

TIM welcomes formation of popular government

Imphal: Thadou Inpi Manipur (TIM) has expressed support for the imminent formation of a democratically elected government in Manipur, following the end of President’s Rule after one year. TIM emphasized that the Thadou community is a legitimate participant in the democratic process within the nine Scheduled Tribe Assembly Constituencies. They asserted that no single community can monopolize authority over these electorates, as doing so violates the law and the electorate’s interests. TIM urged elected MLAs to resign if they refuse to support the new government, criticizing the unethical practices of inciting hatred and violence for political gain.

Three SOREPA cadres arrested in Imphal West

Imphal: Manipur Police arrested three active cadres of KYKL (SOREPA) from different locations of Imphal West district yesterday. A statement of Manipur Police identified the arrested cadres as Keithelakpam Telheiba Mangang @ Thoiba @ Lamyamba (23) of Kwakeithel Heinou Khongnambi, Imphal West district, arrested from Kangabam Leikai; Konthoujam Goomdy Meitei @ Phirepa (23) of Bishnupur Ward No. 10, Joypur Khunou Bishnupur district, arrested from Kwakeithel Thokchom Leikai, and Laishram Ichan Devi @ Sangita (30) of Wabagai Terapishak, Kakching district, presently staying at Kwakeithel Akham Leikai, arrested from Kwakeithel Bazar.

TIM welcomes formation of popular government

Imphal, Jan 14: Thadou Inpi Manipur (TIM) has welcomed the formation of a popular government in Manipur, likely to be witnessed soon as President’s Rule, imposed on February 13, comes to an end after one year, saying that the establishment of a democratically elected government is a fundamental expression of the people’s will, as enshrined in the Constitution of India. In a press release, TIM said that the Thadou community of Manipur is a legitimate stakeholder in the democratic process, particularly across the nine Scheduled Tribe (ST) Assembly Constituencies represented by the ten elected MLAs from the hill districts. These constituencies comprise diverse communities, and no single organisation or community can claim exclusive authority over their electorate. Doing so would contravene the law, the Constitution, and the interests and will of the electorate, it said. It said that if elected MLAs do not wish to support the formation of a popular government—the very mandate for which they were elected—they should resign honourably. It said that there is no constitutional justification for occupying office while refusing to perform the duties entrusted by the electorate. The practice of using the public, inciting hatred, and fomenting violence for personal political ambition must end, it added.

NDA is a family, not an electoral arrangement



Guwahati, Jan 14: Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday, January 13 said the alliance functions like a family and is rooted in shared commitment rather than electoral compulsions. Addressing the 13th Foundation Day celebrations of the Nishad Party in Lucknow, Rijiju asserted that the NDA is a time-tested and well-functioning coalition built on trust, mutual respect and collective responsibility. “The NDA works in a familial atmosphere. This is an old and well-functioning alliance. We are not opportunists, nor are we together merely from an electoral perspective,” Rijiju said, underlining the alliance’s long-standing stability and cohesion. The Union Minister noted that NDA partners are aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of inclusive governance and national development. He said the alliance continues to move forward with unity and strength, driven by a shared sense of purpose rather than narrow political interests.

Rijiju further stressed that cooperation within the NDA goes beyond politics, reflecting genuine collaboration and wholehearted participation among its constituents. “The parties in the NDA are not only together from a political perspective, but we also work together wholeheartedly,” he added.

Frontier State Development Workshop begins in Gangtok with focus on Northeast growth

Sikkim, Jan 14: The Frontier State Development Workshop, focusing on development challenges and opportunities in the North-East, began in Gangtok on January 14, bringing together senior policymakers, administrators and experts from across the region for a day-long series of discussions and technical sessions.

The programme is being held at a city hotel and aims to contribute to more coordinated and context-specific policy planning for frontier and border states. The workshop commenced at 9.30 am with the registration of participants, followed by the inaugural session at 10 am. The opening ceremony included the lighting of the lamp and a welcome programme. Delivering the welcome address, Sikkim Chief Secretary Ravindra Telang emphasised the need for focused and practical planning for frontier states, noting that the North-East faces distinct challenges due to difficult terrain, border sensitivity and limited connectivity. He stressed that development policies must be tailored to local realities rather than adopting uniform national models.

Setting the context for the discussions, Dr M P Lama, Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of Sikkim, spoke on the economic realities of frontier regions. He highlighted the importance of community participation and environmental sustainability in development planning, and said that long-term growth in border areas must balance economic aspirations with ecological protection.

A special address was delivered by Prof



Ramesh Chand, Member of NITI Aayog, who shared perspectives on national-level planning for remote and border regions. He underlined the need for better coordination between the Centre and states to address structural gaps in infrastructure, livelihoods and human development indicators in frontier areas. The keynote address was delivered by Suman K Bery, Vice Chairperson of NITI Aayog, who highlighted the strategic and economic significance of frontier states. He said that strengthening border regions is critical not only for inclusive economic growth but also for long-term national stability and security. The inaugural session concluded with a vote of thanks by

M T Sherpa, Secretary of the Planning and Development Department, Government of Sikkim.

After a brief tea break, the workshop moved into the first technical session at 11.15 am, which focused on holistic frontier area development. The session was chaired and moderated by Major General K Narayanan, Programme Director at NITI Aayog. Presentations were made by Khushbu Gurung from Sikkim’s Planning and Development Department on the Vibrant Village Programme, and by Colonel Lalit Khandpal of the Indian Army on development initiatives in border areas. Representatives from Nagaland, Manipur and

Arunachal Pradesh also shared experiences related to community-led development, connectivity challenges and livelihood initiatives. The session concluded with an interactive question-and-answer segment before the lunch break.

The second technical session in the early afternoon focused on scaling and advancing organic agriculture. Chaired by Pradeep Kumar, Principal Secretary of the Agriculture Department, Government of Sikkim, the session highlighted Sikkim’s organic farming journey and future opportunities. Speakers included senior agriculture officials, export and certification experts, and representatives from Mizoram and Meghalaya, who shared experiences on organic transition, market access and farmer-led growth models. Later in the afternoon, the third technical session is scheduled to focus on the innovation ecosystem in the North-East. Chaired by Karma Doma Youtso, Secretary of the Commerce and Industries Department, Government of Sikkim, the session brings together startup leaders and innovators from Sikkim, Tripura and Assam to discuss entrepreneurship, healthcare, tourism and agri-based enterprises in the region. The workshop is expected to conclude in the late afternoon with a formal vote of thanks, followed by high tea and dinner. Officials said the discussions held so far have been constructive and are expected to inform future policy initiatives aimed at improving development outcomes and co-ordination across frontier and border areas of the North-East.

Air Force Station Guwahati pays tribute to veterans

Aizawl, Jan 14: The 10th Armed Forces Veterans Day was commemorated with solemn pride and ceremonial grandeur at Air Force Station Guwahati, as the nation paid homage to the courage, sacrifices and lifelong service of its military veterans. The event brought together over 1,500 veterans, serving personnel, veer naris and family members, reaffirming the Armed Forces’ enduring bond with those who once stood at the nation’s frontlines.

The ceremony was graced by Air Marshal Surat Singh, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C), Eastern Air Command, who attended as the Chief Guest. The commemorative programme began with a poignant

wreath-laying ceremony at the War Memorial, honouring the supreme sacrifices made by personnel of the Indian Armed Forces in defence of the country. Addressing the gathering, Air Marshal Surat Singh lauded the indelible legacy of ex-servicemen, describing them as the bedrock of Indian skill development and re-settlement programmes aimed at empowering veterans in civilian life. veterans, addressing critical concerns related to resettlement, pension entitlements, and empanelment of medical facilities. Emphasising inclusive engagement, the programme featured felicitation of senior veterans in recognition of their exemplary service to the nation.

Mizoram to begin ginger, broomstick procurement from Feb 2: CM

Aizawl, Jan 14: The Mizoram government will begin procurement of ginger and dry broomsticks from farmers across the state from February 2 under its flagship ‘Bana Kaih’ handholding scheme, Chief Minister Lalduhoma announced on Tuesday. The announcement was made during the inauguration of a ginger processing unit at Sairang, around 21 km from Aizawl.

Lalduhoma said the initiative was aimed at strengthening farmers’ incomes and reinforcing Mizoram’s growing identity as a major producer of ginger.

He noted that although Mizoram is largely agrarian, no single crop had earlier given the state a distinct national identity. “Today, Mizoram is recognised as the ginger capital of India, and this status is the outcome of the sustained hard work of our farmers,” the chief minister said, referring

to NITI Aayog’s recent declaration. Under the Bana Kaih programme, the Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM) government has been procuring key agricultural produce from farmers at support prices, in line with its poll commitments. Since the scheme’s launch in September 2024, the government has been purchasing ginger, turmeric, chilli, broomsticks and unhusked rice. Officials said the state spent about Rs 137.72 crore last year on procuring ginger alone.

In the same period, the government purchased over 48,600 quintals of dried broomsticks worth nearly Rs 2 crore and 1,473 quintals of unhusked rice valued at Rs 44.18 lakh. Lalduhoma said ginger cultivation has significantly improved livelihoods and purchasing power in rural areas. He added that Mizoram also holds strong potential for ‘sapthai’ fruit, and efforts would be intensified to promote its cultivation on a larger scale.

Kuki MLAs set conditions for joining Manipur govt, demand written assurance on separate

Guwahati, Jan 14: Hopes of the Kuki legislators participating in the formation of a new elected government in Manipur have effectively dimmed, with Kuki MLAs insisting on a written and time-bound assurance from the incoming government for the creation of a separate Union Territory for the Kuki-Zo communities. This, it said, should include the creation of a Union Territory with Legislature and adequate constitutional safeguards for land ownership and community rights.

The resolution further stated that the political settlement must be finalised and formally signed before the expiry of the normal tenure of the current Manipur Legislative Assembly. Manipur has been under President’s Rule since February 13, 2025, following the resignation of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on February 9 amid prolonged ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities that began in May 2023. The Centre imposed President’s Rule under Article 356 after the Governor reported a breakdown of constitutional machinery and political deadlock, as the ruling BJP failed to agree on a successor despite having majority support. Parliament subsequently approved a six-month extension of President’s Rule from August 13, 2025, which remains in force until February 13, 2026.

While the Centre has indicated improvements in law and order since the imposition of central rule, debates continue over the restoration of an elected government.

The position was finalised at a meeting held in Guwahati on Tuesday, where Kuki MLAs met representatives of the Suspension of Operations (SoO) groups and leaders of the Kuki-Zo Council (KZC) to review the prevailing political and security situation in Manipur.



The meeting concluded that any participation in government formation would be contingent on a firm constitutional commitment towards a separate administrative arrangement. The formation of a government is crucial for the BJP, as elections to the state’s lone Rajya Sabha seat are scheduled to be held this year. The lone Rajya Sabha seat from Manipur, currently held by Maharaja Sanajaoba Leishemba of the BJP, is scheduled to become vacant on June 21, 2026. According to a resolution adopted at the meeting, the proposed government must provide a written commitment to support a negotiated political settlement for a Union Territory with Legislature under the Constitution. The resolution further stat-

ed that such a commitment must be implemented in a time-bound manner within the tenure of the present Legislative Assembly. “In the absence of such political commitment from both the Central and State governments, the meeting resolves to respect the political will of the people by refraining from taking any part in the formation of an elected government in Manipur,” the resolution said.

The meeting also resolved that a definitive political solution for the Kuki-Zo people must be achieved before the 2027 General Elections, underlining the urgency of the demand amid prolonged political uncertainty.

Reviewing the ongoing crisis in Manipur, the participants referred

to the formal political demand submitted in September 2023 and recalled the severe ethnic violence and targeted attacks faced by the Kuki-Zo community over the past year.

The resolution expressed grave concern over alleged complicity and support by state agencies during the violence and noted the deep erosion of trust in existing governance structures.

Taking cognisance of what it described as an unprecedented de facto demographic and administrative separation that has existed for nearly 32 months, the meeting unanimously reiterated its demand that the Central government must expedite a negotiated political settlement.

Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, DoNER Minister review Polo

Imphal, Jan 14: Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, along with Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, on Tuesday co-chaired a review meeting on the development of Polo in Manipur.

The meeting reviewed proposals submitted by the Manipur government as part of a comprehensive development plan for Polo in the state. “To establish Manipur as a global reference centre for Polo, our discussions focused on key areas such as youth engagement, high-performance development, strengthening polo clubs through equipment and institutional support and collaboration with the Indian Polo Association,” Jyotiraditya M. Scindia said in a post on X. Polo originated in Manipur, India, where it was known as Sagol Kangjei, a traditional horseback game played for centuries. It was later adapted and introduced to the British, who popularized it globally as “polo,” with Manipur recognized as the sport’s birthplace, according to sources such as the Guinness Book of World Records. The Governor said the meeting focused on strengthening infrastructure, promoting the sport’s heritage, and ensuring efficient, result-oriented implementation. The central government, through the Ministry of DoNER and Manipur’s Tourism Department, promotes polo in Manipur by developing infrastructure, such as the Marjing Polo Complex with the world’s tallest polo statue. It also organizes international tournaments (Statehood Day Women’s Polo, Manipur International Polo), supports local associations (MHRPA), fosters pony conservation (Polo Policy 2016, grassland allotment), and links polo with tourism (Sangai Festival) to boost both heritage and the economy. Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, DoNER Minister review Polo development plan in Manipur Polo originated in Manipur, India, where it was known as Sagol Kangjei, a traditional horseback game played for centuries. It was later adapted and introduced to the British, who popularized it globally as “polo,” with Manipur recognized as the sport’s birthplace, according to sources such as the Guinness Book of World Records. A Lok Bhavan communique issued on Tuesday states that the Governor of Manipur, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, along with Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, co-chaired a review meeting via video conferencing at the Conference Hall, Lok Bhavan, Imphal, to discuss the overall development of polo in Manipur.

Rare woolly bat discovered in Meghalaya, first Indian record

Imphal, Jan 14: In a significant discovery underscoring the rich and largely unexplored biodiversity of Northeast India, researchers have recorded Titania’s woolly bat (*Kerivoula titania*) in Meghalaya, marking the first confirmed record of the species in India. The finding, from the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya, extends the known geographical range of this elusive bat westward by nearly 500 kilometres and raises India’s bat diversity to 137 species. The discovery has been documented in a recent study published in the scientific journal *Animal Taxonomy and Ecology*. The research was carried out by a team comprising Uttam Saikia, Manuel Ruedi, Rohit Chakravarty, Jennifer Lyngdoh, Ra-

jib Goswami and Gábor Csorba. According to the study, a lone male specimen was captured during a field survey conducted in December 2024 in a community-owned forest near Thankarang village in the East Khasi Hills district, at an elevation of around 870 metres above sea level. The bat was caught at approximately 7.30 pm using a two-bank harp trap placed across a narrow forest trail under dense canopy cover. To improve capture efficiency, the team used a specialised bat lure that replayed pre-recorded ultrasonic echolocation calls. The researchers said the specimen was handled in accordance with internationally accepted mammalogical and ethical research protocols..

Guv underscores role of Manipuris in India’s military history

Imphal, Jan 14: Governor of Manipur, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, today graced the 10th Armed Forces Veterans’ Day – 2026 held at the Palace Auditorium, MSFDS, Imphal. On the occasion, the Governor felicitated 53 distinguished and Gallantry Award-winning veterans as well as Veer Naris, acknowledging their exemplary service, courage, and lifelong contribution to the nation. In his address, Governor Bhalla highlighted the unwavering dedication of the Armed Forces and emphasised the nation’s enduring gratitude to its veterans, ex-servicemen, and their families. He noted that Veterans’ Day serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made to uphold India’s sover-

eighty, unity, and democratic values. The Governor also underscored the role of Manipuris in India’s military history, praising their exceptional service in safeguarding borders and contributing to national security. He reiterated the government’s commitment to the welfare of serving personnel, ex-servicemen, and Veer Naris, including measures related to healthcare support, pensions, resettlement, and skill development. The event was attended by MLA, Th Biswajit Singh; Chief Secretary, Dr. Puneet Kumar Goel; Security Advisor, Kuldiep Singh, senior civil and police officers, senior officers of the Armed Forces and paramilitary fore-



es, as well as a large gathering of veterans and ex-servicemen.

Mizoram to start Ginger, Broomstick procurement from February 2 under ‘Bana Kaih’ scheme

Aizawl, Jan 14: The Mizoram government will begin the direct procurement of ginger and dry broomsticks from farmers starting February 2 under its flagship Bana Kaih handholding scheme. The announcement was made by Chief Minister Lalduhoma while inaugurating a ginger processing unit at Sairang, about 21 kilometres from Aizawl. Speaking at the event, Lalduhoma said the new step is aimed at giving assured income to farmers by removing middlemen and ensuring fair prices for their produce. He said agriculture has always been the backbone of Mizoram, but for many years the state did not get wider recognition for any particular crop. The chief minister said the situation has now changed, with Mizoram gaining a clear identity at the national level for ginger production. He pointed out that NITI Aayog has recently recognised Mizoram as the “ginger capital of India”. He said this recognition has come due to the consistent hard work of farmers across the state. Under the Bana Kaih scheme, the government will procure ginger and dry broomsticks at support prices,



which will help farmers plan their cultivation with confidence. Lalduhoma said ginger farming has already improved the income and purchasing power of many rural families. The scheme was launched in September 2024 by the Zoram People’s Movement government as part of its election commitments. Since then, the state has been procuring crops such as ginger, turmeric, chilli, broomsticks and unhusked rice directly from farmers. Officials said the government spent around Rs 137.72 crore last year on the purchase of ginger alone. During the same period, the government also procured over 48,600 quintals

The Mizoram government will start direct procurement of ginger and dry broomsticks from farmers on February 2 under the Bana Kaih handholding scheme, as announced by Chief Minister Lalduhoma.

of dried broomsticks worth nearly Rs 2 crore and more than 1,400 quintals of unhusked rice valued at about Rs 44 lakh. The chief minister also said Mizoram has good potential for sapthei fruit cultivation. He added that the government plans to promote the crop on a larger scale to diversify farm income and further strengthen the rural economy.

Knowledge of local language mandatory

Shillong, Jan 14: The Meghalaya government said knowledge of the local language is mandatory for recruitment to all posts under the District Selection Committee. Personnel Department Commissioner and Secretary CVD Diengdoh on Tuesday said the decision follows an office memorandum issued earlier and makes it compulsory for candidates to clear a qualifying paper in the local language of the district where the post is located. Candidates applying for posts in the Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills districts will be required to write and comprehend Khasi, while those seeking appointment in the Garo Hills districts must clear a test in Garo, according to the official.



Three SOREPA cadres arrested in Imphal West



Imphal, Jan 14: Manipur Police arrested three active cadres of KYKL (SOREPA) from different locations of Imphal West district yesterday. A statement of Manipur Police identified the arrested cadres as Keithelakpam Telheiba Mangang @ Thoiba @ Lamyamba (23) of Kwakeithel Heinou Khongnemb, Imphal West district, arrested from Kangabam Leikai; Konthoujam Goodydy Meitei @ Phirepa (23) of Bishnupur Ward No. 10, Joypur Khunou Bishnupur district, arrested from Kwakeithel Thokchom Leikai, and Laishram Ichan Devi @ Sangita (30) of Wabagai Terapishak, Kakching district, presently staying at Kwakeithel Akham Leikai, arrested from Kwakeithel Bazar. Three mobile phones, four SIM cards, a sum of Rs. 6000 and a Yamaha bike were seized from their possession. They were involved in recruiting new cadres and extortion in the valley districts and providing logistic support to their organisation, said the statement.

Meghalaya health authorities order testing of fish sold in markets

Shillong, Jan 14: Meghalaya Health authorities have ordered testing of fish sold in local markets, most of which are supplied from neighbouring Assam, following reports of metal contamination in that state.

The move follows inputs indicating the presence of lead and other heavy metals beyond permissible limits in certain fish consignments originating from Assam, an officer said on Tuesday.

“Food Safety Officers have been directed to collect samples from wholesale points, retail markets and entry points across the state and send them to authorised laboratories for testing,” a senior food safety officer told media.

A senior food safety officer said Food Safety Officers have been directed to collect samples from wholesale hubs, retail markets and entry points across Meghalaya and send them to authorised laboratories for detailed testing. The inspections will be carried out in a coordinated manner to ensure comprehensive coverage of supply chains entering the state.

Meghalaya depends largely on As-



sam and Andhra Pradesh to meet its fish demand, even as government agencies continue efforts to scale up local fish production. In view of the potential public health risk, food safety authorities have asked officers to intensify market inspections and strictly enforce provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act.

The official said any fish found unfit for human consumption will be seized and destroyed, and legal action will be initiated against those found violating food safety norms. The authorities have stressed that the measures are precautionary and aimed at safeguarding consumer health.

Army team recovers vehicle from slope after mishap in Arunachal

Guwahati, Jan 14: A team from the Spearhead Division under Indian Army’s Spear Corps responded swiftly to recover a civilian vehicle that fell about 60 metres down a steep slope in Basar district of Arunachal Pradesh. Official sources said the Bolero pickup vehicle, owned by one Amar, plunged into a steep slope, before settling precariously near a residential structure. “Owing to timely intervention, no casualties were reported, averting a major tragedy,” a statement

issued by PRO Defence on Tuesday said. In a demonstration of operational readiness, a dedicated team comprising a junior commissioned officer and four other ranks, supported by a heavy-duty recovery vehicle, was immediately mobilised to the site. “Despite difficult terrain and adverse conditions, the team executed a safe and precise recovery of the severely damaged vehicle through meticulous planning, coordination and sustained effort,” it said.

Kamrup administration bans Bulbuli bird fights ahead of Magh Bihu



Guwahati, Jan 14: The Kamrup district administration has once again prohibited the holding of bulbuli bird fights anywhere in the district during the upcoming Magh Bihu celebrations. The ban has been imposed to ensure strict compliance with existing court orders and wildlife protection laws. The order was issued by Kamrup District Magistrate Dev Kumar Mishra by exercising powers under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita. It applies to all parts of the district, with special attention on Hajo, where the traditional bird fight has been associated with Magh Bihu festivities for decades. According to the administration, the decision follows a clear ruling of the Gauhati High Court delivered on December 17, 2024, in connection with a writ petition that examined the legality of animal fights during festivals. In its judgment, the High Court had struck down a state government notification issued on December 27, 2023, which had permitted buffalo and bulbuli bird fights. The court ruled that such activities violated the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and other related legal provisions. Officials pointed out that bulbuli birds fall under Schedule IV of the Wildlife Protection Act and are legally protected species. Organising

bird fights during Magh Bihu was described as harmful to the birds and a direct breach of the High Court’s directions. The district administration also warned that failure to enforce the ban could result in contempt of court proceedings. The order clearly states that anyone found violating the ban will face legal action under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, along with other relevant laws. As a result, the well-known bulbuli bird fight traditionally linked to Magh Domahi celebrations in Hajo has been cancelled this year. The event, usually held at the ground near the Hayagriva Madhav Temple, will not take place. Temple authorities and local organising committees have said they will strictly follow court orders to avoid legal trouble. This is not the first time the event has been stopped. The bulbuli bird fight had remained banned for nearly nine years after a court order in 2015. It briefly returned in 2024 under tight conditions and monitoring after receiving conditional approval linked to Supreme Court guidelines. That year’s event was held in the presence of the Chief Minister. However, with the legal position unchanged, organisers have decided not to go ahead this time.

Rare woolly bat discovered in Meghalaya, first Indian record of Kerivoula titania

Shillong, Jan 14: In a significant discovery underscoring the rich and largely unexplored biodiversity of Northeast India, researchers have recorded Titania’s woolly bat (Kerivoula titania) in Meghalaya, marking the first confirmed record of the species in India. The finding, from the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya, extends the known geographical range of this elusive bat westward by nearly 500 kilometres and raises India’s bat diversity to 137 species. The discovery has been documented in a recent study published in the scientific journal Animal Taxonomy and Ecology.

The research was carried out by a team comprising Uttam Saikia, Manuel Ruedi, Rohit Chakravarty, Jennifer Lyngdoh, Rajib Goswami and Gábor Csorba. According to the study, a lone male specimen was captured during a field survey conducted in December 2024 in a community-owned forest near Thankharang village in the East Khasi Hills district, at an elevation of around 870 metres above sea level.

The bat was caught at approximately 7.30 pm using a two-bank harp trap placed across a narrow forest trail under dense canopy cover. To improve capture efficiency, the team used a specialised bat lure that replayed pre-recorded ultrasonic echolocation calls. The researchers said the specimen was handled in accordance with internationally accepted mammalogical and ethical research protocols.

MSCW Hosts Capacity Building Programme Focused On Education And Legal Literacy Held In Imphal

Imphal, Jan 14: The Manipur State Commission for Women (MSCW) on Tuesday successfully organised a one-day capacity building programme on the theme “Empowerment Through Education & Legal Literacy” at the DM Community College Hall, DM College of Science, Imphal. Addressing the programme, W. Phajatombi Devi, Member Secretary of MSCW and Additional Director (IPR), Government of Manipur, highlighted the crucial role played by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) in safeguarding vital national infrastructure, including airports, railways and metro systems. She said the services rendered by CISF personnel deserve wider public appreciation and greater awareness. Phaj-

atombi Devi also elaborated on the role of MSCW as a women-centric statutory body committed to the empowerment and protection of women. Emphasising the importance of the technical sessions organised during the programme, she urged students and teachers to actively participate and make the most of the interactions. She further informed that the Commission is focusing on providing free marital counselling this year. Referring to the National Commission for Women’s initiative “Tere Mere Sapne”, she said Pre-Marital Communication Centres (PMCCs) are being set up in youth-centric institutions and offices to prepare young men and women emotionally, mentally and socially for marriage. Chair-

person of MSCW, Thumlip Tiningpham Monsang, in her address, stressed the importance of attentive listening, quoting the saying that good listeners are good learners. She urged students to pay close attention to the sessions, noting that the knowledge gained would be useful throughout their lives. Highlighting the role of MSCW as a platform for addressing issues faced by women, she said the Commission, established in 2006, works to safeguard women’s rights and promote their overall empowerment. Speaking on legal literacy, the Chairperson pointed out that a large section of the population remains unaware of existing laws and legal rights. She said the programme was organised with the objective of

spreading awareness about laws, legal rights and various Acts related to women. The programme featured technical sessions on “Capacity Building Programme for Youth Aspiring to Join the Central Paramilitary Force” delivered by Mohnish Bagree, Deputy Commandant and CASO, CISF Unit, Imphal Airport, and “Legal Literacy: A Tool for Women’s Empowerment” conducted by Aribam Nouteneshwari Devi. The event was attended by Prof. Dr. N. Subhashchandra Singh, Nodal Officer, DM Community College, Imphal, SK. Sophia. A Tool for Women’s Empowerment” conducted by Aribam Nouteneshwari Devi. Subhashchandra Singh, Imphal DM Community College.

Pawan Hans conducts trial helicopter landings in five Nagaland districts under UDAN scheme

Kohima, Jan 14: India’s government-owned helicopter service provider Pawan Hans Limited carried out trial helicopter landings in five districts of Nagaland on January 13 as part of the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)–UDAN of the Government of India. The trial flights were aimed at assessing the feasibility of regular helicopter services to improve air connectivity in the state. Officials said the trial operations were conducted to test air links between Mokokchung, Kohima, Phek, Tuensang and Zunheboto, with Dimapur as the central connecting point. The helicopter used for the trials was a Dauphin twin-engine aircraft operated by Pawan Hans after receiving permission from the respective district administrations. To ensure safety during the trial landings, proper arrangements were made at all helipads. These included deployment of police per-



sonnel, availability of fire tenders, and ambulance services. Officials confirmed that the trials were completed smoothly without any issues. Commissioner and Secretary of the Transport Department, Robert Longchari, along with Officer on Special Duty (Transport) M. Ababe Ezung and officials from Nagaland State Transport, were present at the Lerie Helipad in Ko-

hima to observe the operations and interact with the Pawan Hans team. Senior officials said the successful trial landings were the result of close coordination between Pawan Hans Limited, the Nagaland Transport Department, and the district administrations. They added that careful planning and ground-level support at each helipad played an important role in the exercise.

EDITORIAL

The Climate Crisis: From Understanding to Action

The evidence is undeniable. From record-breaking heatwaves scorching continents to unprecedented flooding submerging cities, climate change has moved from an abstract future threat to a present-day reality. As global temperatures continue their upward trajectory, understanding the causes, consequences, and potential solutions to this crisis has become imperative for every citizen, policymaker, and nation. The science behind climate change is well-established. Human activities, particularly the burning of fossil fuels for energy, transportation, and industry, have released massive quantities of greenhouse gases into our atmosphere. Carbon dioxide, methane, and other heat-trapping gases have accumulated at levels not seen in millions of years, creating a thermal blanket around Earth that disrupts the delicate balance of our climate system. Deforestation compounds the problem by eliminating the very trees that absorb carbon dioxide, while industrial agriculture and waste management practices release additional methane into the atmosphere. The consequences of this warming are far-reaching and interconnected. Rising sea levels threaten coastal communities and small island nations with displacement and economic devastation. Extreme weather events—hurricanes, droughts, wildfires, and floods—are becoming more frequent and severe, destroying infrastructure, disrupting food production, and claiming lives. Agriculture

al patterns are shifting, jeopardizing food security for millions. Ecosystems are collapsing, pushing countless species toward extinction. Perhaps most concerning, these impacts disproportionately affect the world’s poorest communities, those least responsible for creating the problem yet least equipped to adapt. The economic toll is staggering. Insurance claims from climate-related disasters are breaking records annually. Agricultural losses mount as crops fail under extreme conditions. Healthcare systems strain under the burden of heat-related illnesses and vector-borne diseases spreading to new regions. The World Bank estimates that climate change could push more than 100 million people into poverty by 2030 if current trends continue. Yet despair is not our only option. Solutions exist, and many are already being implemented with encouraging results. The transition to renewable energy is accelerating, with solar and wind power now cheaper than fossil fuels in many markets. Electric vehicles are rapidly gaining market share, promising to revolutionize transportation. Energy efficiency improvements in buildings and industry can dramatically reduce emissions while saving money. Nature-based solutions, including reforestation and wetland restoration, offer powerful tools for carbon sequestration while providing numerous co-benefits for biodiversity and communities. However, technology alone cannot solve this crisis. We

need comprehensive policy frameworks that put a meaningful price on carbon emissions, eliminate fossil fuel subsidies, and redirect those resources toward clean energy and climate adaptation. International cooperation remains essential, as climate change recognizes no borders. Developed nations must fulfill their commitments to support developing countries in both mitigation and adaptation efforts, acknowledging their historical responsibility for the bulk of cumulative emissions. Individual action matters too. While systemic change is paramount, our collective choices about consumption, transportation, diet, and energy use create the political and economic conditions for broader transformation. Supporting businesses and politicians who prioritize climate action, reducing waste, choosing sustainable products, and advocating for change in our communities all contribute to building momentum. The window for preventing the most catastrophic impacts is narrowing, but it has not closed. Every fraction of a degree of warming we prevent will spare communities from suffering, preserve ecosystems, and protect future generations. The question is not whether we can address climate change, but whether we will summon the political will and collective courage to do so. History will judge us not by our words but by our actions in this decisive decade. The choice, and the responsibility, rests with all of us.

Trump’s attack on the Fed is a component of the blame game for affordability

The US government’s authoritarian and vexatious attack on Jerome Powell, the chair of the Federal Reserve, should be seen in the light of America’s affordability crisis, which Donald Trump once dismissed, but is now scrambling to claim as his cause. The cost of living is eroding his support ahead of the congressional midterms. By launching a legal assault on the Fed, Mr Trump is trying to shift blame for borrowing costs.

Yet despite controlling the presidency, Senate and the House, Republicans have passed little beyond a large tax-cutting bill that benefits the rich. They have not legislated on housing supply, childcare, healthcare costs or wages. Indeed most of their actions are worsening affordability, notably deferring action even though millions face a sharp rise in their health insurance bills. Mr Trump’s sudden enthusiasm for credit card caps and housing interventions is pure opportunism.

Affordability is not an abstract talking point; it is increasingly driving US politics. The rise of New York’s Zohran Mamdani – whose victory was built by zeroing in on the cost of living – crystallised a



broader shift: voters respond to real help, not rhetorical blame. Clearly, Mr Mamdani offered concrete policies and institutional reform. Democratic leaders are listening. Importantly, Senator Elizabeth Warren is prepared to take on the vested interests in her own party. Republicans have offered gestures, scapegoats and reversals of their own past consumer protections.

Until recently President Trump described the affordability crisis is a “hoax” invented by Democrats. For ordinary Americans, however, it is a rising grocery bill eating into already fragile household finances. Then at the end of November Mr Trump declared he was the “AFFORDABILITY PRESIDENT” and he would deliver Republican

midterm victories. If this prediction were realised it would be a triumph of spin over substance. Mr Trump’s own policies – tariffs, weaker than expected wage gains and elevated prices – resulted in an estimated 3% hit to median household spending power. Thomas Edsall in the New York Times reckoned the average American household lost about \$2,250 in spending power in 2025.

Mr Trump’s economic policies are defined by theatrical announcements that do no more than gesture at confrontation with corporate power. His promise to ban institutional investors from buying more single-family homes briefly rattled markets, yet it remains conspicuously vague – there is no legislation, no

enforcement mechanism, no challenge to the tax privileges and regulatory carve-outs that fuel real-estate consolidation. In practice, his administration has done the opposite: settling antitrust cases, throttling funding for consumer protections and giving real-estate tax breaks.

The US president claims to want to smash a system stacked against ordinary people. What he actually does is make small changes that leave powerful interests better protected than before. The latest wheeze over pollution is a case in point. By telling the Environmental Protection Agency to stop counting the health benefits of clean air, his administration makes it easier for polluters to cut costs while voters pay the price in illness, missed work and shorter lives. Mr Trump is not lifting all boats, only raising tolerance for corruption and pollution that benefit a plutocratic class. He trades in symbolic hostility toward corporate excess while promoting policies that entrench it. That is why affordability remains elusive – and why scapegoats, from the Fed to “Democrats”, must continually be found.

Long wait times for disability benefits: the system shouldn’t make individuals more impoverished

Long delays in processing personal independence payment (Pip) claims have become one of the most damaging and least defensible failures in the UK’s welfare system. Pip is designed to support disabled people with the additional costs of daily living and mobility, yet for many claimants it has instead become a source of prolonged uncertainty, financial hardship and distress. Waiting months – and in some cases more than a year – for a decision can push people into debt, rent arrears and poverty, especially as Pip unlocks other support such as carer’s allowance.

Parliament has been sounding the alarm over the scale of the problem – but it appears the

Department for Work and Pensions has its fingers in its ears. The stock response is that a new “health transformation programme” will lead to efficiency gains made by replacing paper Pip applications with an online claims system. Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, the chair of the public accounts committee, last week pointed out that MPs had been told “three years ago that improvements would have manifested by now; we are now told that they are a further three years off”.

The figures tell the story. The department aims to process 75% of new Pip claims within 75 working days, but, in 2024–25, only 51% of claims were processed within this timeframe. Despite this, the department

continues to present long-term digital reform as its primary answer, while offering little reassurance that waiting times will improve meaningfully in the near future. The result is a widening gap between policy intent and lived reality.

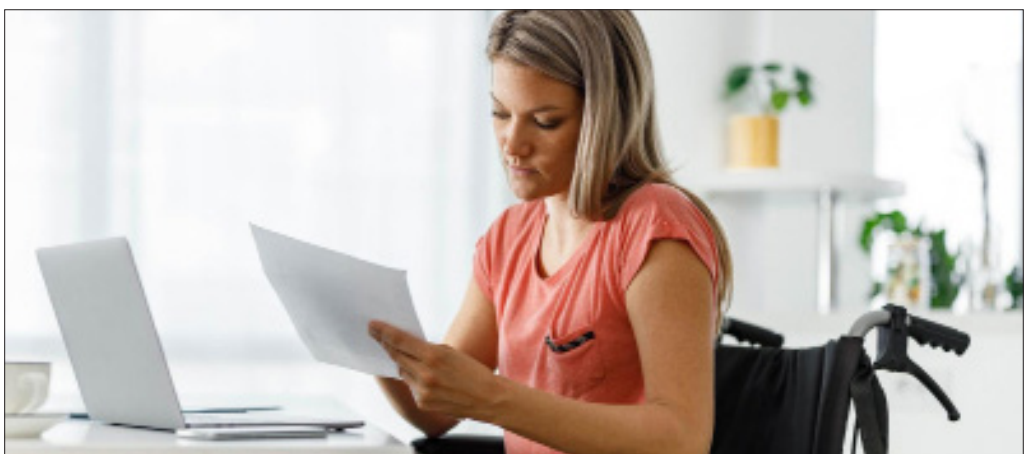
For disabled people who rely on Pip to remain financially secure and independent, delay is not a neutral administrative issue – it is pushing them into poverty. Added to that, it is considerably more expensive to live as a disabled person. Charities say that disabled households need to find £625 more each year than non-disabled households just for the basic essentials such as energy bills and transport.

Post-Covid Britain has seen more people with long-term ill-

ness, worsening mental health and the numbers of people reporting a disability increasing sharply. The result is more new Pip claims each year, even as the system struggles to process existing ones.

The minister for social security and disability – Sir Stephen Timms – was tasked with undertaking a review of Pip, including the assessment model, and is expected to report this year. But the committee is blunt in telling the government that it cannot allow the review to become another excuse for delay. Reform and speed are not mutually exclusive, and claimants should not have to wait years for basic administrative competence.

The problem that MPs identify is that this fits a broader pattern



in three distinct ways. One is that while Pip is legally an entitlement, it looks as if it is being administratively rationed by delay. It is also hard not to feel that digital transformation being used as a shield against par-

liamentary accountability. And what is happening is that ministers talk about reform while frontline capacity erodes. Clearly the committee’s patience is running out – and with very good reason. Cynics might sug-

gest it suits ministers not to have to hire extra staff to cope with increased Pip demand while the tech solution comes on stream sometime in the future. The state could fix this. It just refuses to name the problem correctly.

Now, Europe needs to terminate all connections with the US and tell Trump that enough is enough

‘He keeps encouraging me ... to choose between Europe and the US. That would be a strategic mistake for our country,’ Keir Starmer said in response to Ed Davey’s question in the House of Commons last week, about whether a US move against Greenland would mean the end of Nato. What about Europe, though? As Danish and Greenlandic ministers prepared to face JD Vance in the White House, the question was would Europe finally choose between Europe and the US? Will its leaders have the courage to tell the full truth – that the US isn’t simply abandoning its allies and destroying the international order but is now in the position of active and hostile predation by force – and more importantly, to act on it? To offer Denmark moral and material backing, and Greenland a future of self-determination and membership, rather than subservience to US resource plunder? Donald Trump has already set the tone by saying the US will seize Greenland “one way or the other”, and no part of the triumvirate around him is trying to hide their imperial intentions any more.

Not the nepotists and grifters amassing ever greater private fortunes. Not the white supremacist ideologues drawing inspiration from Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Führer! to post “One Homeland. One People. One Heritage”, via official US government social media accounts. Not the techno-nihilists salivating to mine every bit of Greenland’s min-



eral resources and rule their own neofeudal city states on its coast. When Trump says that the only constraint on his exercise of power is “my own morality”, that means there is no constraint. Like Vladimir Putin, he will keep grabbing until someone imposes a limit on him.

The truth is, Maga’s grand design for a new American empire has never been all that hidden. During the final months of the 2024 US presidential election, unfamiliar maps started going viral in the Magasphere. These maps are all in some way derivative of a 1930s movement that sought to create what it called the Technate of America, a union of most of North America and some of South America under US power and control. The “technate” would run south from Greenland, through Canada, Mexico,

Cuba and Venezuela, stretching all the way to French Guiana (a full French department standing in the way of the “Donroe doctrine”). So what can Europe do, as this mad historic fantasy comes closer to reality? How do you maintain a space of democracy and the rule of law in a world that is rapidly reverting to imperialism, oligarchy and the rule of power alone? Only by building a protective moat of federalism around it. If the US actually attacks Denmark by invading Greenland, and declares war on the EU, a treaty-bound defensive alliance, the hand of history will be forced. Europe would need to both expand and restructure to become a defence and intelligence union that absorbs Nato’s non-EU members. Such a situation would demand the seizure of US military bases from Germany

to Spain, individual sanctions on a wide range of US government officials, broad sanctions against the US economy, and an unapologetic expansion of the “carbon border tax” across every sector. There would surely be pressure not to stop there, but to use the EU’s Anti-Coercion Instrument to ban X and other large US tech companies and accelerate the replacement of US-controlled payments infrastructure with European systems and a digital euro. And if the US doesn’t attack Denmark, Europe’s best chance of surviving as a free and open continent in an imperial world is still to force the rupture with the US, force the consequences, and force the federalism anyway. Whatever comes out of the meeting in the White House today, it is time for Europe to tell the US to leave its European military

bases, throw off the yoke of US tech billionaires, begin a concerted push to fund public media as a form of informational defence – and maybe even expand the Erasmus programme into a general purpose European civil service corps. Everything short of actual combat should be considered, because “annexing Greenland” is a symptom of American fascism, and others will follow. A generous interpretation of how Europe’s political leaders have spent the past year is that they have been playing for time to prepare. A more critical reading is that they naively tried to avoid the costs of a rupture with Trump and now their time is up, and there is no option that is cost free.

We can either choose the crisis and the cost of that historic break, or be subjected to the crises and costs that the US will choose for us. But our window to choose is narrowing. Trump, Vance, Steve Bannon and others are explicit that they will boost far right, anti-EU parties into power wherever possible, with the goal (shared with Putin) of detonating the EU from within. By boldly detaching from the US now, visibly and decisively, Europe might even send a resuscitative shock through the US’s ailing democratic corpus. Only Americans can save their country from a descent into something even uglier and deadlier than what we are witnessing already. But for everyone’s sake, theirs included, Europe must cut the cord now, and not follow them into the storm.

A manifesto that should not be disregarded

The 15-point manifesto issued by the National Workers’ Rights Advocacy Alliance ahead of the national elections represents a crucial advocacy for workers’ rights and social justice. This manifesto comes at a pivotal moment as political parties gear up to seek public support. Historically, workers have played a central role in political movements within the country; however, their interests have consistently been deprioritized by successive administrations. Key challenges such as job insecurity, low wages, unsafe working conditions, and inadequate social protection continue to affect millions of workers. The persistence of these issues, despite established constitutional protections, highlights a significant disconnect between legal frameworks and their practical implementation, underscoring the urgent need for reform in labor policies to safeguard workers’ rights. Central to the manifesto is the advocacy for a national minimum wage aimed at ensuring that all workers can achieve a dignified standard of living. This demand resonates with ongoing calls from labour rights organizations and echoes the fundamental principle that employment should provide more than just the means for survival. However, historical evidence indicates that while the declaration of workers’ rights is relatively straightforward, the implementation and enforcement of these rights pose significant challenges. This difficulty is particularly prominent in contexts where a majority of the workforce operates within the informal sector, where compliance and regulation are less strictly upheld. Without robust mechanisms for enforcement, effective monitoring, and genuine political will, the proposed national minimum wage risks becoming merely a theoretical commitment, tangible change in the lives of workers. Proposals to amend labour laws focus on ensuring universal legal recognition and protection for workers, alongside guarantees for freedom of association and collective bargaining—particularly within export processing zones. Strengthening workplace safety measures and enhancing accident compensation is crucial, especially in light of the significant history of industrial tragedies that have highlighted a lack of accountability. Transparent investigations and provisions for fair compensation are deemed essential for achieving justice and preventing future accidents. Furthermore, there is a strong emphasis on gender equality, with measures addressing protection from harassment and violence, as well as the introduction of six months of paid maternity leave. These proposals reflect a broader understanding that labour rights are fundamentally human rights. Workers are often commended for their contributions to the nation, yet they frequently find themselves marginalized after elections.

The surprise nation that just pushed India out of Russia’s no. 2 spot

New Delhi: India’s Russian crude imports recorded a sharp 29% month-on-month reduction in December, slipping to the lowest levels since the price cap policy came into force, according to the latest report by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The fall came despite a slight increase in India’s overall crude oil imports during the month.Reliance and state refineries cut back

According to the CREA report, the main reason for the fall was Reliance’s Jamnagar refinery, which cut its imports by almost 49% in December. State-owned refineries also reduced their Russian crude intake by about 15%. CREA explained, “The entirety of their imports was supplied by Rosneft, albeit from cargoes purchased before the OFAC (US sanctions) came into effect.”Kpler, a global data provider, reported that India imported over 20.4 million barrels of Russian crude in 2025. In December alone, India brought in 1.2 million barrels, down from 1.8 million barrels in November. By January 13, 2026, India had already imported over 1.1 million barrels of Russian crude. In terms of value, India became the third-largest buyer of Russian fossil fuels in December, displaced from the second position by Türkiye. CREA reported that India spent €2.3 billion (around ₹24,150 crore) on Russian fossil fuels that month. Of this, crude oil made up €1.8 billion (around ₹18,900 crore), accounting for 78% of the total. Coal imports stood at €424 million (about ₹4,450 crore), while oil products were valued at €82 million (around ₹860 crore).

For comparison, India’s crude oil



imports were valued at €2.5 billion (around ₹26,250 crore) in October and €2.6 billion (around ₹27,300 crore) in November China dominates coal and crude oil purchases. Türkiye became the second-largest importer of Russian fossil fuels in December, replacing India. In December, China remained Russia’s biggest buyer overall, accounting for 48% of export revenue among the top five importers, worth €6 billion (around ₹63,000 crore). The EU ranked fourth, contributing 11%, or €1.3 billion (around ₹13,650 crore). The EU remains the largest buyer of LNG and pipeline gas. Türkiye’s imports of Russian crude dropped 33% in December, even as total imports rose 9%, with supplies coming from Norway, Guyana, and Iraq. The Tupras-owned

refineries saw a 69% fall in Russian crude imports, replaced mainly by Iraqi crude.Who buys Russian fossil fuels?

Russia’s fossil fuel exports remain concentrated among a small group of buyers.Coal exports were led by China at 43%, followed by India at 20%, Türkiye at 11%, South Korea at 10%, and Taiwan at 4%.Crude oil purchases were dominated by China at 47%, followed by India at 38%, Türkiye at 6%, and the EU at 6%.In oil products, Türkiye led with 27%, followed by China at 13%, Brazil at 11%, and India at 8%.For LNG, the EU accounted for 49% of Russia’s exports, followed byChina at 23% and Japan at 18%.

Pipeline gas exports were led by the EU at 35%, followed by China at 31% and Türkiye at 28%

Earnings timing, analyst preview, FY26 guidance, deal wins Infosys Q3 results:

New Delhi: Infosys Ltd is set to announce its December quarter results on Tuesday, around 3:45 pm IST, followed by a press conference at 4:30 pm IST. The IT major was seen reporting a 5-11 per cent year on year (YoY) rise in net profit for the December quarter, driven by an 8-9 per cent increase in sales. A couple of brokerages said Infosys is likely to retain its FY26 guidance and announce deal wins in the range of \$4.5-5 billion.Analysts said investor focus would be on the outlook for technology spending in 2026, competitive intensity, pricing pressure in large deals, and clients’ willingness to undertake large transformation programmes that could be margin-dilutive in the initial phase.Kotak Institutional Equities expects 4.8 per cent YoY rise in net profit at Rs 7,132.30 crore compared with Rs 6,806 crore in the same quarter last year. It sees sales at Rs 45,087 crore compared with Rs 41,764 crore in the year-ago quarter, up 8 per cent YoY.

“We forecast revenue decline of 0.25 per cent QoQ primarily due to lower billing days and absence of mega deal wins in earlier quarters. We do not assume any incremental revenues from sale of third-party items. We expect gradual EBIT margin improvement QoQ, primarily driven by benefits from Project Maximus,” it said.

The brokerage sees large deal wins at \$4.5-5 billion, led by 1.2 billion pounds mega deal win from NHSBSA. Axis Securities sees TCS’ Q3 net profit rising 8.8 per cent to Rs 7,425 crore on



9.4 per cent YoY jump in net sales at Rs 45,679 crore. “We expect Infosys to report revenue growth of 2.7 per cent QoQ, driven by deal ramp-ups, while furloughs and lower working days are likely to keep growth modest. EBIT margins are expected to remain flat sequentially, supported by the cost optimisation program, i.e. Project Maximus,” it said.JM Financial sees TCS’ net profit at Rs 7,577 crore in Q3, up 11.3 per cent YoY. Net revenue is seen rising 8.7 per cent YoY to Rs 45,385 crore. Antique Stock Broking sees net profit for TCS rising 10.8 per cent YoY to Rs 7,541.70 crore for the quarter. It sees dollar revenue at \$5,086 million, up 3 per cent YoY. MOFSL expects Infosys to maintain its guidance of 2-3 per cent YoY in CC terms. It said

revenue growth is expected to be flat sequentially in CC terms due to seasonal furloughs, with H2 weaker than H1 as growth was front-ended, in line with prior years. Operating margin is likely to remain flat given the absence of wage hikes and lower third-party costs, MOFSL said.The domestic brokerage said US BFSI is expected to remain resilient, with some pockets of discretionary spend, particularly in rate-sensitive portfolios such as mortgages, while retail remains soft amid tariff uncertainty. “The ask rate for the top end of guidance is minus 0.2 per cent for next two quarters, suggesting similar seasonality as previous years: seasonality implies flat Q3 growth and 1.3 per cent QoQ decline in Q4, MOFSL said.

Amazon India unveils Great Republic Day Sale 2026 with early deals, bank offers and AI-led shopping experience

Aizawl: Amazon India has announced that its much-awaited Great Republic Day Sale 2026 will go live from 12 am on January 16, with early deals already available to customers. The sale will feature wide-ranging discounts across smartphones, consumer electronics, large appliances, fashion, beauty, home and kitchen products, groceries and everyday essentials.Customers can avail up to 10 per cent instant savings on SBI credit card and EMI transactions, along with additional bank discounts of up to Rs 10,000. Prime members will get unlimited 5 per cent cashback on purchases using the Amazon Pay ICICI Bank credit card and welcome rewards worth Rs 2,500. Amazon Pay Later will offer eligible customers instant credit of up to Rs 60,000, while exchange benefits

on select smartphones go up to Rs 60,000, along with no-cost EMI options.The sale will bring deals on leading brands such as Apple, Samsung, OnePlus, Sony, LG, HP, Xiaomi and boAt. Highlights include discounts on iPhone 17 series devices, smart TVs, laptops, wearables, home appliances and fashion brands such as Levi’s, Skechers and L’Oréal Paris.Saurabh Srivastava said the company aims to make festive and Republic Day shopping more meaningful by combining a wide selection, fast deliveries and extra savings for Prime members. Amazon will also leverage AI-powered tools such as Rufus, Lens AI and AI Review Highlights to help customers discover products and make informed purchase decisions during the sale.

Inflation rises to 0.83% food inflation flat

New Delhi: The wholesale price inflationWPI Inflation edged higher in December to 0.83%, driven mainly by rising prices of manufactured goods and minerals.“Positive rate of inflation in December, 2025 is primarily due to increase in prices of other manufacturing, minerals, manufacture of machinery and equipment, manufacture of food products and textiles etc.,” the official data said.On a sequential basis, wholesale prices rose 0.71% in the food inflation was 0.51% in December.

The primary articles index rose by 1.09%. The fuel and power index climbed 1.23% and Manufactured products also ticked up by 0.41%.The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation for the month of December, released on Monday, January 12, rose to 1.3% year-on-year.

These numbers, ahead of the Union Budget 2026 scheduled to be held on February 1, will be crucial.DPIIT releases index number of wholesale price in India on monthly basis. WPI data for the month of January will be released on February 16.

NSE IPO this month; unlisted shares surge past Rs 2,000 Is the issue likely soon SEBI Chief hints at NOC this

New Delhi: The chatter around the NSE IPO timeline is picking up again. This is after the SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said that “We have to provide them with NoC and then NSE will have to follow on with other processes of filing, including DRHP, etc. Possibly, it (NoC) will be issued by this month.” He said this during an address to the media earlier this month on January 10. What further added to the optimism is a post on the X, the very next day, by NSE’s Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Ashish Kumar Chauhan. In his post after a visit to Lord Venkateshwara at Tirupati, Chauhan said, “The pilgrimage was planned a while back. Hon’ble SEBI Chairman’s signal to give NSE IPO approval this month, just as we reached Tirupati last evening, truly felt like a divine sign from the Almighty.” Earlier in November 2025, the SEBI Chairperson said that the process on the proposed changes to the Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements (LODR) regulations for the IPO had begun, and involves extensive consultations before a final decision is taken. Before that, in July 2025, speaking at the FE CFO Awards, he had said, “There is no obstacle remaining in the case of the NSE.” He added that the exchange and the markets regulator are settling some of the key issues. “There are some legal settlements and other things. Some amount will have to be paid, and those cases would have to be withdrawn, and so on.”What’s the main cause for delay

NSE has been trying to list since 2016. According to Reuters, approval has been delayed as a result of a regulatory probe into its conduct on fair market access for traders via its co-lo-



cation facilities.In June 2025, NSE filed a settlement application to settle the co-location and other cases. As per the news reports, NSE agreed to pay around Rs 1,400 crore as the settlement amount for the co-location and dark fibre cases. As per Reuters, this case is currently pending in the Supreme Court.Even as the timeline of the NSE IPO remains uncertain, NSE’s unlisted shares have been trading close to Rs 2,000 per share. This is as per data on the Unlisted Arena, a common platform that undertakes buying and selling of unlisted shares. At these rates, the exchange is valued at around Rs 5 trillion. As per the latest updated data, NSE has a 92.3% market share in the cash segment at the end of Q2.

The share in Equity Future is over 99% while in Equity Options it has 75.6% market share. One of the world’s largest multi-asset classes, it continues to enjoy 100% market share in currency derivatives.

Pre-listing, NSE has 177,807 shareholders. This sheer shareholder base makes it one of the largest unlisted companies, especially in terms of investor base.

NSE financial performance
NSE’s Q2 numbers indicated that the National Stock Exchange has set aside Rs 1,297 crore to settle cases pending with the markets regulator. The Q2 revenue came in at Rs 3,676 crore, while the revenue for Q2 was at 3,676 crore.

India’s wholesale inflation rises to 0.83% in December, food inflation flat, manufactured goods turn costlier

New Delhi: The wholesale price inflationWPI Inflation edged higher in December to 0.83%, driven mainly by rising prices of manufactured goods and minerals.“Positive rate of inflation in December, 2025 is primarily due to increase in prices of other manufacturing, minerals, manufacture of machinery and equipment, manufacture of food products and textiles etc.,” the official data said.On a sequential basis, wholesale prices rose 0.71% in December compared with November 2025, indicating a pick-up in price momentum towards the end of the year. Manufactured products, which carry the highest weight in the WPI basket, recorded an inflation rate of 1.82% in December 2025. This sector continued to remain the biggest contributor to overall wholesale inflation. The index for this group increased by 0.41% from 145.0 (provisional) for the month of November to 145.6 (provisional) in December. The food



index, which includes food articles and manufactured food products, showed no inflation in December, remaining flat,

0.00% compared with the same period last year. Fuel and power prices continued to stay in negative territory. The

fuel and power index recorded a deflation of 2.31% in December 2025, helping contain overall wholesale inflation. Primary articles registered an inflation rate of 0.21% on a year-on-year basis in December. Prices of minerals and some food items supported the marginal rise in this category.On month-on-month (MoM) basis, the food inflation was 0.51% in December. The primary articles index rose by 1.09%. The fuel and power index climbed 1.23% and Manufactured products also ticked up by 0.41%.The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation for the month of December, released on Monday, January 12, rose to 1.3% year-on-year. These numbers, ahead of the Union Budget 2026 scheduled to be held on February 1, will be crucial.DPIIT releases index number of wholesale price in India on monthly basis. WPI data for the month of January will be released on February 16.

House Oversight Committee to Subpoena Billionaire Les Wexner over Epstein Ties

London: The House Oversight Committee has secured subpoenas to seek testimony from billionaire Les Wexner and two executors of the estate of convicted serial sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. The subpoenas come as the Justice Department has released just over 12,000 documents from more than 2 million files related to Epstein — which amounts to less than 1% of its files. That’s despite a measure passed by Congress ordering the DOJ to release the vast majority of the files by December 19. U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi claimed in a federal court filing Monday that the DOJ’s supposed efforts to protect the identities of Epstein’s survivors had slowed the process. In Minnesota, thousands gathered in a Minneapolis neighborhood Wednesday evening for a candlelight vigil to mourn a 37-year-old Twin Cities resident who was shot and killed by an ICE agent earlier in the day shortly after she had dropped her 6-year-old son at school. Renee Nicole Good was a mother of three who lived in south Minneapolis with her partner, just blocks from where a masked ICE officer fired three shots at her at point-blank range. Good’s mother described her as loving, forgiving and affectionate and “an amazing human being.” She was killed blocks from the site of George Floyd’s murder in 2020 by Minneapolis police officers, a killing that sparked protests internationally under the banner Black Lives Matter.

Video of Good’s killing quickly spread across the internet, sparking protests and demands for accountability. The footage shows masked ICE agents approaching a vehicle being driven by Good, screaming for her to “Get out of the F—

ing car” — using profanity — and attempting to pull her driver-side door open. As Good backs up her car slightly, then attempts to drive past the officers, a masked agent pulls a firearm and fires three rounds into Good’s vehicle, which then crashes into a nearby car. Another video shows the aftermath: outraged residents, including a physician, screaming at the agents to let them check the mortally wounded driver for a pulse, while she’s seen bleeding, limp and slumped against her car’s blood-soaked air bag. Witnesses say medics responding to the shooting were forced to approach on foot, after federal agents obstructed their access to the scene while pepper-spraying bystanders who protested the killing. Good was ultimately brought to the Hennepin County Medical Center, where she was pronounced dead on arrival. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem accused Good of “weaponizing her vehicle” to commit an “act of domestic terrorism.” And in a social media post, President Trump falsely claimed Good had “violently, willfully, and viciously ran over the ICE Officer, who seems to have shot her in self defense.” Trump went on to say that “it is hard to believe that he is alive, but is now recovering in the hospital.” Video from the scene shows the ICE agent walking away after the shooting with no signs of injuries. Minnesota officials condemned those remarks. Democratic Governor Tim Walz issued an order to prepare to mobilize the Minnesota National Guard, calling Good’s killing “preventable” and “unnecessary.” This is Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey.

Mayor Jacob Frey: “They are already trying



to spin this as an action of self-defense. Having seen the video myself, I want to tell everybody directly: That is bullshit. This was an agent recklessly using power that resulted in somebody dying, getting killed. ... To ICE, get the fuck out of Minneapolis. We do not want you here.” This comes after the Trump administration ordered a surge of 2,000 ICE agents to the Twin Cities this week, after President Trump called the region’s large Somali community “garbage” and accused state officials of failing to root out fraud in social services programs. The killing of Renee Nicole Good was at least the ninth time federal immigration officers have fired on people since last September; five people have died in mass deportation operations since President Trump retook the White House. After headlines, we’ll go to Minneapolis for the latest.

Minneapolis Reels After ICE Fatally Shoots Renee Good

London: We speak with two people who responded to the fatal shooting of Renee Nicole Good, a 37-year-old mother of three, by an ICE agent in Minneapolis Wednesday. Trump administration officials claim the agent acted in self-defense, but local officials, including Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, reject that claim. “This could happen to you in your city,” says Robin Wonsley, member of the Minneapolis City Council. “This happening here in Minneapolis sets a tone for this to play out in many other cities.” The shooting comes after the Trump administration deployed over 2,000 ICE agents to Minnesota.

“This is not normal,” says Edwin Torres DeSantiago with the Immigrant Defense Network, which monitors ICE activity and has received thousands of requests from Minnesotans for “constitutive ICE in Minneapolis. people terrorized all all over the country protection.” NER-Minneapolis, though a candlelight vigil to mourn the death of Renee Nicole Good, who was fatally by an ICE agent at range. Video of masked ICE agents



hicle, screaming for her to “Get out of the F—ing car” — using profanity — and attempting to force open her driver-side door. As Good attempts to drive past the officers, a masked agent pulls his firearm and fires three rounds at Good. The shooting comes after the Trump administration deployed over 2,000 ICE agents to Minnesota. They are not here to cause safety in this city. What they are doing is not to provide safety in America. What they are doing is causing chaos and distrust. They’re ripping families apart. They’re sowing chaos on our streets, and in this case, quite literally, killing people. ... They are already trying to spin this as an action of self-defense. Having seen the video myself, I want to tell everybody directly: That is bullshit. This was an agent recklessly using power that resulted in somebody dying, getting killed. ... There’s little I can say, again, that will make this situation better, but I do have a message for our community, for our city, and I have a message for ICE. To ICE: Get the fuck out of Minneapolis. We do not want you here. NERMEEN SHAIKH: According to press accounts, Renee Nicole Good was shot shortly after she dropped her 6-year-old son at school. She was killed less than a mile from the site of George Floyd’s murder in 2020 by a Minneapolis police officer, a killing that sparked protests internationally under the banner Black Lives Matter.

tors ICE activity and sands of requests who want to volun- tional observers” of “We’ve been seeing over the state and under the guise of MEEN SHAIKH: In sands gathered for Wednesday evening of 37-year-old Renee a mother of three shot hours earlier near-point-blank the shooting shows approaching her ve-

Affirms Support for Venezuelan Gov’t After Attacking Ukraine’s Second-Largest Kharkiv

Paris: Russia has reaffirmed its support for the Venezuelan government, calling the U.S. attacks “extremely concerning and deserving of condemnation.” On Saturday, Russia’s Foreign Ministry wrote in a statement, “Venezuela must be guaranteed the right to determine its own future without destructive external interference, particularly of a military nature.” The statement came a day after a Russian missile attack on Ukraine’s second-largest city Kharkiv leveled a multistory residential apartment block, killing two people, including a 3-year-old child, while injuring 28 others. The U.S. military launched a large-scale attack on Venezuela Saturday to capture Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores. Missiles rained down on army bases, airfields and key infrastructure across the capital Caracas and the surrounding region. By 2 a.m., U.S. special forces reached Maduro’s residence and abducted him along with his wife.

They were then boarded onto a U.S. warship and flown to the U.S. President Trump posted an image of Maduro bound and blindfolded aboard the USS Iwo Jima. Maduro and his wife were later held at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, New York, to face criminal charges of narcoterrorism conspiracy, cocaine importation conspiracy and weapons offenses. They are now being flown by helicopter to Lower Manhattan to appear in federal court today. Shortly after the operation, President Trump praised U.S. forces for abducting Maduro and his wife, and promised to run Venezuela and seize the country’s oil. Venezuela has the world’s largest reserves of crude oil. President Donald Trump: “The oil companies are going to go in. They’re going to spend money. They’re going to —

we’re going to take back the oil that, frankly, we should have taken back a long time ago. A lot of money is coming out of the ground.” After the



operation, Venezuela’s Supreme Court officially designated the country’s vice president, Delcy Rodríguez, as interim president. On Saturday, Rodríguez denounced the abduction of Maduro and his wife and vowed that Venezuela was ready to defend itself against the United States. Vice President Delcy Rodríguez: “We demand the immediate liberation of President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores — the only president of Venezuela, President Nicolás Maduro. ... Everything within the Constitution, we learned it from Commander Chávez in the face of adversities, in the face of coup d’état, in the face of oil sabotages. We are ready to defend Venezuela. We are ready to defend our natural resources that must be for national development.” Soon after her comments, President Trump issued a warning to Rodríguez, telling The Atlantic,

“If she doesn’t do what’s right, she is going to pay a very big price, probably bigger than Maduro.” By Sunday, Rodríguez posted a more

conciliatory message on Instagram saying that her government is ready to work with the U.S. She wrote,

“We invite the US government to collaborate with us on an agenda of cooperation oriented towards shared development within the framework of international law to strengthen lasting community coexistence.”

Meanwhile, Semafor is reporting that The New York Times and The Washington Post knew of the secret U.S. raid on Venezuela before it was scheduled to begin Friday night, but held off on publishing the story to avoid endangering U.S. troops.

A senior Venezuelan official speaking to The New York Times said that at least 80 people, including civilians and soldiers, were killed in the U.S. attack on Saturday.

The Cuban government said 32 of its citizens had been killed, including military and intelligence personnel. This is Jonatan Mallora, whose home was damaged by U.S. airstrikes.

Amazon India’s Great Republic Day Sale 2026 - early deals now live

Paris: Los Angeles police responded Sunday after somebody drove a U-Haul box truck down a street crowded with marchers demonstrating in support of the Iranian people, causing protesters to scramble out of the way and then run after the speeding vehicle to try to attack the driver.

The U-Haul truck, with a window and side mirrors shattered, was stopped several blocks away and surrounded by police cars. ABC7 news helicopter footage showed officers keeping the crowd at bay as demonstrators swarmed the truck, throwing punches at the driver and thrusting flagpoles through the driver’s side window. The driver, a man who was not identified, was detained “pending further investigation,” police said in a statement Sunday evening. The police statement said one person was hit by the truck, but nobody was seriously hurt. Two people were evaluated by paramedics, and both declined treatment, the Los Angeles Fire Department said. A banner at-



tached to the truck said “No Shah. No Regime. USA: Don’t Repeat 1953. No Mullah,” an apparent reference to a US-backed coup that year that toppled then Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh.

The August 1953 coup stemmed

from US fears over the Soviet Union increasingly wanting a piece of Iran as Communists agitated within the country.

The ground had been laid partially by the British, who wanted to wrest back access to the Iranian oil industry,

which had been nationalised earlier by Mossadegh.

The coup toppled Mossadegh and cemented the power of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. It also lit the fuse for the 1979 Islamic Revolution, which saw the fatally ill Shah flee Iran and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini usher in the theocracy that still governs the country. A huge crowd of demonstrators, some waving the flag of Iran, had gathered Sunday afternoon along Veteran Avenue in LA’s Westwood neighbourhood to protest against the Iranian theocracy. Police eventually issued a dispersal order, and by 5 p.m., only about a hundred protesters were still in the area, ABC7 reported. Activists say a crackdown on nationwide protests in Iran has killed more than 530 people. Protesters flooded the streets in Iran’s capital of Tehran and its second-largest city again on Sunday.

Los Angeles is home to the largest Iranian community outside of Iran. a

Mamdani Takes Oath at Abandoned NYC Subway Station to Highlight

New York: City started 2026 with a new mayor, as democratic socialist Zohran Mamdani made history when he was sworn in as the city’s first Muslim, first South Asian and first African-born leader, as well as the youngest in over a century. Ahead of a public ceremony on New Year’s Day that drew tens of thousands of people in the freezing cold, Mamdani was privately sworn in at midnight by New York Attorney General Tish James in a small ceremony held at a decommissioned subway station below City Hall. He took his oath using two Qur’ans, including one that belonged to his grandfather. Andrew Epstein, one of Mamdani’s closest advisers, spoke with Democracy Now! about the significance of the private ceremony and how it connected the new mayor to the history of the city he now leads. AMY GOODMAN: Democratic socialist Zohran Mamdani has been sworn in as the mayor of New York City. He was officially sworn in just after midnight on New Year’s Eve. He’s made history as New York’s first Muslim, first South Asian and first African-born mayor, and, at the age of 34, the city’s youngest mayor in more than a century. Ahead of a public ceremony that drew thousands of people in below-freezing weather, Mamdani was sworn in privately at midnight New Year’s Eve by New York Attorney General Tish James in a small ceremony in an old, decommissioned subway station below City Hall. AMY GOODMAN: As the New York Attorney General Tish James swore in Zohran Mamdani, he placed his

hand on top of two Qur’ans held by his wife, the Syrian American artist Rama Duwaji, including one that belonged to his grandfather, making him the first New York City mayor to use Islam’s holy text at his inauguration. This is Mayor Mamdani.

MAYOR ZOHRAN MAMDANI:

Thank you so much for everyone for being here. Happy New Year to New Yorkers, both inside this tunnel and above. And I cannot wait to see everyone tomorrow as we begin our term.

This is truly the honor and the privilege of a lifetime. And after just having taken my oath to become the mayor of the city of New York, I do so also here in the old City Hall subway station, a testament to the importance of public transit to the vitality, the health and the legacy of our city. AMY GOODMAN:

That was just after midnight on January 1st. Later, on Thursday afternoon, Senator Bernie Sanders swore in Zohran Mamdani again in a huge public ceremony at City Hall in the freezing weather. We’ll hear more of that soon.

But first, this is Andrew Epstein, one of the key people who helped steer Mayor Mamdani’s long-shot campaign, who talked to Democracy Now! just before he was sworn in the second time on the steps of City Hall about the significance of Mayor Mamdani’s midnight swearing-in. ANDREW EPSTEIN: My name is Andrew Epstein. I was the communications director and, later, the creative director on Zohran’s campaign for mayor. I’m now an adviser.

Turkish Mafia Among Key Targets In London’s Massive Crime Crackdown, Says Police

Paris: London’s Metropolitan Police have launched a major crackdown on organised crime groups across the capital, including feared gang networks like the so-called “Turkish mafia,” as part of efforts to reduce violent crime and bring the city’s homicide rate to its lowest level in more than a decade, according to The Metro

New figures show that 97 homicides were recorded in London in 2025, down from 109 in 2024, an 11 per cent reduction and the lowest total since 2014. The decline comes as the Met steps up targeted operations against dangerous gangs, drug networks and violent offenders, according to Police Professional. Detective Chief Superintendent Rick Sewart said that dismantling organised crime groups is central to the strategy of cutting serious violence and lowering the murder rate. Officers have increased arrests, used technologies such as facial recognition, and worked closely with community units to reduce violent crime on London’s streets.

He told Metro: “The Turkish gangs are the number one threat to the UK and London in terms of firearms. We have been working with Europol and the National Crime Agency on the supply of firearms into Europe and the UK.” “We have a clear focus on organised crime groups who are bringing firearms and supplying those street gangs one operation alone which started in 2024 has helped us recover 138 firearms and 2,500 rounds of ammunition from a particular organised crime group who has been importing guns into that’s a Turkish organised crime group.”

Among the groups named by police are gangs linked to heroin trafficking and street violence, including those associated with Turkish-origin networks such as the Bombacilar (the Bombers) and rival crews like the Tottenham Boys.

The drop in homicides coincides with broader civic efforts to prevent violence through early intervention and education, notably programs addressing knife crime and youth involvement in gang culture. London Mayor and police officials have highlighted both enforcement and community-based approaches as contributing to the improved safety indicators.

The Rare Cases Of False Pregnancy: Symptoms, Causes and Emotional Impact

“As a gynaecologist, one of the rare yet deeply sensitive conditions I encounter is false pregnancy, medically known as pseudocyesis,” says Dr Nirmala M., Consultant, Obstetrician, Gynaecologist & Fertility Specialist, Motherhood Hospitals, Whitefield, Bengaluru.

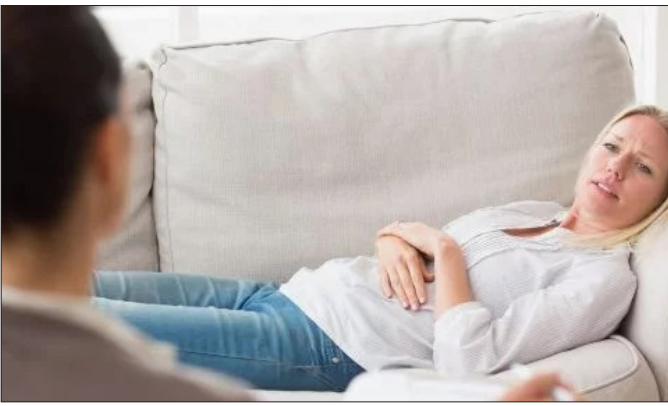
False pregnancy occurs when a woman firmly believes she is pregnant and develops several physical signs of pregnancy, despite the absence of an actual

foetus. According to Dr. Nirmala, common symptoms include missed periods, abdominal enlargement, breast tenderness, nausea, fatigue, and in rare cases, even the sensation of foetal movements. “Hormonal changes may also lead to weight gain and milk secretion, further reinforcing the belief of pregnancy,” she explains. The causes of pseudocyesis are complex and multifactorial. Dr. Nirmala notes that the condition is often linked to intense emotional factors. “Women experiencing infertility, repeated miscarriages, strong social or familial pressure to conceive, or profound emotional stress may be more vulnerable,” she says. Psychological stress can influence the brain’s hormonal regulation, triggering physical changes that closely mimic pregnancy. In some cases, underlying medical conditions such as hormonal imbalances, ovarian cysts, or uterine fibroids may also contribute

to misleading symptoms.

The emotional impact following a diagnosis of false pregnancy can be significant. “When investigations such as ultrasound scans and blood tests confirm the absence of pregnancy, patients may experience grief, embarrassment, anxiety, or even depression,” explains Dr. Nirmala. She emphasises that how the diagnosis is communicated plays a crucial role in recovery. “It is essential that this condition is

explained with empathy, sensitivity, and reassurance, ensuring the woman feels supported rather than judged.”With timely medical evaluation and compassionate psychological support, most women are able to process the experience and recover emotionally. As Dr. Nirmala highlights, understanding pseudocyesis as a medical and psychological condition rather than a personal failing is key to healing and restoring emotional wellbeing.



What does sugar do to your body – and how can you avoid a slump

Sugar tastes great for good reason: we evolved to like it, back when honey was a hard-to-get, energy-dense treat and we spent half of our time running around after antelope. Now that it’s much easier to get and we don’t move as much, that sweet tooth is working against us: many of us are consuming far too much of it, and suffering from poor health as a result. But is there anything specifically bad about it beyond it providing too many calories and not enough nutrients? “When we taste sugar, the body starts reacting the moment sweetness touches the tongue,” says Dawn Menning, a registered dietitian who works with health app Nutu. “The brain recognises it as a quick source of energy and activates the reward system, releasing the feelgood chemical dopamine that makes it so appealing.” Interestingly, not everyone tastes sugar in exactly the same way – in 2015, researchers compared different types of siblings’ perception of sugar and sweeteners, and found that identical twins were more similar to each other in their sweet taste perception than fraternal twins or non-twin siblings. They concluded that genetic factors account for about 30% of the variance in how sensitive people are to sweet tastes – but it’s unclear whether that actually affects how much we eat.

Regardless, what happens after your first taste depends on the kind of sugar you’re taking in: glucose, which is what you get from table sugar, most sweet treats and starchy carbohydrates, has slightly different effects from fructose, the type you’ll commonly find in fruits and juices. “Glucose causes the pancreas to release insulin, a hormone which – to put it in simple terms – is involved in removing that glucose from circulation and depositing it where it needs to go,” says Sarah Berry, professor of nutrition at King’s College London and chief scientist at science and nutrition company Zoe. “That might mean that it’s stored in the muscles or liver for energy as glycogen, or converted into fat.” Fructose, meanwhile, doesn’t cause insulin to be released. “It’s delivered directly into the liver, where, again it can be converted to glycogen – or again, if consumed in excess, is converted also into fat.” Both types of sugar, when eaten in excess, can



lead to an increase in the type of fat circulating in your blood known as triglycerides: they’re essential for energy, but high levels can increase the risk for heart disease, stroke and pancreatitis. Fructose is more of a concern for people at risk of fatty liver syndrome, but glucose is an issue for people who have trouble regulating insulin. Which one you should be more concerned about, then, really depends on your other lifestyle choices and genetic predispositions. “What we also know is if you have an insulin peak that’s excessive and repeated day in and day out, then it can increase levels of inflammation,” says Berry. “That in itself isn’t inherently bad because inflammation is happening all the time in our bodies – but if it’s repeated and excessive, that’s when we believe it becomes a problem.”

The sugar rush, incidentally, is a myth that has somehow persisted for decades: when researchers analysed a meta-analysis of studies on young people eating sugar back in 1995, they concluded that “sugar does not affect the behaviour or cognitive performance of children”, suggesting that “the strong belief of parents may be due to expectancy and common association”. More recently, a 2019 meta-analysis found no mood-boosting effects from carbohydrates (including sugar), and noted that it “was associated with higher levels of fatigue and less alertness compared with [the] placebo within the first hour post-ingestion”. But

even if our seemingly sugar-crazed darlings are actually just acting up in response to the placebo effect, or the fact that they’re at a party, the other problem is what happens after the insulin peak goes away and we experience a corresponding dip. “We know from research that we’ve done with our Zoe Predict cohort that if people have that dip, they feel more hungry, and they tend to consume 80 calories more at their next meal, and 320 calories more over the day,” says Berry. “So if you have a breakfast that’s just carbohydrate it’s very likely to cause you to have a dip and you’ll end up eating more later.” This means that it’s not just how much sugar you eat: it’s about when you eat it, and how much. “We know blood sugar response is more favourable in the morning because you’re more insulin sensitive compared to the afternoon,” says Berry. “But our bodies are also better able to handle sugars if they’re being delivered as part of an overall balanced meal with heart-healthy fats and healthy proteins. By the way, this whole idea of trying to ‘flatline’ your glucose response that you see from some influencers is totally unnecessary: an increase in blood glucose is a normal physiological response to eating. We just need to make sure that it’s not excessive.” The takeaway? As a nation, we definitely eat more sugar than we need or can use. A recent study released by the Oral Health Foundation found that 84% of us eat at least one sugary snack dai-

ly, with 79% consuming “up to” three every day. It’s a good idea to eat less, but there’s no need to demonise or cut it out entirely: just enjoy it in moderation, preferably not too late in the day, and ideally alongside some fibre, healthy fat or protein. And if you’re tempted to skip this whole worrisome business by relying on sugar substitutes instead, that might not be the foolproof plan you’re hoping for. It was once thought that artificial sweeteners might cause your insulin to spike on their own or somehow “trick” your hunger hormones into making you famished, but neither of those things seem to be the case: actually, the problem happens in a different place. “There’s some emerging evidence that sweeteners like saccharin and sucralose can affect your oral and gut microbiome,” says Berry.

“More research needs to be done to understand if there are also subsequent effects on other health outcomes in the long term, such as blood pressure, insulin resistance, and body weight. But it’s not a get out of jail free card.” It’s also possible, according to research published recently, that some sweeteners are actually converted to fructose in the body, triggering effects similar to regular sugar. Until the results are in, get some sweetness from sugar instead – that’s what we’ve evolved to do. But remember: our paleolithic ancestors didn’t have access to as much as you, and they probably moved around a heck of a lot more.

Why Indian Skin Needs A Winter Reset: Expert-Backed Skincare Tips

Winter brings more than just a change in weather, it alters how our skin behaves. For Indian skin, this seasonal transition can be particularly demanding. While it’s true that Indian skin contains more collagen than Caucasian skin, offering better resilience against early wrinkling, studies from the ITC Dermafique Indian Skin Health Report reveal that it also has a weaker barrier and lower moisture retention. This means that even though Indian skin may appear firmer for longer, it is significantly more prone to dryness and sensitivity when temperatures drop.

Understanding the Indian Skin Barrier

The outermost layer of our skin, the stratum corneum acts as a protective shield, locking in moisture and defending against external aggressors. However, Indian skin tends to have lower levels of Natural Moisturising Factors (NMF), making it more vulnerable to transepidermal water loss, especially during colder months. This helps explain why nearly 80% of Indian women experience dryness due

to environmental factors, with 87% struggling with under-eye dryness even after using moisturisers, as noted in the Dermafique report.

The Role of Barrier-Repairing Ingredients

Dr Aparna Santhanam, skin expert and dermatologist, ITC Dermafique, emphasises that winter care for Indian skin must go beyond superficial hydration. Ingredients such as ceramides, hyaluronic acid, and glycerin play a crucial role in reinforcing the skin’s lipid barrier and improving water retention. Hyaluronic acid acts as a moisture magnet, drawing water into the skin, while glycerin forms a humectant layer that helps seal hydration in. Together, these ingredients help restore balance to skin that is both dehydrated and sensitive.

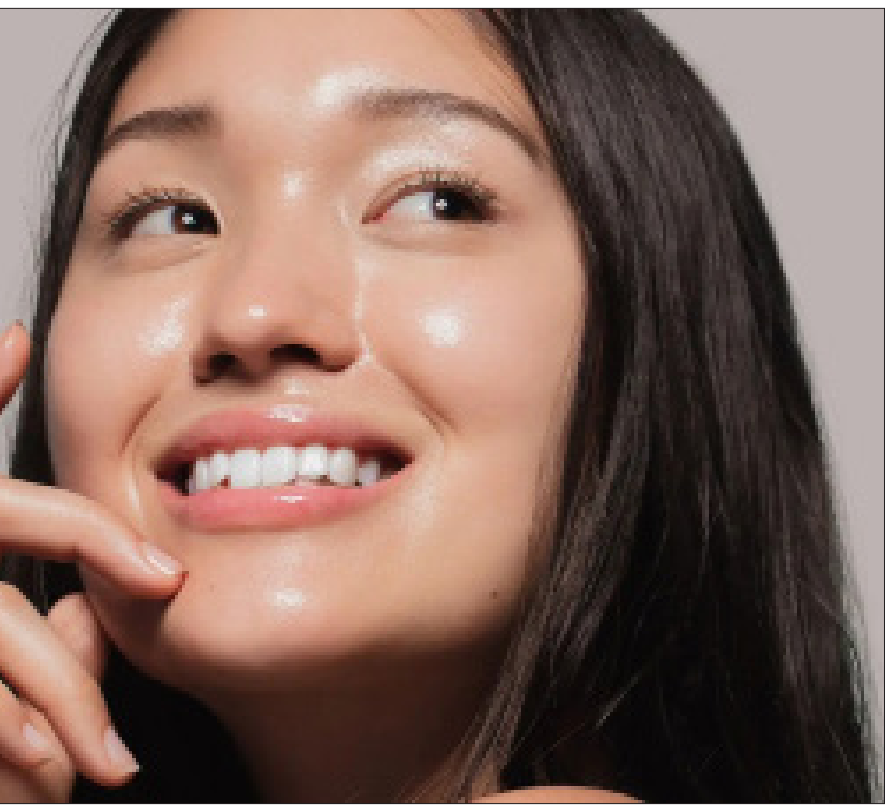
Addressing Pigmentation and Uneven Tone

Interestingly, Indian skin’s higher melanin content, approximately 50% more than Caucasian skin provides natural sun protection but also makes it more prone to pigmentation. Winter sun exposure, combined with indoor heat-

ing, can trigger oxidative stress, leading to dullness and uneven tone. Niacinamide, a form of vitamin B3, helps regulate melanin transfer and improve skin tone, making it particularly beneficial for winter skincare routines.

The Winter Reset Routine

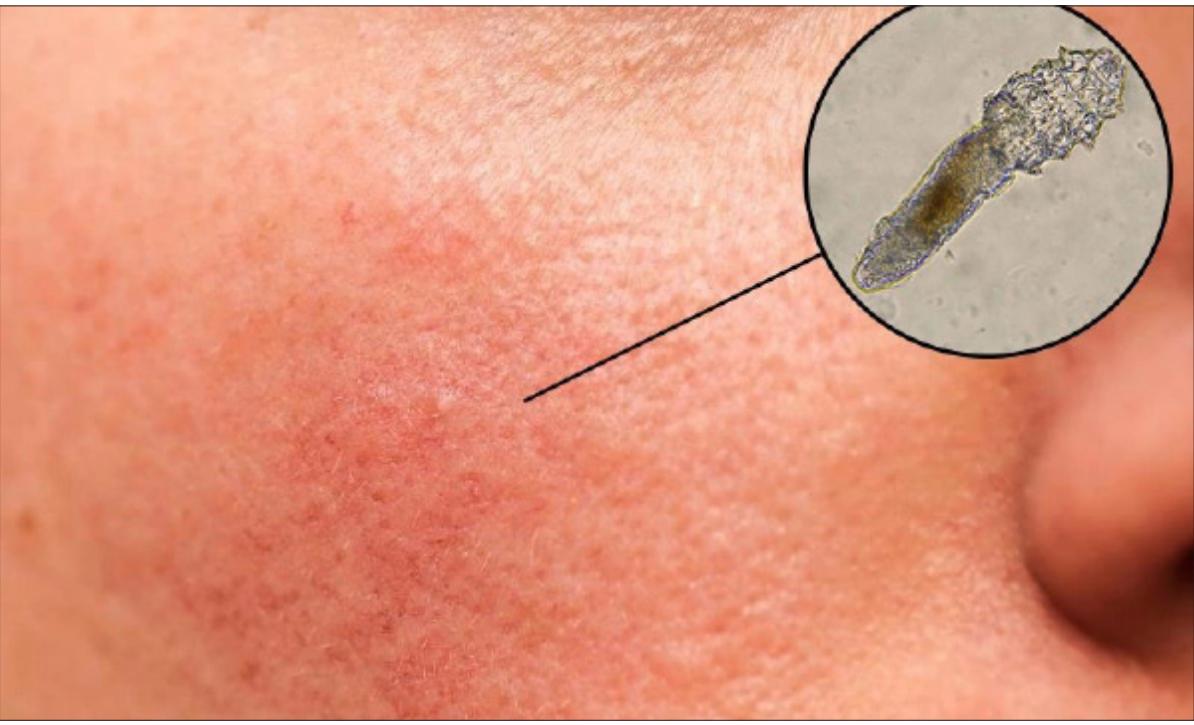
A winter reset doesn’t require a complete overhaul of your skincare routine; it simply involves adapting to your skin’s changing needs. Start with a gentle cleanser containing amino acids or lactic acid to cleanse effectively without stripping natural oils. Follow this with a hydrating serum rich in humectants, and finish with a barrier-supporting moisturiser infused with ceramides and panthenol. Most importantly, stay well hydrated, internal hydration plays a vital role in maintaining skin moisture. As Dr Santhanam summarises, “Indian skin is beautifully resilient yet uniquely sensitive. Understanding its biology allows us to customise our routines to truly support it. Winter care, when done right, helps restore not just moisture, but balance.”



Demodex Mites: Here’s What You Need To Know About The Tiny Creatures Living on Your Face

When we think about skincare, bacteria often get the blame for breakouts, irritation, or redness. But few people realise that microscopic creatures called Demodex mites naturally live on human skin – particularly on the face. While the idea may sound unsettling, these mites are surprisingly common and usually harmless.

Dr Sonali Kohli, Senior Consultant, Dermatology, Sir H.N. Reliance Foundation Hospital, says, “Demodex mites are tiny, cigar-shaped organisms that live in hair follicles and sebaceous (oil) glands. There are two primary species found on humans: Demodex folliculorum, which resides in hair follicles (especially eyelashes and eyebrows), and Demodex brevis, which lives deeper in oil glands.” Nearly everyone acquires them shortly after birth, often through close contact, and their numbers tend to increase with age. In most people, Demodex mites coexist peacefully with the skin. They feed on dead skin cells and excess oil, emerging mostly at night to move between follicles. Under normal conditions, the immune system keeps its population in check, preventing any noticeable symptoms. Problems arise when mite populations grow excessively—a condition known as demodicosis. Dr Sonali Kohli says, “This overgrowth has been linked to skin issues such as persistent redness, itching, rough texture, and acne-like breakouts. Demodex mites are also associated with rosacea and chronic eyelid inflammation (blepharitis), where symptoms may include itching, burning



sensations, or crusting around the eyelashes.”

Several factors can contribute to Demodex overgrowth, including weakened immunity, excessive oil production, poor eyelid hygiene, stress, and certain skin conditions. Using heavy or oily skincare products can also create an environment that allows mites to thrive.

Diagnosis is typically made by dermatologists through skin scrapings or eyelash sampling examined under a microscope, explains Dr Sonali Kohli. Treatment focuses on reducing mite numbers rather than eliminating them entirely. Common approaches include topical medications, medicated cleansers, tea tree oil-based products (especially for eyelid involvement), and improved skincare hygiene. In some cases, oral medications may be prescribed. Preventive measures play a crucial role. Maintaining gentle facial hygiene, removing makeup thoroughly, avoiding sharing towels or cosmetics, and keeping pillowcases clean can help keep mite populations under control. Importantly, experts advise against over-cleansing or harsh treatments, as these can disrupt the skin barrier and worsen symptoms.

While the idea of mites living on your face may sound alarming, Demodex mites are a normal part of human skin ecology. Understanding their role – and knowing when they become problematic – can help people make informed decisions about skincare and seek timely medical advice when symptoms persist.

Emraan Hashmi explains why it took 19 years to complete Awarapan 2



Mumbai: Emraan Hashmi’s eagerly anticipated sequel to Awarapan, which debuted in 2007, is finally returning nearly twenty years later. The film’s music, dark romance, and Emraan’s strong on-screen demeanor have all contributed to its cult appeal over time. The actor claims that the enormous expectations for Awarapan 2 are the exact reason the sequel took so long to come to fruition. Emraan talked candidly about the length of time between the two movies in a recent interview with Man’s World India. He disclosed that he had purposefully waited for the ideal script before returning to the franchise. “A sequel must be worthy of the original movie, which is why I was waiting so long. “I was waiting for a strong script,” he stated, adding that when writer Bilal Siddiqi joined the team with an intriguing topic, everything finally came together. “After reading it, we made

the decision to proceed,” Emraan stated. When smuggled photos and footage from the Rajasthan sets of Awarapan 2 appeared online late last year, the enthusiasm around the film reached a high.

Hashmi’s rough, long-haired appearance in the images sparked discussion and conjecture regarding the movie’s plot and the development of his character. The project faced difficulties even though the leaked images increased the buzz. In order to stop more unapproved leaks, the producers reportedly had to increase security on the set. After neighbors allegedly filmed terrace scenes, access to shooting places was restricted, phones were prohibited on set, and numerous areas were sealed off. Despite these setbacks, Awarapan 2 is still one of the most eagerly awaited movies, with viewers hoping to see Hashmi play the same character again and the plot develop.

As filming begins, Anupam Kher reunites with the OG cast

Mumbai: After posting pictures with the original cast and a statement expressing his excitement for the forthcoming sequel, actor Anupam Kher has reignited interest in Khosla Ka Ghosla 2. The announcement was posted on Instagram along with pictures of Kiran Juneja, Parvin Dabas, and Ranvir Shorey, who all acted in the 2006 movie. Since the sequel features a number of well-known actors, the release has sparked conjecture on the plot’s trajectory and the roles of both new and returning cast members.

Fans of the original movie, which developed a cult following due to its humorous plot and stand-out performances, took notice of Kher’s social media remark. “KHOSLAS ARE BACK AND HOW: I have been in movies now for forty years,” the actor wrote. “But never have I

experienced this crazy anticipation for the sequel of any movie (including International) as in the case of #KhoslaKaGhosla2!” he went on. Kher’s comments highlight the original’s ongoing appeal and the high hopes for the follow-up. Tara Sharma, who starred in the first movie, will also be returning, along with the main cast.

With the latest addition of Ravi Kishan to the cast, the actors will reprise their roles as members of the Khosla family in the upcoming movie. Fans’ excitement has increased as a result of these events; many are excited to see how the new plot will evolve and how the new cast member will alter the well-known dynamic. The first film, which was helmed by Dibakar Banerjee, immediately became a cult classic in Indian cinema thanks to its humorous story and powerful performances.

Every Record Within 40 days of its release, Dhurandhar broke

Mumbai: When Aditya Dhar’s film Dhurandhar debuted on December 5, 2025, nothing could have predicted how successful it would be at the box office. The movie opened to a strong Rs 28 crore nett in India on its first Friday, making it the greatest opening of Ranveer Singh’s career. Since then, it has consistently broken box office records on both weekdays and weekends. The movie has achieved the distinction of becoming the highest-grossing Indian movie globally in 2025. After forty days, Dhurandhar is still gaining momentum every day and every week, making it one

of the most prominent theatrical runs in recent Hindi film. Ranveer Singh’s movie made Rs 2.90 crore on Day 40. At Rs 863 crore, domestic earnings are currently quite high. Dhurandhar achieved several professional milestones for director Aditya Dhar. The highest single-day revenue of Rs 17.17 crore was earned by his previous hit Uri: The Surgical Strike. Dhurandhar achieved several professional milestones for director Aditya Dhar.

The highest single-day revenue of Rs 17.17 crore was earned by his previous hit Uri: The Surgical Strike.



Malaika Arora’s performance of item songs at fifty

Mumbai: Malaika Arora, a Bollywood performer and businesswoman, lately wowed audiences with her dancing routines in Thamma and with Honey Singh. But when she sang item songs in her 50s, she also encountered trolling. Now, Malaika talked about feeling empowered while doing item numbers at this point in her life in an interview with The Namrata Zakaria Show on YouTube. Malaika responded, “Why not? I see no reason not to possess this image of mine. Why should I apologize or tone it down? I mean, a lot of people say different things and you get tired for things, but I don’t see the big deal. Dancing is a form of expression that should be appreciated in all of its beauty. I must be doing something right because I feel really fortunate to be able to accomplish all of this at fifty.” It is very, very empowering,” she added. It gives me a wonderful feeling. As I’ve previously stated, it’s a job well done if women see it as an example or as something that empowers them and makes them feel good. Malaika has



contributed to several of Bollywood’s most famous item songs, including Chaiyya Chaiyya, Munni Badnaam, and Anarkali Disco Chali. She costarred with Rashmika Mandanna in the dance performance Poison Baby from Maddock Films’ Thamma in 2025.

Reactions were all over the internet, with many pointing out that Malaika in the song stole the show from Rashmika. She later made an appearance in the Chillgum music video, when her audacious actions drew condemnation once more. Malaika, though, was unaffected by the teasing.

Sadhaaf, an Afghan competitor on Splitsvilla 16, is a Shiv devotee



Mumbai: Model from Afghanistan One of the most talked-about competitors on the Indian dating reality show Splitsvilla 16 is Sadhaaf Shankar. On January 9, 2026, the series debuted. Shankar’s unusual name and preference for Indian customs and culture have drawn attention. Shankar is from Afghanistan, but she has spent the last ten years living in India. In the show, she acknowledged that she wanted to mar-

ry an Indian. Despite being of Muslim descent, host Karan Kundrra was shocked to see Shankar connected to her name. She revealed that she is a devotee of Lord Shiva when Kundrra questioned her about the significance of her name. She changed her name to Shankar due to her faith. Everyone, even the host, complimented the Afghan contestant after hearing her. Shankar disclosed that she fasts and prays out of devotion rather than duty. Despite being active on social media, she has mostly kept information about her upbringing, education, and family private, preferring to let her presence and personality do the talking. Many people have responded favorably to her candor about her faith, which has enhanced her public persona and identity on the show. After a six-year hiatus, Kundrra is back to co-host Splitsvilla in its sixteenth season with actor Sunny Leone. They are joined by Nia Sharma and Uorfi Javed, two naughty characters from the reality program.

In order to find their ideal mate, 32 contestants are participating in the reality series. The few participants from the show include Anjali, Akanksha Choudhary, Anisha Shinde, Diksha Pawar, Sadhaaf Shankar, and Soundarya Shetty. Every Friday through Sunday at 9:00 p.m., MTV broadcasts Splitsvilla 16. The show is also available for streaming on JioHotstar.

At the reception for Nupur and Stebin, Salman Khan steals the show

Mumbai: On Tuesday night, Kriti Sanon’s sister Nupur Sanon and Stebin Ben threw a lavish reception party in Mumbai following two lavish weddings in Udaipur. Salman Khan was at the top of the guest list. Salman looked dapper as ever in a crisp blue suit. A number of footage from the event, which featured Stebin and Nupur greeting the celebrity, went viral.

After Salman enters, Stebin Ben is seen in one widely shared video lowering his head in appreciation. Just so you know, Stebin recently performed with the celebrity at Da-Bangg The Tour Reloaded in Doha. Stebin and Nupur joined Bhaijaan and smiled broadly as they posed for photos. Jacky Bhagnani, Ankita Lokhande, Hina Khan, and Isha Malviya were among the other famous people present at the event. Additionally, Kriti Sanon acted as the ideal hostess for the visitors. Over the weekend, Nupur Sanon and Stebin Ben enjoyed a white wedding in Udaipur, which was followed by a Hindu ceremony. “I did,” Nupur commented, sharing photos from their white wedding. Yes, I do. I always and forever will. The pair shared the second batch of photos from their Hindu wedding along with the caption, “You are the peace of my tomorrow, and thanks to today.” After they appeared together in several mu-



sic videos and promotional events, rumors about their romance began to circulate.

The suspicions were fueled by fans’ observations of their social media activities, including likes, comments, and behind-the-scenes photos. Industry rumors claim that Nupur and Stebin first became friends in the

music business. According to reports, their relationship started when they collaborated on music videos, where their chemistry on screen was well-received. They were able to spend time together because to their frequent collaborations, which many believe created the groundwork for their strong relationship.

Celina Jaitley claims that she received a divorce notice in the guise of an anniversary present

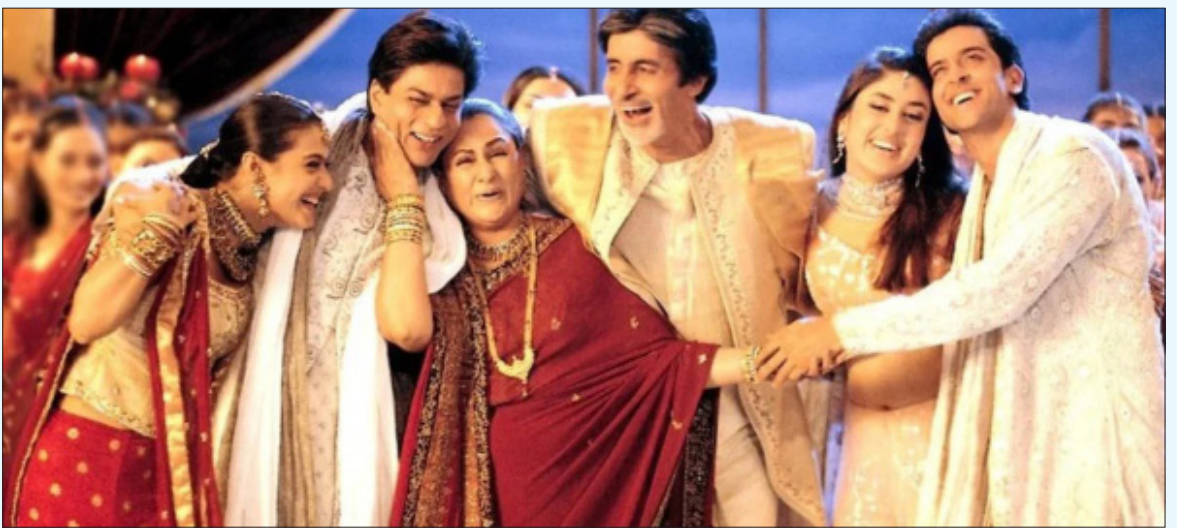


Mumbai: In November of last year, Celina Jaitley filed for divorce from her husband, Peter Haag, in a Mumbai Andheri court, citing abuse and domestic violence. The actress said in a lengthy Instagram post on Tuesday that, despite joint custody and an ongoing Austrian Family Court order, she has been refused access to her three children. She wrote in the same note that her husband had delivered her the divorce notification under the guise of an anniversary present from the local post office. In addition, she was driven to the post office by her

spouse. A portion of her note read: “In early Sept., I was served a divorce notice by my husband on the pretext of receiving a gift ordered for our 15th wedding anniversary at the local post office, to which I was driven by him.” Peter Haag filed for divorce in an Austrian court last year, according to Celina’s attorney. According to reports, he took this action after Celina discovered that homes in Vienna were being sold without her knowledge. Haag is trying to demonstrate that Celina has no title to any of their

possessions in the Austrian lawsuit. Additionally, the attorney claimed that Peter is holding Celina responsible for their marriage’s dissolution. For the benefit of their kids, Celina had begged him to pursue a mutual-consent divorce, but Peter refused. In her last statement, Celina Jaitley reiterated the same assertion: “Thereafter, I repeatedly and legally sought an amicable separation in good faith, prioritizing only the welfare of the children.” The actress, who was represented by Karanjawala & Co., asked the court to prevent Haag from entering her Mumbai home and requested ₹10 lakh in maintenance each month. Additionally, she has requested custody of their three children, who are presently residing in Austria with Haag. She has also claimed ₹50 crore to make up for the purported loss of earnings that her husband caused. Jaitley, 47, called Haag, 48, a “narcissistic” and “self-absorbed individual” who has “no empathy” for her or their kids in her plea. She added that Haag “robbed her of her financial independence and dignity” and “prohibited” her from working under various pretexts following the birth of their children. 2010 saw the marriage of Jaitley and Haag. In March 2012, they welcomed twin boys into the world. She gave birth to a second set of twin boys five years later, one of them passed away from a hypoplastic heart.

Yash Johar’s Response to Bole Chudiyan by Karan Johar Crossing The Rs 3 Crore



Mumbai: Amitabh Bachchan, Jaya Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Kajol, Kareena Kapoor Khan, and Hrithik Roshan were among the ensemble cast members of Karan Johar’s 2001 hit film Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham. The pandemonium on set during the song Bole Chudiyan and the enormous budget that worried everyone were recently discussed by Nikkhil Advani, who collaborated with Karan as an associate director on the movie. Nikkhil Advani talked about how Yash Johar had written the film’s art budget as Rs 3 crore when they had recounted Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham to him.

Yash Johar had given the crew the

all-clear to move forward. “Our very first set was for Bole Chudiyan,” he revealed. On set, Karan Johar passed out. Kajol was unable to dance because to problems with her lehenga. With 200 dancers and 300 younger artists, it was total mayhem. Karan wanted everything to appear magnificent, so we even made jhoomars, or chandeliers. Nikhil went on, “Yash ji made us sit down for a tea break that evening and questioned, ‘Didn’t you make a budget for this film?’ Yes, I replied. “How much was it?” he inquired. “I don’t remember,” I said. “The set you’ve created has already cost more than that,” he added after taking out the paper I had given him

and reading it aloud: “Rs 3 crore.” “Now, you make the film!” he said, tearing the paper. In addition to Amitabh Bachchan, Jaya Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Kajol, Hrithik Roshan, and Kareena Kapoor, Rani Mukerji made a special appearance. Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham was Karan Johar’s second film as a director, following his 1998 breakthrough with Kuch Kuch Hota Hai. Additionally, it was his second project with Shah Rukh Khan, who had appeared in his debut, and Kajol. Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham won five Filmfare Awards, including Best Dialogue for Karan Johar and Best Actress for Kajol.

Wife May Receive 25% of Husband's Income as Maintenance



New Delhi, Jan 14: The Allahabad High Court ruled on Tuesday that a wife may get up to 25% of her husband's salary in a landmark decision made during the hearing of a maintenance petition. The husband's petition was denied by the court, which upheld the Family Court's decision to enhance the wife's support allowance. The petitioner husband has a sacred and legal obligation to help his wife, who is unable to sustain herself, the court noted. According to the court, the petitioner/husband is a fit person and cannot ig-

nore his duty to support his wife because he has not claimed a physical disability. Suresh Chandra's criminal revision plea was dismissed by Justice Madan Pal Singh, who also gave the ruling. Suresh Chandra filed a plea in the Allahabad High Court in December 2024 in an attempt to overturn the July 26, 2024, decision and order issued by the Additional Principal Judge, Family Court, Shahjahanpur, in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). With effect from the date of the ruling, the trial court

raised Chandra's monthly stipend to Rs 3,000 from Rs 500. Chandra appealed this Family Court ruling to the Allahabad High Court. His attorney told the High Court that on September 9, 2003, the trial court had approved the wife's application under Section 125 of the CrPC, ordering the husband (Chandra) to give the petitioner a monthly maintenance allowance of Rs 500. The wife then filed an application under Section 127 of the CrPC in the Family judge on June 6, 2015, and the trial judge granted her request, increasing the support amount to Rs 3,000 per month. The petitioner is a laborer who makes very little money, according to Chandra's attorney. Additionally, it was noted that the trial court had excessively raised the support amount for the second respondent, his wife, for the sixth time. When raising the maintenance amount under Section 127 of the CrPC, the trial court failed to take into account all of these crucial ele-

ments. However, the state government's Senior Additional Government Advocate (AGA) contended that the increased maintenance amount of Rs 3,000 per month could not be deemed excessive or beyond his means considering the current rate of inflation. According to the court, the petitioner has a sacred and legal obligation to provide for his wife, who is unable to sustain herself. The court further observed that there is no documentation indicating that Chandra's wife, respondent number two, has a source of income. Consequently, it might be assumed that she is unable to support herself. In its ruling, the court cited other rulings from the Supreme Court and said that, given the facts and circumstances of the case, if the petitioner is deemed a laborer, he can make Rs 600 per day, or Rs 18,000 per month. According to the Supreme Court, a subsistence stipend of up to 25% of the husband's total income, or Rs 4,500, may be granted.

Allegations of "Illegal Madrasa" led to the demolition of a MP school

New Delhi, Jan 14: The demolition of a school building in a remote village has caused shock and outrage in Madhya Pradesh, where over 83,000 government schools serve students in grades 1 through 8, over 200 operate without a building, nearly 2,000 lack boys' restrooms, and 1,700 lack girls' restrooms. This is especially true given that the action came after rumors and accusations that the building was a "illegal

madrasa" were made. In the Betul district's Dhaba village of Bhainsdehi, Abdul Naeem was building a tiny private school at his own expense, spending about Rs 20 lakh, when the issue started.

There are only three Muslim families among the roughly 2,000 residents of the town. There were rumors that Naeem was operating an illegal madrasa in the community three days prior to the demolition.



Manchester United has appointed Michael Carrick as head coach



New Delhi: In an attempt to salvage its collapsing season, Manchester United has turned to former star Michael Carrick. Following Ruben Amorim's dismissal last week, Carrick was appointed head coach till the end of the season on Tuesday.

During a trophy-filled playing career at Old Trafford, the former England midfielder won the Champions League and five Premier League crowns. When Ole Gunnar Solskjaer was dismissed in 2021, he served as an assistant coach at United for three games without a loss. Solskjaer was also interviewed for the position, but Carrick was chosen this time. He stated, "I know what it takes to succeed here; my focus is now on helping the players reach the standards that we expect at this incredible club, which we know this group

is more than capable of producing." After more than ten years of decline since Alex Ferguson's retirement in 2013, Amorim became the sixth permanent manager or coach to be fired by the legendary club. By assigning Carrick to a temporary position, United is giving itself time to find a long-term replacement.

If Carrick performs well in the final 17 games of the season, he might put himself in the running. It was noteworthy that United did not refer to him as interim when announcing his deal, despite the fact that he has only been appointed temporarily. Carrick's first full-time managerial tenure was from 2022 to 2025 at second-tier Middlesbrough, when his tenure came to an end after the team was unable to gain promotion to the Premier League.

Halfway through, Muhammad Rizwan was told to quit BBL

New Delhi: Following his forced "retirement out" during a Big Bash League (BBL) match against the Sydney Thunder by the Melbourne Renegades management, Pakistan wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan became the talk of the town. After scoring a slow 26 off 23 balls, Rizwan—who has often been criticized for his poor strike rate in the shortest format—was ordered to leave the crease by Renegades captain Will Sutherland. The decision was seen by many as "humiliating" for a player of Rizwan's caliber, sparking intense discussion within the Pakistani cricket community. During a discussion on

GTV Sports, former Pakistani wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal was asked about his thoughts on the event. In protest, the host even asked if Rizwan ought to go back to Pakistan. While acknowledging the host's worries, Akmal added that Rizwan's game needs to be updated to meet contemporary standards. "You have talked a lot about how Babar and Rizwan need to increase their strike rates on your shows and YouTube," the host said. In addition to making people laugh all across the world, what happened to Rizwan has made them feel ashamed. Rizwan should quit the league and go back home, according to some. Younis



Khan played beside you for the Rajasthan Royals during the IPL's inaugural season, but he was kept on the bench. "I am the captain of Pakistan; I will not sit on the bench," he famously declared. We've seen athletes defend themselves in similar ways, so you have to send me back with

dignity." Akmal said, "Definitely." He is our best player and a proven performer, thus I too think this shouldn't occur. But you have to acknowledge how quick these leagues are. Since modern cricket is now practiced in every nation, it is imperative that you grow in accordance with this. Akmal also brought up a recent incident in which the Mumbai Indians "retired out" India's Tilak Varma during the 2025 Indian Premier League. "Tilak Varma, a crucial player, was summoned back to the dugout. "Rizwan needs to think about his future path, even though these moves are based on the match situation," Akmal said.

Due to Delhi smog, world No. 3 Anders Antonsen has withdrawn from the India Open

New Delhi: On Wednesday, World No. 3 Anders Antonsen finally spoke out about his decision to withdraw from the India Open Super 750 badminton competition that is now taking place in Delhi. The four-time World Championship winner attributed his withdrawal to the pollution in Delhi.

BWF has also penalized Antonsen for skipping the competition. "Top Committed Players" (the top 15 singles players and the top 10 doubles pairs) are required by BWF rules and regulations to compete in the World Tour 750, World Tour 1000, and World Tour Finals, unless they are injured or have a medical exemption. Players who fail to participate without a good reason will be punished more than the standard late withdrawal costs. "Many are curious as to why I have pulled out of the India Open for the third consecutive year," Antonsen stated on his Instagram story.



I don't think Delhi is a suitable location for a badminton event because of the severe pollution there right now. I'm hoping that things will improve when the World Championships are held in Delhi in the summer. BWF has therefore penalized me \$5,000 USD once more. In order to take part in on-site

promotional events, players may be excused from traveling to the tournament under BWF regulations. Shi Yuqi, the world champion and current world number one, chose to withdraw from the India Open but spent a day in Delhi doing promotional work. Regarding player conditions, the competition has already been embroiled in controversy. Mia Blichfeldt, a Danish athlete, recently described the circumstances as "unhealthy." "I had hoped it would be better than the other hall, but it is still very dirty, really unhealthy conditions for all players," she told reporters. Birds were flying around and making a mess when I arrived at the courts yesterday [Monday]. Delhi's air pollution has recently been worse. In a number of places, the Air Quality Index has reached the severe level. An AQI of more than 300 has been reported throughout the majority of the nation's capital.

On Ekadashi, more than 9 lakh devotees take a holy dip in Prayagraj



New Delhi, Jan 14: Many devotees came to the Sangam Ghat in Prayagraj to take a holy plunge during the ongoing Magh Mela on the occasion of Ekadashi. Thousands of devotees can be seen braving the cold and having a plunge at Sangam Ghat in drone footage from the Mela. On Makar Sankranti, January 15, Prayagraj will host the second sacred bathing ceremony (snan) of Magh Mela. The Mela administration is getting ready for the next Makar Sankranti Snan following the successful Purnima Snan, in which more than 31 lakh devotees took a holy bath. UP ATS mobile patrol squads are keeping an eye on the Magh Mela region as part of the ad-

ministration's high-security preparations. SP Magh Mela Neeraj Pandey provided information on the security measures, stating that some 10,000 police officers have been deployed and that surveillance is continuing to guarantee "a safe snaam." "The police have taken all the necessary preparations with Makar Sankranti in mind. There are about 10,000 police officers on duty. There are a lot of civil police officers, 22 PAC, 6 RAF, NDRF, and ATS deployed. The water cops are always on patrol. CCTV and drone cameras are being used for surveillance. The SP said, "Everyone is guaranteed a safe 'snaan', and all preparations are in place."

Furthermore, over 9 lakh people had taken a swim by 6 AM, according to Magh Mela Officer Rishi Raj, who also stated that "the entire police force has been deployed on the spot." "Many people are bathing even on the occasion of Ekadashi. Approximately 9 lakh fifty thousand individuals had already taken a bath by six in the morning, and devotees were bathing at all of our ghats. Although Makar Sankranti is tomorrow, people are still coming to wash today because it's January 14th. Our entire police force is on the scene, and monitoring is being done everywhere," the officer stated. The safety during the Makar Sankranti snaan was guaranteed by Soumya Agarwal, Divisional Commissioner, Prayagraj. "Heavy security has been put in place to guarantee a safe bath during the festival, and the police and security staff have been thoroughly briefed. On Makar Sankranti, we anticipate more than one crore people for the holy dip," she said. Along with Prayagraj, pilgrims also prayed at Ayodhya on Makar Sankranti and took a sacred dip in the River Sarayu. The Gangasagar Mela, however, has intricate plans, according to West Bengal minister Sujit Bose, who also stated that "such a huge gathering has not been organized anywhere else in the country."

Team India Speaks Out About Ayush Badoni's Divisive ODI Selection



New Delhi: Ayush Badoni has been called up for the last two ODIs between India and New Zealand due to Washington Sundar's injury. However, not everyone has responded well to the choice of Badoni. Although many thought Rinku Singh or Rryan Parag would be better choices, Badoni was drafted in. Indian batting coach Sitanshu Kotak discussed the inclusion of Delhi youngster Ayush Badoni in the squad ahead of the second One-Day International (ODI) against New Zealand. He stated that Badoni has performed exceptionally well for India A in the opportunities he has been given as well as in the Indian Premier League (IPL), making him a good candidate to replace all-rounder Washington Sundar with his useful right-arm off-breaks, thereby acting as a like-for-like replacement for the Tamil Nadu star. "He has been playing, he has been performing, he has played some India," Kotak stated during the news conference. He has performed in a one-day

match. Of course, the selectors choose the team, but for the average person, you can't typically use just five bowlers when Washington is out. For instance, who would have bowled the fourth or fifth over in the previous game if we had just five bowlers and Washington was hurt? Thus, having a sixth bowling option would be ideal for all teams. Sometimes it's more of a batter who can bowl; other times, if it's an all-rounder like Washington, it's an equally good bowler." "Someone should be able to bowl four or five overs, or even three or four overs, if necessary. He can bowl and has hit a few fifties for India A. Good luck to him; he's done well in white-ball cricket and the IPL," he continued. Badoni has amassed 693 runs at an average of 36.47 in 27 List A outings thus far, with a strike rate of over 93, including five fifties and a century, with a top score of 100. With best statistics of 3/29, he has also claimed 18 wickets at an economy rate of 4.54 and an average of 29.72.

An audit report reveals that a diarrhea outbreak in Indore caused 15 deaths

New Delhi, Jan 14: According to reports, an audit report on the deaths of 21 people in Bhagirathpura has been presented to the Indore administration. The investigation's results indicate that 15 of the deaths may be connected to a recent vomiting and diarrhea outbreak in the area. According to a Madhya Pradesh health department official, five new cases of diarrhea were discovered on Tuesday in the Bhagirathpura neighborhood of Indore, the cleanest city in the nation, and were connected to drinking tainted water. The new diarrhea patients from Bhagirathpura went to the outpatient department (OPD) of health centers, where they received treatment, according to Dr. Madhav Prasad Hasani, Chief Medical and Health Officer (CMHO) of Indore. Six people have died as a result of vomiting and diarrhea brought on by drinking tainted water, according to the local government. However, locals reported that the outbreak had already claimed the lives of 23 individuals, including a six-month-old child. In the meantime, a "audit" report on the deaths of 21 people in Bhagirathpura has been given to the administration by a team from the government-run Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College here. Fifteen of these deaths may be connected in some manner to the vomiting and



diarrhea outbreak, according to people acquainted with the report's contents on Tuesday. "A committee comprising top physicians from the college was established to examine the reasons behind the deaths in Bhagirathpura. District Magistrate Shivam Verma informed media on Tuesday that the committee has turned in its findings. However, Verma did not elaborate on the "death audit" findings. He stated that while some patient deaths were unrelated to the outbreak, some deaths in Bhagirathpura were probably caused by vomiting and diarrhea brought on by contaminated drinking water. According to the senior official, the committee was unable to determine the

true cause of death in some other cases. He stated that the district administration has so far given 18 impacted households in Bhagirathpura financial relief totaling Rs 2 lakh apiece. Regardless of the cause, every death in Bhagirathpura is extremely tragic. We are offering financial support and comfort to the impacted families," Verma stated. Since the outbreak of vomiting and diarrhea caused by the local supply of tainted drinking water on December 29, 436 individuals have been taken to hospitals; 403 of them were released after recovering, according to the CMHO. Eight of the 33 patients who are now in hospitals are in intensive care units (ICUs), he continued.

India Open: Fit and fierce PV Sindhu targets World Championships, Asian Games in 2026

PV Sindhu fit, shines at Malaysia Masters, eyes glory

New Delhi: Veteran PV Sindhu made a tremendous return from injury at the Malaysia Open. The ace shuttler, who was out of competition since October, raced to the semi-finals of the first competition of the year, showing that she was ready to go deep in this year's competitions. The shuttler spoke about her rehabilitation ahead of her first match at the India Open Super 750 and stated that she did not want to rush things this time around. The choice was perhaps the correct one, as the season runs deep, with the World Championships and the Asian Games set to be hosted in August and September in India and Japan respectively. Sindhu revealed that she had suffered a slight tear in her toe and wanted to ensure she returned at full fitness instead of rushing back at 50 percent. "In badminton, footwork is everything. You need to be quick on your toes, so it was important to address it properly before coming back," Sindhu told the media on Monday, January 12. "I wanted to make sure I was completely injury-free and back to 100



percent before returning to competition. I felt that was a smarter decision than playing at 50 percent, going on court without confidence and risking things further," she added. Her rehabilitation process took her to the United States, where she worked with Wayne Lombard, a figure she has trusted through Olympic cycles before. "I had worked with him earlier, before and during the Olympics, and we resumed training together around two months ago, soon after the injury. Things have been going well so far." The focus has not been on one specific area but more on overall body management and recovery. What worked five or 10 years ago does not necessarily work now," she

said. There are days when recovery is more important than pushing through a gym session. Understanding your body and managing it properly is crucial." Sindhu said she also spent some time in Atlanta during her rehabilitation. During my time off, I went to the US. It was a mix of recovery and family time. I did my rehab there at a facility in Atlanta. I was fortunate to work with excellent trainers and physios. It was important that the break was productive, focused on rehabilitation rather than complete rest." Sindhu began full training only in mid-December. An initial plan to return at the Syed Modi International had to be scrapped, as she did not want to rush her comeback. She eventually returned at the Malaysia

Open Super 1000, finishing at the semi-final stage. Malaysia was my first tournament back. I went in with the mindset of taking it one match at a time. Everything felt fine physically and it turned out to be a good run. I hope to continue with the same rhythm and confidence," she said. The year ahead is demanding, with the World Championships on home soil in August and the Asian Games also on the horizon. Playing the World Championships at home will be special. There will be pressure, but it is also a great feeling to compete on home courts," Sindhu said. The schedule this year is packed, so it is important to pick tournaments wisely and take care of the body." India's top shuttlers, including PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen, will look to convert recent form into results on home courts when the USD 950,000 India Open Super 750 begins on Tuesday. Indian players, however, have struggled to fully capitalise on home advantage, with only a handful lifting the title in the last 15 years. The draw once again throws interrupted phase.

India's T20 World Cup defence faces serious threat from multiple injuries

New Delhi: With less than a month remaining until the T20 World Cup 2026, India would have hoped for a smoother build-up to their title defence. However, the Men in Blue have been hampered by injuries to two of their key players, with both Washington Sundar and Tilak Varma currently sidelined. India have been the team to beat in the lead-up to the upcoming edition of the tournament, having won all of their series so far. The Men in Blue appear to have all bases covered — formidable batting firepower, mystery spinners, express pacers and a plethora of all-rounders. Given their squad depth and recent form, the Suryakumar Yadav-led side looks well-placed for a successful title defence. However, their preparations have been disrupted by unforeseen injury setbacks. It began with Tilak Varma undergoing surgery for an abdominal issue while on domestic duty for Hyderabad in the Vijay Hazare Trophy 2025–26. Varma was hospitalised after experiencing sudden pain and is currently stable, with his recovery progressing well. He is expected to resume physical training and gradually return to skill-based activities once his symptoms have fully subsided and wound healing is deemed satisfactory. However, the batter finds himself in a race against time to regain full fitness ahead of the T20 extravaganza. Tilak has been a vital cog in India's batting line-up over the past 12 months. The southpaw is the second-highest run-scorer for India since 2024, having amassed 847 runs from 22 innings at an average of 60.5, including two centuries and four half-centuries. He also played a pivotal role in the team's Asia Cup 2025 triumph, producing a crucial unbeaten knock of 69 off 53 balls in the final against Pakistan to rescue India from a precarious position.



In addition to Varma's absence, Washington Sundar's in-

jury has further compounded India's problems. The all-rounder reported acute discomfort in his left lower rib area while bowling during the first ODI against New Zealand at the BCA Stadium in Vadodara. Despite sustaining the injury, Sundar walked out to bat in the same fixture and played a key role in guiding India to victory, forging a crucial partnership with KL Rahul. The 26-year-old has been instrumental in providing balance to the Indian side over the past two years, thanks to his all-round capabilities. Sundar has claimed 20 wickets from 16 innings at an impressive average of 13.05 and an economy rate of 6.16. He has also contributed 147 runs from nine innings, including a match-winning knock of 49 not out off 23 balls in Australia. India will finalise their preparations for the World Cup in the last series ahead of the tournament, beginning on January 21 against New Zealand. With the tournament fast approaching, India's team management will be closely monitoring the recovery timelines of both players while simultaneously preparing contingency plans. The balance of the squad could be significantly impacted if either Tilak Varma or Washington Sundar fails to regain full fitness in time. The injuries have also opened the door for potential replacements to stake a claim, with several players waiting in the wings to seize an opportunity on the global stage. While India has no dearth of talent to replace the injured players, the absence of proven performers at a marquee event could test the side's adaptability and combination planning. As defending champions, India will be under immense scrutiny heading into the T20 World Cup, with expectations remaining sky-high despite the setbacks. How swiftly they manage to overcome these injury concerns may well determine the success of their title defence.

Kris Srikkanth blasts Ayush Badoni's ODI selection, alleging unfair favouritism in explosive statement

Srikkanth questions selectors, alleges favouritism

New Delhi: Former India cricketer and selector Kris Srikkanth has triggered a fresh selection debate by launching a scathing attack on the inclusion of Ayush Badoni in India's ODI squad for the New Zealand series. Srikkanth called the decision "absolutely unfair" and alleged favouritism in the selection process. Questioning the logic behind the call-up, Srikkanth argued that Badoni's recent domestic form did not justify an ODI berth. Referring to his Vijay Hazare Trophy performances, he said, "With this kind of performance, he had no chance of selection," adding that the yardstick for selection appeared inconsistent. Srikkanth claimed that the criteria used by selectors lacked clarity. "For some, you are told to score runs. But for some, you are picked even if you don't do anything," he said, expressing concern over the message such selections send to domestic performers waiting in the wings.



He also took aim at Badoni's IPL record, questioning his impact at the highest level. "Can anyone remind me of one significant knock?" Srikkanth asked, arguing that IPL exposure alone does not guarantee success in the 50-over format. "He can't take the match away from you," he added, criticising Badoni's limited power-hitting ability and reliance on

unorthodox shots. The former selector was particularly critical of Badoni being viewed as an all-round option. "Just because he took three wickets in a game, you're calling him an all-rounder," Srikkanth said. He also questioned how often Badoni has bowled in the IPL, asking, "Has anyone even seen him bowl there?" Srikkanth contrasted Badoni's selection with the omission of proven performers, calling it "absolutely unfair" that Ruturaj Gaikwad was left out despite scoring a century in the previous ODI series. "What sin did he commit?" he asked. He also questioned why Axar Patel was ignored if an all-rounder was indeed required. Alleging that personal associations may have played a role, Srikkanth hinted at Badoni's IPL connections. "I think he played for LSG, had a mentor there, and that's why he is in the team now," he said, adding that he saw "no other reason" for the selection. He described breaking into the Indian team as increasingly difficult, saying players now need "a couple of trucks" to break down the selection door. India's team management, however, has defended the decision. Batting coach Sitanshu Kotak explained that Badoni was drafted in after Washington Sundar was ruled out with a rib injury. "We couldn't go into a match with only vital balance.

Virat Kohli regains ODI top ranking after brilliant half-century against New Zealand

Dubai: India's star cricketer Virat Kohli has reclaimed the top spot in the ICC ODI rankings for batters, replacing Rohit Sharma, after scoring a brilliant half-century against New Zealand in the first match of the three-game series in Vadodara. At 37, this marks his return to number one position for the first time since July 2021, while former India skipper Rohit has slipped to third spot. India defeated the Black Caps by four wickets on Sunday with Kohli scoring a 91-ball 93, which also made him the second-highest run-getter in men's international cricket behind Sachin Tendulkar. Kohli's recent performances in ODIs have been nothing short of phenomenal. He scored an unbeaten 74 against Australia, 135, 102 and 65 not out against the visiting South Africans and 93 against New Zealand in



his last five outings. Kohli had gained the top ranking for the first time in October 2013 and it is his 11th different spell in the top spot. As of today, he has been at the top for a total of 825 days -- 10th most by any player, and the most by an Indian batter. India's ODI skipper Shubman Gill has maintained his fifth spot, while Shreyas Iyer is the other Indian batter in the top-10. New Zealand all-rounder Daryl Mitchell has gained a spot following

his blazing 84 off 71 in the first ODI, and is just one rating point behind Kohli, who is on 785. Mitchell's teammate Devon Conway climbed three spots to secure the 29th position as he continues to score runs at the top. India pacer Mohammed Siraj has risen five spots to sit in 15th position along with Bangladesh's Mehidy Hasan Miraz in the ODI bowler rankings. New Zealand fast bowler Kyle Jamieson, following a ca-

reer-best performance of 4 for 41 runs, has jumped 27 places -- moving up to joint 69th position, where he shares the spot with Indian pacer Arshdeep Singh. India batting stalwart Virat Kohli on Sunday became the fastest player to reach 28,000 runs across formats in international cricket and the second most prolific scorer behind Sachin Tendulkar during the first ODI against New Zealand here. Playing in his 624th innings, Kohli got to the milestone by hitting a four off New Zealand leg-spinner Adithya Ashok. Tendulkar had reached the landmark during his 644th innings, while Sri Lankan legend Kumar Sangakkara, only the third player in the 28000-run club, crossed the feat in his 666th innings. The 37-year-old Kohli had come into the match with 27975 runs across spot.

Kidambi Srikanth defends India Open after Denmark power cuts criticism



New Delhi: Former world No. 1 Kidambi Srikanth pushed back against criticism of the India Open conditions in New Delhi, saying such shortcomings are part and parcel of international sport and not unique to India. Responding to remarks by Denmark's Mia Blichfeldt, Srikanth recalled his own experiences playing abroad, including power cuts that caused floodlight failures during matches in Denmark. Blichfeldt had claimed that players faced unhygienic training conditions and an unclean environment in the capital while competing at the Super 750 tournament, prompting debate over venue standards. Srikanth suggested that players encounter operational challenges in different countries and urged for a more balanced perspective rather than singling out one host nation. Srikanth's comments came hours after World No. 2 men's singles player Anders Antonsen said he withdrew from the India Open due to what he described as "extreme pollution" in New Delhi. Antonsen also stated that the Badminton World Federation (BWF)

finned him USD 5,000 for pulling out of the tournament. "I frankly haven't really read about what she (Mia) said. With my experience, I don't really see... I think the conditions are fine. I don't think any bad things are happening," Srikanth said after winning his men's singles opening round against Tharun Manneppalli in the Super 750 tournament. "From my own experience, back in 2016-17, I had to wait for an hour in between my match in Denmark because the light went out. (HS) Pranoy was telling me he had to play one set on one day and the second set on the following day. These things do happen. It's just that nobody does it purposely. "Every country wants to host properly. All these things happen very rarely. I don't know why everyone is complaining about all these," he said. Srikanth was speaking to media in New Delhi after a three-game win over compatriot Tharun, his first against the World No. 43 in three meetings. Srikanth lost the opening game, but bounced back in 53 minutes to win the match 15-21, 21-9, 21-19. Srikanth also brushed aside criticism of the chilly conditions in New Delhi, saying players must be prepared to deal with challenging environments. The India Open was shifted from the KD Jadhav Indoor Hall to the much larger Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium. Several players noted that the shuttle was travelling faster than expected and

that there was sideways drift, despite organisers opting not to use air conditioning. "I don't know. Every country has its own conditions. If you go to Singapore, there will be a lot of drift. If you go to Malaysia, there will be less drift. Indonesia, they have renovated the stadiums, but earlier, it used to be compact and really fast," Srikanth said. "I am just very happy to be playing here again." Mia Blichfeldt sparked controversy at the India Open 2026 Super 750 in New Delhi by publicly criticising venue conditions, describing players. Kidambi Srikanth has strongly defended the playing conditions at the India Open Super 750 in New Delhi after Denmark's Mia Blichfeldt criticized the venue as "unhealthy." He pointed out that similar issues occur worldwide, citing a power failure in Denmark that disrupted matches for over an hour, and insisted that every country has its own challenges. - Denmark's Mia Blichfeldt slammed the conditions at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, calling them "unhealthy" and urging the Badminton World Federation (BWF) to intervene before the World Championships later this year. Her remarks sparked debate about hygiene, ventilation, and organizational standards at the India Open. - Former World No.1 Kidambi Srikanth dismissed the complaints, saying he personally found the venue acceptable.

Lakshya defeats Ayush

New Delhi: The opening round encounter between Lakshya Sen and Ayush Shetty was a fight between the established order of Indian badminton and the upcoming talent. Ayush, 20, already a BWF Super title winner, making his debut in the India Open, was supposed to give Lakshya a tough time. Instead it was the senior pro that ran out as the clear winner. The first game was over before one could settle. It took Lakshya only 14 minutes to wrap the first game 21-12. In fact he raced to an 11-3 lead in the mid game break as Lakshya's shot making, including his net play and cross court shots, had the youngster all in knots. The second game started on a positive note for Ayush, who raced to a 4-1 lead but the moment Lakshya drew level with him at 7-7, he was in control to see off the challenge. Even though Ayush went into the mid-game break with a apan.

Neeraj Chopra reunites with first coach after Jan Zelezny split



Doha: Having recently parted ways with javelin throw legend Jan Zelezny, Neeraj Chopra is reportedly set to reunite with his first coach, Jay Chaudhary. Chaudhary was the coach who introduced the sport to him and trains athletes in Panipat. According to reports, Chaudhary will join Neeraj's team as a consultant. His job will be to provide coaching and technical assistance. Zelezny's stint as Neeraj's coach began towards the end of 2024 when Dr Klaus Bartonietz stepped from his role due to old age. After

parting ways with Zelezny, Neeraj said, "Working with Jan opened my eyes to so many new ideas." The way he thinks about technique, rhythm, and movement is incredible, and I learned a lot from every single session we had together. What I'm most proud about is the friendship I've built with someone who has been my idol all my life. Jan is not only the best javelin thrower of all time, but also one of the best human beings I have ever met," he added. Meanwhile, Zelezny said, "Working with an athlete like Neeraj was a great

experience. I'm glad we met and were able to work together, that I got him to break the 90-metre barrier for the first time." "Our relationship is very positive also on the human side and we will continue to stay in touch, we will definitely meet at some training camp or, for example, on vacation with our families in Europe or India," he added. The partnership saw Neeraj get past the 90-metre mark for the first time in his career at the 2025 Doha Diamond League, which was also their coach and athlete.