

Kokrajhar ends Janjatiya Gaurav Pakhwada with cultural tributes and welfare campaigns

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Kokrajhar, Nov 15: The Kokrajhar district administration successfully wrapped up the Janjatiya Gaurav Pakhwada, which took place on November 13 and 14. This event featured a variety of initiatives designed to enhance tribal welfare, uphold cultural identity, and foster greater community involvement.

The programme aimed to increase awareness among tribal communities regarding various government schemes. It also focused on creating platforms that enable citizens to voice their concerns and access essential public

services effectively. The celebration commenced with a solemn floral tribute to Bhagwan Birsa Munda and other revered tribal heroes of the region, honouring their courage and sacrifice in India's freedom movement.

This was followed by Jan Sunwai sessions held across all Adi Sewa Kendras in the district, where citizens were given the opportunity to raise grievances and receive immediate redressal. As part of the district's green initiative, sapling plantation drives were also organized at the Adi Sewa Kendras.

Simultaneously, health



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camps were conducted across 10 Adi Sewa Kendras under Kokrajhar, Gossaigaon,

and Debitola Development Blocks. These camps offered essential medical services

including screening for sickle cell disease, anaemia, and fever-related ailments, along

with free consultations and medicines.

Local health officials, paramedics, and medical experts actively participated, ensuring that hundreds benefited from the initiative. After the conclusion of Janjatiya Gaurav Pakhwada, the celebrations will continue with the grand observance of Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas on November 15 at Pragati Bhan, Kokrajhar.

The programme will feature vibrant cultural performances, traditional cuisine stalls, artisan product displays, free medical check-ups, and Aadhaar enrolment services.

Tripartite discussions on the Rabha Hasong Council's Sixth Schedule status are scheduled for December

Guwahati, Nov 15: Assam Education Minister Ranaj Pegu announced on November 15 that a tripartite meeting is scheduled for December to address the long-standing demand for integrating the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council (RHAC) under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The meeting will gather representatives from the central government, the Assam state government, and stakeholders from the Rabha Hasong region, focusing on the constitutional safeguards, administrative autonomy, and developmental rights that the inclusion in the Sixth Schedule would provide. Earlier that day, Dr. Pegu inaugurated a newly constructed tribal boys' hostel at Boko Jawaharlal Nehru College, coinciding with the observance of Janajatiya Gaurav Divas. During this ceremony, he also laid the foundation stone for a new girls' hostel at the college. Both hostels, each sanctioned at a cost of Rs 1 crore, aim to accommodate 30 students, thus alleviating residential challenges faced by tribal learners. Furthermore, the



Minister indicated plans for an additional hostel to cater to the increasing demands of the institution.

Principal Dr. Tapan Dutta pointed out that the boys' hostel was built under Article 275(1) of the Constitution,

which allows for financial support for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes. In his speech, Dr. Pegu emphasized the importance of incorporating skill-based courses into higher education to enhance students' employability and

readiness for future challenges. The event was attended by students, faculty, and distinguished guests, marking a significant advancement in educational infrastructure and opportunities for tribal communities in the area.

Public advisory issued on NHIDCL land acquisition in Cachar

Silchar, Nov 15: The District Administration of Cachar has released a public advisory regarding the proposed land acquisition for a major road improvement project undertaken by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL), which is a major step towards strengthening the district's road infrastructure. In order to improve communication between isolated villages and promote regional development, the project intends to upgrade the vital road segment that begins at NH-37 near Paipool and connects Jaipur, Harinagar, Kumarcherra, Zinam, and Hangrum before connecting with NH-137 (Mahur-Tamenglong Road). According to the notification released by the Office of the District Commissioner, Cachar (Land Acquisition Branch), the alignment of the proposed road will pass through several villages, including Laboc Grant, Lalang grant, kamranga bond part I, Kamranga bond part II, Doloicherra, Kanakpur part III, Kanakpur part II, Baladhan Grant, Kanakpur part I, Silchar grant, Harinagar, Paschim Dikha, Pehelpur, Dramnagar, Purba Dakshin Mutracherra, Uttar Diphu, Lalangkitta Labocpar Part III, Ladyacherra Grant, Uttar Doloicherra, Thaipunagar, Chatridayal, Mollong part II, Mollong part I, Kumarcherra, Diphu, Diphucherra, Moulthuong (Mollong NC), Gendathol (NC), Ngentemukh (NC), and New Kalinagar (NC). All locals and interested parties in these regions have been advised by the District Administration to proceed with caution when it comes to new building. According to the notice, the Office of the District Commissioner, Cachar, must get prior consent for any new building or developmental activity inside the proposed alignment. The administration has also made it clear that any unapproved buildings, whether temporary or permanent, constructed after this notification is issued would not be taken into account for compensation when purchasing land or carrying out projects. Both private and commercial businesses are subject to this directive.

Guwahati to host Northeast's largest renewable energy expo

Guwahati, Nov 15: A push for clean-energy adoption in the North East will be highlighted at the North East Renewable Energy & Electric Vehicle Expo (NEREVE), scheduled for November 21-23 at Guwahati's Sarusajai Stadium. The event aims to be a key platform for national and regional stakeholders in renewable energy and electric mobility, supported by multiple central ministries. With around 70 companies and 120 stalls, the expo will feature product displays, policy discussions, and B2B meetings, especially fostering local entrepreneurs and startups.

Gaurav Gogoi queries Results of the Bihar Assembly poll

Guwahati, Nov 15: Assam Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi, representing Jorhat, expressed concerns on November 15 regarding the discrepancies between exit poll predictions and the final results of the recent Bihar Assembly elections.

He stated that while Bihar's voters were acknowledged, the overwhelming nature of the assembly was unexpected. Gogoi congratulated the Election Commission for challenging even the best exit poll predictions, highlighting that the actual vote tallies showed only slight differences between parties. He raised alarms about the potential for "targeted vote chori" in select constituencies, suggesting that this could significantly sway the overall election outcome. Gogoi criticized the media's tendency to spotlight opposition parties while neglecting to hold the Election Commission accountable.

He assured that opposition parties would continue their quest for truth to protect Indian democracy and uphold the



Constitution. Furthermore, he commented that the NDA's victory in Bihar would not impact the electoral sentiments in Assam, asserting that various communities there are united in their opposition to the rule of Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Assam Chief Minister Travels to London to Help Bring Back Historic Vrindavani Vastra

Guwahati, Nov 15: Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma has departed for London to initiate the process of retrieving the Vrindavani Vastra, a significant cultural artefact of Assam. Announced via a Facebook Live session at Delhi Airport, the Chief Minister stated that this visit represents a pivotal step towards restoring this historic treasure to its rightful home.

In a social media post, he expressed the government's commitment to recover the Vrindavani Vastra, emphasizing its importance to Assam's heritage. The Vastra, an intricate textile art piece crafted by the 15th-century saint-scholar Srimanta Sankardev, narrates key events from the life of Lord Krishna. The Assam



Government has actively been promoting awareness of the Vastra's cultural and spiritual importance, particularly among younger generations.

Historically, the Vastra left Assam centuries ago, journeying through Tibet before reaching various museums across Europe, with notable collections located in London, Paris, Boston, and Los Angeles. A formal agreement is set to be

signed during the Chief Minister's visit with the museum that currently holds the majority of the Vastra, facilitating its eventual return. The Assam Government's roadmap suggests that the artefact is expected to be brought back by 2027.

This initiative marks a significant cultural milestone, symbolizing Assam's dedication to reclaiming, preserving, and celebrating its rich heritage.

Debabrata Saikia, a leader of the opposition, worries about Majjan's erosion

Dibrugarh, Nov 15: Opposition leader Debabrata Saikia expressed grave concerns regarding the significant erosion occurring at Majjan in Dibrugarh, asserting that this has been a progressive issue over several years, exacerbated by the failings of the Assam government to address the erosion of the Brahmaputra river.

During a press conference at Rajiv Bhawan, he lamented the persistent waterlogging faced by Dibrugarh, criticizing the BJP-led government under Himanta Biswa Sarma for their lack of effective action despite their claims to the contrary. Saikia articulated deeper issues regarding what he views as escalating political, social, and administrative instability in Assam. He

Opposition leader Debabrata Saikia raised alarm regarding significant erosion occurring at Majjan in Dibrugarh during a statement made on Friday.

pointed out the government's failure to deliver on electoral promises and criticized their divisive and controversial governance style, which he believes is detrimental to societal unity. Addressing the administrative shortcomings, he highlighted alarming vacancies in key departments, particularly within the health and education sectors, attributing delays in recruitment as a contributing factor to the deterioration of these essential public services. Furthermore, Saikia underscored the

'visible decline' in government-run health and education systems, linking this to poor planning and inadequate infrastructure development. He accused the ruling party of instigating political attacks and fostering social divisions that threaten the fabric of the state. Emphasizing the importance of harmony, Saikia insisted that unity should take precedence over polarization to ensure the future stability and development of Assam.

In his remarks, he called for a cohesive, transparent, and accountable governance system to restore public trust. Saikia argued for coordinated efforts and proper policy execution to tackle the intertwined crises affecting governance, economy, and society.

In Brief

African Swine Fever detected in Dibrugarh

Dibrugarh: Fresh cases of African Swine Fever (ASF) in Dibrugarh district have led to strict containment measures to curb the disease's spread. ASF was confirmed in the Moran and Tingkhong Revenue Circles, prompting the declaration of 'Infected Zones' within a 1-km radius and 'Surveillance Zones' within a 10-km radius of the infection sites by Dr. Monika Borah, the Additional Deputy Commissioner and CEO of DDMA Dibrugarh. Movement of live pigs, pork, pig feed, and related products is prohibited in infected zones, and all pig markets and exhibitions are banned. Strict biosecurity protocols must be adhered to during culling and disposal of carcasses, following veterinary guidelines. Police are tasked with enforcing prohibitions on unauthorized pork sales. These measures are effective immediately and will continue until further notice.

18 kg of Opium in Manipur

Senapati: In a significant anti-narcotics operation, security forces arrested two men from Assam in Manipur's Senapati district, seizing approximately 18 kg of opium from a truck at a police checkpoint. The operation, a collaboration between state police and the CPRF, highlights concerns over opium trafficking from Myanmar. The arrested individuals are from Kamrup district, Assam, and a case has been registered under the NDPS Act. This incident reflects a rise in drug syndicates in Northeast India, which exploit challenging terrain and ineffective border controls. Investigations are ongoing to trace trafficking networks and prosecute those involved, marking a crucial step in combating drug trafficking in the region.

Destroy over 200 acres of poppy cultivation

Imphal: In coordinated anti-narcotics operations from November 12 to 14, 2025, Security Forces eradicated over 200 acres of poppy plantations in the Ukhrul and Kangpokpi districts. On November 14, 113 acres were destroyed in various locations in Ukhrul, including the Lamlai Chingphei and Thawai Kuki Hill Ranges, along with 10 farm huts. On November 13, 35 acres were eradicated at Mullam Hill Range, with three huts demolished. On November 12, 56 acres were destroyed in Kangpokpi, where 19 huts and bags of fertilizer and salt were also eliminated. Additionally, two drug traffickers were arrested at Maram check post on November 14, with authorities seizing 18.2 kg of opium. These operations underscore the commitment to combating drug trafficking and protecting local communities.

Assam College Teachers' Association held in Biswanath

Guwahati: The annual conference of the Biswanath Sonitpur zone of the Assam College Teachers' Association (ACTA) took place at Biswanath College, featuring a daylong agenda that included flag hoisting by Balin Bhuyan and Bandana Gogoi. The open meeting, presided over by President Balin Bhuyan, commenced with a Borgeet performed by Bhagyashree Deka. Retired teachers from various colleges in the zone were honored, while students who excelled in arts, science, and commerce were awarded. Dr. Chinta Mani Sharma, the Principal of Biswanath College, welcomed attendees, including Dr. Jayanta Baruah, President of ACTA, Pranjal Gogoi, Finance Secretary, and Hazrat Ali, Organizing Secretary. Dr. Baruah emphasized ACTA's ongoing efforts to advocate for the professional and democratic rights of college teachers, noting that the government had taken significant measures to address the issues faced by educators and higher education as a whole. Additionally, he released the annual publication 'Anudhyan' during the event.

AKRSU Slams Assam Govt

Dibrugarh, Nov 15: The All Koch Rajbongshi Students' Union (AKRSU) Dibrugarh District section has made a number of long-standing political, cultural, and socioeconomic demands.

The group bemoaned the current state government's inaction in addressing the Koch Rajbongshi community's problems.

The Koch Rajbongshi community has fought for the promotion and preservation of their language, culture, tribal status, land rights, political rights, and a Kamatapur state for the past 35 years, but the government has shown no compassion for their demands, the AKRSU's Dibrugarh district unit said at a press conference on Saturday at its Dibrugarh office.

Additionally, the speakers at the press conference emphasized that although though the government had given the community scheduled tribe (ST) status in 1996, the classification was revoked after six months, which they called a humiliation to the community as a whole.

They insisted that ST status be reinstated by the government using the same criteria that were used to establish it in 1996.

Chirag Paswan slams Mahagathbandhan

Agency: Union Minister Chirag Paswan criticized the opposition Mahagathbandhan for continuously criticizing EVM-related problems and placing the blame on officials, claiming that they would accomplish “something better” if they took the time to do their own evaluation. He went on to claim that the opposition was using “provoca-

tive politics” by bringing up the Gen Z demonstrations that took place in Nepal. “They said yesterday that India will establish an environment like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. Rahul Gandhi, a senior Congress politician, has stated time and time again that Gen Z should fulfill their role. Paswan declared, “This is provocative politics.”

Earlier, RJD leader Sunil Singh had issued a strong warning to election officials, cautioning against any attempt to manipulate the people’s mandate, otherwise “the same scenes witnessed on the roads in Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka will be seen on the roads of Bihar as well”.Singh claimed that in the 2020 Bihar Assembly elections, “many RJD

candidates were forcibly defeated,” and urged vigilance to prevent such incidents from repeating. The RJD leader further warned that any act against the will of the people could trigger widespread public outrage. “You will see the common people taking to the streets. We are absolutely vigilant about this, and we urge you not to do anything that

goes against public sentiment, that the public will not accept,” Singh added.

The parties of the Mahagathbandhan, including the RJD and Congress, suffered significant setbacks, and Jan Suraaj, which had hoped for an impressive debut after its founder, Prashant Kishor, conducted an extensive campaign, failed to open its account.

NDA’s sweeping victory in Bihar draws sharp reactions from INDIA bloc

Patna, Nov 15: After the Election Commission of India (ECI) released the results of the pivotal elections on Friday, which saw the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) win 202 of the 243 seats and limit the Mahagathbandhan to a meager 35 victories, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi led the opposition in accepting the results of the Bihar assembly elections, which he claimed were unfair from the beginning. While the Congress and the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), which led the INDIA bloc or the Mahagathbandhan in Bihar, stated that they would examine the results of the Bihar election, they also hinted that the results support their theory that the Election Commission of India (ECI) is engaging in widespread vote chori, or theft, at the request of certain parties. Rahul Gandhi expressed gratitude to those who voted for the Mahagathbandhan and described the result as “truly surprising”, adding that the alliance could not win an election that was unfair from the very beginning. He said people’s mandate still favors RJD, as it received the highest number of votes across all of Bihar. RJD got the highest vote share - 23 per cent - in the Bihar elections, however the party also fought more seats - 143 -than any other.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge also echoed Rahul Gandhi’s sentiments, “respecting the decision of the people of Bihar”, and said the alliance will continue its “fight against those forces that are engaged in weakening democracy by misusing constitutional institutions.”He also said a thorough study of the election results will be conducted to present a detailed perspective after understanding the reasons for the outcomes. Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin and INDIA bloc ally DMK’s supremo MK Stalin congratulated JDU’s Nitish Kumar for the decisive victory and also wished appreciated Tejashwi Yadav for his “tireless campaign”.

Stalin wrote on X, “Election outcomes reflect welfare delivery, social and ideological coalitions, clear political messaging, and dedicated management until the last vote is polled. The leaders of the #INDIA bloc are seasoned politicians capable of reading the message and planning strategically to address emerging challenges.” The result of this election does not whitewash the misdeeds and reckless actions of the ECI, Stalin said, adding that the reputation of the poll body is at its “lowest point.”.The citizens of this country deserve a stronger and more impartial Election Commission, whose



conduct of polls should inspire confidence even among those who do not win,” he wrote.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Priyanka Chaturvedi shared on Friday what she termed as an “unsolicited advise” for the bloc over the humiliating defeat in the Bihar assembly elections.

As the results unfolded on Friday, Priyanka Chaturvedi wrote on X, suggesting that more focus should be on the women of the country. Priyanka Chaturvedi’s post followed another post in which she shared a news article, headlined: ‘Bihar women shatter records, turnout 8.8 percentage points more than men’.

Tight races: 3 Bihar seats decided by tiny margins

Patna, Nov 15: In three of the Bihar assembly’s constituencies, there was a close race with a margin of fewer than 250 votes, and at least three constituencies had winning margins of less than 100 votes.

With 202 seats overall, the NDA won handily, leaving Mahagathbandhan with just 39 seats. In Rupauli, JDU candidate Kalandhar Prasad defeated RJD candidate Bima Bharti by 73,572 votes, the largest vote margin. Get real-time updates on Bihar’s election results.

The three assemblies of Bihar that witnessed fewer than 100 votes were Sandesh, Agiaon, and Ramgarh. In the Nabinagar assembly seat, JD(u)’s Chetan Anand defeated his nearest rival, Amod Kumar Singh of RJD, with a margin of 112 votes.



RJD’s Faisal Rahman bagged victory in the Dha-ka seat, defeating his rival Pawan Kumar Jaiswal of BJP by a margin of just 178 votes.BJP’s Vidya Sagar Keshari lost the Forbesganj assembly seat to Congress nominee Manoj Bishwas by just 221 votes.

Bihar assembly elections were conducted across 243 assembly constituencies in two phases.

While the BJP emerged victorious in 89 seats, the JDU bagged 85, and their rival RJD’s tally dropped to just 25 seats.

Chirag Paswan calls on Nitish Kumar as Bihar awaits CM decision

Patna, Nov 15: Chirag Paswan, a union minister and leader of the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), met with Nitish Kumar, the chief minister of Bihar, on Saturday to congratulate him on the National Democratic Alliance’s resounding win in the assembly elections.

Chirag Paswan expressed his “extended hearty congratulations and best wishes” to Nitish Kumar on X for “NDA’s resounding majority.”

Earlier, the opposition Mahagathbandhan was defeated by the NDA, which secured a resounding majority in Bihar with 202 seats. The results of the 2025 Bihar assembly election showed that Chirag Paswan’s LJP (RV) was the fourth-largest party. For real-time updates on the Bihar election, follow.

Pawan told the reporters that he complimented Chief Minister Nitish Kumar after their meeting. Chirag Paswan also expressed joy, saying that Nitish Kumar valued each coalition partner’s contribution to the NDA. Additionally, he accused the opposition of “misleading” people by fabricating a story about JD(U) and LJP



(RV). The meeting between the two leaders comes amid speculation over whether Nitish Kumar will retain the Chief Minister seat or not.

Earlier, when asked if he would take up the CM post, Chirag Paswan had said that PM Modi has entrusted him with responsibilities at the Centre. However, he also added that, “Right now, I would not take the deputy CM post. But, yes, some leader from my party would definitely assume it if we win.”

No sabotage in Nowgam blast J-K DGP

Srinagar, Nov 15: Nalin Prabhat, the chief of Jammu and Kashmir Police, declared on Saturday that the enormous explosion at the Nowgam police station, which resulted in nine fatalities and thirty-two injuries, was “accidental” and ruled out sabotage as the cause. According to Prabhat, the Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police, the explosives found during the “white collar terror module” case investigation were moved from Faridabad, Haryana, to the Nowgam police station, where they were safely stored in an open space.”As part of the prescribed procedure, the samples of the recovery had to be forwarded for further forensic and chemical examination. On account of



the voluminous nature of the recovery, the FSL (forensic science laboratory) team has been carrying out this process for the last two days,” Prabhat told reporters here.

The DGP said that due to the unstable and sensitive nature of the recovery, the FSL team was conducting the sampling process and its handling with utmost caution. “Unfortunately during

this course, around 11.20 pm last night, an accidental explosion took place. Any other speculation into the cause of this incident is unnecessary,” he added.The top cop said nine people lost their lives in the explosion.“One personnel of SIA (State Investigation Agency), three personnel of the FSL team, two crime photographers, two revenue officials who were part of the

magistrate’s team, and one tailor who was associated with the team, were among those killed,” the DGP said.

He said 27 police personnel, two revenue officials, and three civilians from the adjacent were sustained injuries in the incident.“The injured were immediately evacuated to the nearest hospital, where they are being treated. The police station building has been severely damaged, and even the adjacent buildings have been affected,” he said. The extent of the damage due to the explosion is being ascertained, and the cause for “this unfortunate incident” is being inquired into, Prabhat added.The DGP said the police stands in solidarity with the families of the deceased in this hour of grief.

Bihar elections: NDA dominates

Patna, Nov 15: During the sample of recovered explosives connected to a terror module case, an unintentional explosion at the Nowgam police station caused four fatalities and twenty-seven injuries. Using a combination of cash transfers for women, welfare outreach, astute marketing, and chief minister Nitish Kumar’s enduring popularity among marginalized castes, the five-party alliance defeated two decades of anti-incumbency sentiment to register a historic victory—its best showing since 2010. In the only state in northern India where it has never had a chief minister, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) recorded its highest vote share and second-highest seat share. Kumar is scheduled to take office for a fifth consecutive term and a record tenth time. Key ally Janata Dal (United) utilised its base among women and Kumar’s legacy of corruption-free governance to record its best performance in 15 years, silencing critics who had sounded doom for the regional stalwart after a diffident showing five years ago. Other partners such as the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) and Rashtriya Lok Morcha, too, turned in stellar performances, turning an assured victory into a two-thirds landslide – only the second time in history that the NDA has crossed 200 in Bihar.In contrast, the Opposition Grand Alliance suffered a humiliating defeat as the NDA raided its bastions, demolished its vote bases and reduced the seven-party coalition to just 35 seats, its worst showing in 15 years. Senior leaders of the Rashtriya Janata Dal were trounced on the back of a listless campaign that was roiled by seat squabbles and failed to read the mood on the ground. The results suggested an erosion in the core Muslim-Yadav vote base of the RJD, raising existential threats for the once-dominant regional behemoth. The Congress was reduced to a paltry six seats and no other ally even came close to double digits. The much-vaunted Vikassheel Insaan Party, whose chief Mukesh Sahani was projected as the alliance’s deputy chief ministerial pick, came to naught. The alliance’s paltry tally was a far cry from its insurgent performance five years ago when it came within 12,000 votes of unseating Kumar. The Jan Suraaj party, led by strategist Prashant Kishor, contested 238 out of 243 seats in the Bihar elections but failed to win any. Its inability to impact close-margin seats indicates that its campaign efforts were more effective in media than in actual voter engagement.

Bihar sees return of a ‘coalition of extremes’

Patna, Nov 15: In Bihar, the Mahagathbandhan (MGB) or Grand Alliance has been defeated by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Caste is frequently at the center of Indian politics, and probably more so in Bihar, even if elections are rarely a single phenomena. Because of this, it is crucial to examine the election results through the lens of the state’s caste system. Nitish Kumar’s political genius and his indispensability lies in the fact that he has managed to bring together Hindu upper castes, non-Yadav Backward

Classes (BCs) and Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs) against what was once a formidable Muslim-Yadav or MY coalition of Lalu Yadav. This combine has worked wonders once again in these elections. This is best seen in the caste-breakup of MLAs from the two major alliances in the state. While the MGB has managed to get just 5 and 12 Muslim and Yadav MLAs elected, the number of Hindu upper caste, non-Yadav BCs and EBCs that the NDA has managed to get elected is 70, 50 and 32, respectively. The fact

that the number of non-Yadav BCs and EBCs in NDA’s overall bench strength in the new assembly is significantly greater than that of upper castes shows that Nitish’s ‘coalition of extremes’ has achieved a more optimal non-upper caste composition than it could in the 2010 elections, the only one when its victory was of a similar scale as this time. This analysis highlights the declining representation of Yadavs in the Bihar assembly, where the number of Yadav MLAs has dropped significantly to only 27, the second lowest since

1962. This decline coincides with increased representation of non-Yadav backward classes (BC) and extremely backward classes (EBC), indicating a shift away from Yadav and Muslim stakeholders rather than upper castes. The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) has maintained a relatively stable seat count, yet the share of Yadav MLAs has decreased by over five percentage points since 2010, reflecting a broader alienation of Yadavs from the political dynamics in Bihar despite their prior consolidation around the RJD.

JK cops hurt while handling Faridabad explosives 4 dead, 27 injured

• An accidental explosion at the Nowgam police station resulted in four fatalities and 27 injuries during the sampling of confiscated explosives linked to a terror module case.

Srinagar, Nov 15: An accidental explosion at the Nowgam police station on the outskirts of the city during the extraction of samples from a large cache of explosives recently confiscated in connection with the “white-collar” terror module case resulted in four fatalities and 27 injuries, officials said on Saturday. According to them, the unintentional explosion occurred late on Friday night, resulting in four fatalities and 27 injuries, the most of which were forensic and police personnel.According to the officials, the explosion happened as workers were handling the explosive material that had been trans-

ported from Faridabad, Haryana. The material, part of the 360 kilograms of explosives recovered from the rented residence of arrested doctor Muzammil Ganaie, was being sampled as part of the ongoing investigation, the officials said.

Four bodies have been retrieved from the scene of the explosion, they said adding all the deceased were unidentified so far.The bodies have been taken to Police Control Room Srinagar.

At least 24 police personnel and three civilians were admitted to various hospitals in the city, the officials said. The massive blast smashed the quiet of the night and damaged the police station building as ambulance and police sirens could be heard. The injured police personnel were rushed to various hospitals in the city.Small successive explosions prevented immediate rescue

operations by the bomb disposal squad. While some of the explosives recovered have been kept at Forensic Lab of police, the major part of the 360 kg of explosives was stored at the police station, where the primary case for the terror module was registered. The entire conspiracy was unravelled after the posters threatening police and security forces appeared on walls in Bunpora, Nowgam, in mid-October.Treating the incident as a serious threat, the Srinagar police registered a case on October 19 and formed a dedicated team. The trail ultimately led the Srinagar police to Al Falah University in Faridabad, where they arrested Dr Muzammil Ahmad Ganaie and Dr Shaheen Sayeed. It was here that the massive cache of chemicals, including ammonium nitrate, potassium nitrate, and sulphur, was seized.

Bagalkote arson: Karnataka CM calls for investigation

Bengaluru, Nov 15: Siddaramaiah, the chief minister of Karnataka, stated on Friday that an investigation will be carried out to determine who set fire to tractors and trolleys carrying sugarcane in this district.The incident happened on Thursday night while farmers were protesting and demanding ₹3,500 per tonne for their produce.After multiple sugarcane-loaded tractors and trolleys were allegedly set on fire by miscreants on their way to a plant in Rabbkavi Banhatti taluk, tension erupted in some areas of Bagalkote.

The price of ₹3,300 per tonne for sugarcane procurement has been agreed by nearly all farmers. The only people in Mudhol who disagree

PM Modi reveals ‘MY’ tactic after NDA’s Bihar win

Patna, Nov 15: The people of Bihar voted for development and “Viksit Bharat,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi remarked, criticizing the RJD-led Mahagathbandhan for its purported appeasing tactics.PM Modi made fun of the RJD’s “MY vote bank” by claiming that the NDA’s win has given rise to a new MY formula: Mahila and youths. It appears that he was alluding to the RJD’s MY formula, which is thought to be the party’s traditional votebank: Muslims and Yadavs. ”There is an old saying, ‘loha lohe ko katta hai’.” Some parties in Bihar made the ‘MY’ formula of appeasement. But today’s win has given a new and positive MY formula. And it is ‘mahila’ (women) and youths,” PM Modi told the gathering. The Prime Minister was speaking after NDA’s massive victory in Bihar, where the NDA alliance bagged 202 seats, in a major setback to Tejashwi’s Mahagathbandhan, which got 35 seats. The Bihar election witnessed a record voter turnout of 67.13 per cent, the highest ever since 1951.



Congress scores landslide in Jubilee Hills

Hyderabad, Nov 15: In the by-election for the Jubilee Hills assembly constituency in Hyderabad on Friday, the Congress won handily, defeating the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) by a staggering 24,729 votes.

Following ten rounds of vote counting, the Election Commission of India announced that Congress candidate Vallala Naveen Yadav had received 98,988 votes, while his closest opponent, Maganti Sunitha of BRS, had received 74,259 votes. Yadav won the seat by a margin of 24,729 votes. Sunitha is the wife of sitting BRS MLA Maganti Gopinath, whose death in June this year necessitated the by-poll.Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Lankala Deepak Reddy, who polled only 17,061 votes, lost his deposit. In all, 58 candidates were in the fray in the by-election. The Jubilee Hills constituency recorded a low-turnout of voters during the polling held on November 11 with only 48.42% of the total number of 4.01 lakh voters exercising their franchise. Scenes of jubilation broke out at the Congress office as party workers lit firecrackers and cheered for the result, their celebrations echoing across the city.

Cachar's Janajatiya Gaurav Diwas

Silchar, Nov 15: Minister Kaushik Rai emphasized unity, dignity, and inclusive growth during the Janajatiya Gaurav Diwas event, marking the 150th Birth Anniversary of freedom fighter Bhagwan Birsa Munda at Fulertal Multipurpose Hall. The gathering included tribal leaders, citizens, and students from Lakhipur co-district, honoring Munda's legacy as an emblematic figure advocating for tribal rights. The Minister linked the celebration to the ongoing Janajatiya Gaurav Pakhwada in Assam and commended the District Administration's outreach efforts and programs aimed at improv-



ing tribal welfare, such as health camps and financial literacy initiatives. Rai discussed key government initiatives benefiting tribal communities, including PM Matsya Sampada Yojana, MGNREGA, DAJGUA, and various social security schemes like PMAY and Old Age Pension, which bolster livelihoods and ensure financial support. The

event also featured the launch of the Tribal Parliament Model under the Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan, aimed at enhancing grassroots governance and service delivery. The atmosphere was vibrant with traditional sports and cultural performances, showcasing the rich heritage of the region while paying tribute to Munda's contributions to the community.

The NDA's victory in Bihar thrilled the Meghalaya BJP

Shillong, Nov 15: With the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) gearing up for the 2028 Assembly elections, the party's Meghalaya unit is optimistic about surpassing the double-digit mark in seats, a goal buoyed by the NDA's significant victory in Bihar. BJP Meghalaya president Rikman G Momin expressed enthusiasm over the party's performance, while projecting confidence in achieving a notable electoral result in 2028.

He reminisced about the party's historic beginnings and stated that the current strength of two MLAs would dramatically increase. Momin downplayed potential challenges, specifically dismissing Congress's resur-

● *BJP's Meghalaya unit aims to exceed ten seats in the 2028 elections, fueled by national momentum following the NDA's significant victory in Bihar.*

gence in the Garo Hills as insignificant, asserting that the BJP is working diligently to expand its presence there.

The forthcoming GHADC elections are viewed by party strategists as crucial for gauging the BJP's organizational strength and effectiveness within the Garo region. Celebrations in Shillong underscored the BJP's belief in a forthcoming substantial political shift in Meghalaya, making the recent events a pivotal moment for their campaign.

Tripura CM Saha says that Bihar's mandate is for development, not "jungle raj"

Agartala, Nov 15: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha expressed that the people of Bihar, through their united vote, have successfully prevented the return of "jungle raj" and opted for development by supporting the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the ongoing Bihar Assembly elections.

As the counting of votes proceeded, Saha indicated that the NDA is poised for a significant victory, while also claiming that voters have dismissed the "jungle raj and gundaraj" linked to RJD leader Lalu Prasad Yadav. Additionally, he anticipated a major political transformation in West Bengal in the upcoming elections of the next year. CM Saha made these remarks to the media



during an event where he inaugurated and laid foundation stones for infrastructure related to a private university near Agartala, expressing a strong confidence in the emerging political dynamics in Bihar. "In Bihar, a big victory is supposed to happen.

I was there myself and had campaigned in three Assembly constituencies in the Cham-

● *Tripura CM Manik Saha stated that Bihar voters have rejected "jungle raj" in favor of the NDA's development-oriented governance.*

paran region. The information I have is that in all three seats, the NDA is leading. This is just the tip of the iceberg and shows what is coming," he said.

In Kameng, the Army installs a domestic high-altitude monorail system

Itanagar, Nov 15: The Indian Army's Gajraj Corps has successfully implemented an indigenous high-altitude monorail system at an elevation of 16,000 feet in the Kameng Himalayas, Arunachal Pradesh. This initiative represents a significant advancement in high-altitude logistical operations, according to a statement by Defence spokesperson Lt Col Mahendra Rawat.

The monorail system has been meticulously conceptualized, en-

gineered, and deployed to overcome the formidable operational challenges encountered by troops stationed in this region. It is designed to ensure a continuous supply to forward posts, which are often isolated due to heavy snowfall, rugged terrain, and erratic weather conditions.

The introduction of this monorail system is expected to enhance the operational efficiency and effectiveness of military operations in high-altitude environments. He

emphasized the necessity of an innovative logistical approach for operations in the harsh terrain of the Kameng Himalayas, characterized by steep cliffs and high altitudes that disrupt essential supply routes.

To address this challenge, a fully validated mono rail system has been developed, capable of transporting over 300 kg in one trip, effectively connecting isolated posts that lack alternative supply channels. Lt Col Rawat highlight-



ed that this system facilitates the efficient transport of crucial supplies such as ammunition, rations,

fuel, engineering equipment, and other heavy loads across challenging and precarious gradients where

conventional transportation methods often fail to operate effectively.

The operational system functions continuously, regardless of weather conditions, including during hail or storms, and can operate with or without an escort. Additionally, the mono rail has shown promising capabilities for rapid casualty evacuation, providing a secure option in scenarios where helicopter evacuation is not feasible and ground evacuation may be slow and perilous.

Four arrested for cattle theft in Rowmari

Bonggaigaon, Nov 15: In a notable operation, police arrested four individuals, including Debojit Arya, a Hindutva leader from Abhayapuri, for their involvement in a cattle-theft racket. The arrests followed an accident involving a vehicle used to transport stolen cattle in the Rowmari area. Officers from the Rowmari police outpost reacted promptly, seizing eight stolen cattle and two vehicles, including a Bolero pick-up van. Debojit Arya, known publicly as a 'protector of cows,' was allegedly running a long-standing clandestine network for cattle theft in rural areas. He is implicated alongside three associates from Basbari, Bongaigaon—Shariful Islam, Mintu Ali, and Mominul Islam—who allegedly participated in stealing cattle from numerous villages during night hours for sale. The recent incident brought their illegal activities to light, leading to their apprehension and the recovery of the stolen cattle.

Advocate ULFA President Arabinda Rajkhowa praises Sukapha University's approval in Assam

Nazira, Nov 15: Arabinda Rajkhowa, the President of the pro-talk United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), held a press conference on November 13 at his Lakwa residence to address the establishment of Sukapha University in Charaideo.

He expressed his appreciation for the support from the Assam and Indian governments, which culminated in the university's approval as per a tripartite agreement signed on De-



cember 29, 2023.

This agreement involved ULFA, the Central Government, and the State Government and followed a proposal made by pro-talk ULFA leaders to the Indian

Government back in 2011. Sukapha University, named after Swargadeo Chaolung Sukapha, the founder of the Ahom kingdom and recognized as the father of the Assamese nation, is set to be located in the capital region of Charaideo.

Rajkhowa articulated his hopes that the university would serve as a significant asset for students in Northeast India, enhancing access to higher education and fostering regional development.

Khandu celebrates Bihar's triumph Highlights collaboration and good governance

Itanagar, Nov 15: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu expressed his satisfaction regarding the National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) significant victory in the Bihar assembly elections. In a post on X, he conveyed his heartfelt congratulations to the citizens of Bihar for their remarkable electoral success.

Khandu characterized the election results as a 'decisive mandate' that demonstrates the people's strong confidence

in effective governance, progressive development, and stability, all attributed to the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The chief minister publicly acknowledged and expressed deep gratitude to the workers of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) for their significant role in achieving electoral victory.

He emphasized the importance of the efforts put forth by these party workers, ac-

knowledging their hard work and dedication on the ground, which he believes were crucial in making this victory attainable.

The chief minister's message was one of appreciation for the commitment and perseverance exhibited by the karyakartas, highlighting their invaluable contribution to the party's success.

Khandu expressed gratitude to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for his leadership and collaboration in advancing

Bihar's development, stating, "Bihar has chosen development. Together, we will deliver."

The Chief Minister highlighted the significance of unity and consistent governance, noting that "this decisive mandate reflects the people's unwavering faith in good governance, development, and stability." The statements underscore a commitment to collective progress and the acknowledgment of public trust in effective governance.

Day 55 of the Tezpur University Stir: Significant Administrative Repercussions

Tezpur, Nov 15: The agitation at Tezpur University has escalated significantly as it enters its 55th day, with students expressing strong dissatisfaction towards the Training and Placement (T&P) Cell due to allegations of administrative negligence. The student body raised concerns directly with key university officials, including Dr. Pijush Chandra Das, the Deputy Director of the T&P Cell, and Prof. Shankar Chandra Deka, the Dean of the School of Engineering (SoE), demanding transparent answers regarding their grievances. This confrontation

reflects a critical moment in their ongoing call for accountability, clarity, and necessary institutional reforms.

Among the major issues highlighted by students from the School of Engineering are the dysfunctional training facilities, mismanagement of student development funds, and the continuous inadequacies of the T&P Cell in providing effective placement guidance. Despite numerous requests for improvement over the years, the administration's inaction has left students vulnerable during crucial stages of their career

development. The protests underline concerns about the negligence in maintaining essential training resources and the consistent failures of the T&P Cell in supporting student placements.

In response to these allegations, Dr. Das attempted to deflect blame towards the University's Finance Officer, Dr. Braja Bandhu Mishra, and the absent Vice Chancellor, Prof. Shambhu Nath Singh, claiming that the responsibility for major financial and administrative decisions lies with them. Following this, Dr. Das announced his intention



to resign from his position, indicating deepening divisions within the administration. The events occurring on Day 55 signify an increasingly restless atmosphere on campus, with students asserting that their movement aims for

a more transparent and responsive governance system rather than a stance of rebellion. They remain committed to their unified struggle until the university implements accountability measures and effective structural reforms.

Dr. PL Oswal's 85th birthday was celebrated at Chilarai College

Dhubri, Nov 15: The 85th birth anniversary of Dr. PL Oswal was celebrated at Chilarai College in Golokganj, Dhubri district, featuring a day-long program organized by the Dr. Pannalal Oswal Memorial Committee. The event included two seminars: one focusing on the theme 'Purpose of Education and Training Should Be Man Making,' led by retired district administrator Nriya Binod Wary, and the second addressing 'Mental Health of Students,' conducted by psychologist Nikita Choraria. Additionally, a presentation detailing the history, heritage, and culture of western Assam



was delivered by media veteran and heritage conservationist Bijoy Kumar Sharma, who effectively engaged the college students present.

Before the seminars commenced, the program featured memorial speeches honoring philanthropist Dr. Pannalal

Oswal from the President of the Chilarai College Management Committee, Prem Sukh Sethia, and the college Principal, Netai Chandra Roy. The event was jointly anchored by Dr. Umesh Das and Professor Jugal Kishore Bhattacharya.

All students in attendance received booklets, folders, gifts, and sports materials, while Nahar seedlings were planted in memory of Zubeen Garg. Floral tributes were also paid to the statues and portraits of notable figures including Mahabir Chilarai, the college's founder, Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, Zubeen Garg, and Dr. Pannalal Oswal.

In the past five years, Manipur has implemented 51 road projects

Imphal, Nov 15: Union Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways, Ajay Tamta, announced on Thursday that the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) is actively working to enhance road connectivity throughout Manipur.

The initiative encompasses 11 National Highways, spanning a cumulative total of 1,774 kilometers. During his three-day visit to the region, Tamta highlighted that 747 kilometers of the highway network has already been upgraded and resurfaced with blacktop, effectively converting multiple single-lane segments into two-lane standards, thereby improving the overall infrastructure and accessibility in Manipur. The remaining 332 kilometers of the

MoRTH is enhancing Manipur's connectivity by developing 11 National Highways that span 1,774 km, as stated by MoS Ajay Tamta.

project are expected to be completed by the Financial Year 2026-27. A total of 51 project packages are currently in progress, with an expenditure of Rs 12,000 crore allocated over the past five years. However, Tamta pointed out that delays in 35 of these project packages have been primarily due to issues related to land acquisition and forest clearance. In response to these challenges, the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) has intensified its focus on ensuring the timely completion

of these projects. He outlined the completion targets for several major highway corridors by FY 2025-26, including Imphal to Jiribam (NH-37), Yain-gangpokpi to Finch Corner (NH-202), Tamenglong to Mahur (NH-137), Chura-chandpur to Tuivai (NH-102B), and Maram to Peren (NH-129A). Additionally, a new National Highway is forthcoming from a 658 km Indo-Myanmar Border Road Project currently in the feasibility assessment phase. The Union Minister also noted the upgrade of connectivity with Nagaland from single-lane to two-lane standards on three key routes: Ukhrul to Jessami (NH-202, 156 km), Mao Gate to Imphal (NH-02, 97 km), and Maram to Peren (NH-129A, 104 km).

Mizo National Front wins Dampa constituency by-election

Aizawl, Nov 15: The Mizo National Front (MNF) successfully defended the Dampa Assembly seat in the bye-election held on November 11. MNF candidate R. Lalthangliana, who is the party's Vice-President and a former Health Minister, won with 6,981 votes, defeating Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) candidate Vanlalsailova by 562 votes. The ZPM candidate received 6,419 votes, while Congress nominee John Rotluangliana gained 2,394 votes and BJP candidate Lalthmingthanga received 1,541 votes. The byelection was prompted by the death of MNF legislator Lalrinthuanga Sailo. Voter turnout was notably high at 83.07%. The election results are seen as critical for the ruling ZPM ahead of upcoming local elections.

The Meghalaya cabinet has approved the purchase of land for the New Shillong Corridor

Shillong, Nov 15: The Cabinet has sanctioned the acquisition of further land at Tynring within the New Shillong Township. This initiative aims to establish a corridor that will link the Administrative City with the Knowledge City, facilitating enhanced connectivity and development in the region. Government spokesperson Wailadmiki Shylla announced a plan for the relocation of the Central Jail from its existing location to New Shillong.

This initiative includes the acquisition of an additional 35 acres of land in the Tynring New Shillong Township. The purpose of this land acquisition is to create a corridor that connects the administrative city with a knowledge city, thereby facilitating the shift of the central jail to the new site. Shylla emphasized the importance of this project in enhancing the urban infrastructure of the area.

The Cabinet of Meghalaya has approved an amendment to the Meghalaya Fiscal Responsibility and Budget



Cabinet approves land acquisition in Tynring, New Shillong Township, for a corridor connecting the Administrative City and Knowledge City.

Management Act of 2006, allowing an increase in the fiscal deficit limit from 3% to 3.5%. This adjustment facilitates the state to take loans, a practice previously followed. Additionally, an amendment was made to Rule 6(d) of the Meghalaya Ministerial District Establishment Service Rules, 2017, providing clarity on the filling of Group

D posts. Minister Shylla stated that past confusion regarding this process has been addressed by amending the guidelines to ensure that 50% of Group D posts will now be filled from the RCW (Regular Casual Workers), aligning the rule with the original provisions made in the 1996 Official Memorandum (OM).

Akasa Air to fly from Navi Mumbai on Dec 25, sets sights on wider domestic expansion

New Delhi: Akasa Air on Saturday said it is will commence operations from the Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA), in a staggered manner, starting December 25.Connecting directly with four Indian cities, Akasa Air will operate its maiden flight between Delhi and NMIA on December 25 which will be followed by services to Goa, Kochi and Ahmedabad in subsequent days. The airline, which started flying in August 2022, currently has a fleet of 30 planes and flies to 24 domestic and six international destinations.The airline said it will progressively ramp up operations from the second airport in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, scaling up to 300 domestic and 50 international weekly departures over a period of time. Akasa Air has recently announced overseas flights from the national capital and also expects faster aircraft deliveries from Boeing. As part of its broader network strategy, Akasa said it is also set to ramp up to 10 parking bases by the end of FY2027, with a focused international expansion into key Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian markets.“For Akasa Air, NMIA strengthens our strategic presence in the Mumbai



Metropolitan Region and western India, allowing us to optimise capacity deployment and capture new demand pools across,” said Praveen Iyer, Co-Founder and Chief Commercial Officer, Akasa Air.On October 8, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated phase one of the Navi Mumbai International Airport. The airport is built at a cost of Rs 19,650 crore.

GFA addition is still at its highest in FY20–25

New Delhi: Gross fixed asset (GFA) addition in the five-year block period has been strongest during the financial year 2020 to 2025 (FY20-25) post FY05-FY10, a report stated on Thursday.In particular, construction material, electricity generation and consumer goods led the addition. Metals have been on a downward trend in the past two five-year periods.According to the report, the construction materials sector has witnessed significant volatility in GFA growth over the past two decades.In FY05-10, GFA grew by 233.71 per cent, supported by rapid urbanisation, real estate expansion, and infrastructure development. Meanwhile, growth

moderated to 94.68 per cent in FY10-15 due to project delays and reduced private investment.A sharp decline of -94.59 per cent in FY15–20 was seen, driven by high input costs, regulatory challenges (RERA, GST), demonetisation-led liquidity stress and the NBFC funding crisis that dampened housing and infrastructure activity. The sector rebounded strongly in FY20–25, recording an exceptional 2,802.32 per cent growth, fueled by record government capital expenditure, revival in real estate, and large-scale infrastructure programs such as Smart Cities Mission, Bharatmala, and PM Awas Yojana, the report noted.

Key information about Amber Group’s the majority of Shogini Technoarts A Subsidiary of IL JIN

New Delhi: Amber Enterprises India Limited, through its material subsidiary IL JIN Electronics (India) Private Limited, has entered into definitive agreements to acquire a majority stake in Shogini Technoarts Private Limited. For the fiscal year 2023-2024, the company reported a turnover of Rs 33,250 lakh, which grew from Rs 29,737 lakh in the previous fiscal year (2022-2023). As of the 2024-2025 financial year, its turnover stood at Rs 39,074 lakh, it said. Shares of Amber Enterprises India Limited closed 3.51 per cent higher on Friday at Rs 7,378.70 apiece on the BSE, up from its previous close of Rs 7,128.60. The company currently commands a market capitalisation of Rs 25,935 crore.Jasbir



Singh, Executive Chairman and CEO of Amber Group, commented on the acquisition, stating that Shogini strengthens the group’s bare PCB vertical and supports its progression toward becoming a full-stack, backward-integrated EMS company. He noted that this acquisition, combined with existing facilities and strategic joint ventures, lays a strong foundation for Amber to become a leading PCB manufacturer in India, advancing the vision of ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat’ by reducing import dependency. Abhijit Tamhankar, Chairman & Managing Director of Shogini, emphasised a shared vision to harness synergies and scale the business, adding that both companies aim to accelerate growth and

enhance value for customers. This strategic acquisition was announced in a filing with the stock exchanges on November 14, after market hours. The target company, Shogini Technoarts, is a Pune-based manufacturer established in 1982. It specializes in producing a wide array of Printed Circuit Boards (PCBs), including single-sided, double-sided, multilayered, metal, and flexible PCBs. Shogini caters to a diverse clientele across sectors like automotive, defense, medical electronics, and telecommunications. This move is expected to broaden Amber’s product offerings with advanced PCB types, boost its manufacturing and design capabilities, and allow it to tap into new customer segments. According to the company’s regulatory filing, the acquisition is aimed at strengthening Amber’s in-house PCB production expertise and significantly reducing its reliance on external suppliers. After the transaction is finalized, Shogini will become a step-down subsidiary of Amber Enterprises and a subsidiary of IL JIN.

HDFC Bank’s Rs 1,500-crore ex-Gratia payout sounds generous in terms

Mumbai: HDFC Bank gave its workers ex-gratia payments totaling over Rs 1,500 crore during the previous fiscal year, making it one of the biggest one-time settlements made by any private Indian bank. The payment, which was made public shortly after HDFC Ltd. HDFC Bank merged, was presented as an expression of appreciation for employees who assisted in navigating the challenging consolidation process. Employees quickly discovered that this “thank you” came with a catch: the reimbursement is completely taxable, despite the announcement receiving praise from the business community. This has sparked a renewed conversation on what ex-gratia really means, and why companies continue to prefer this route over traditional bonuses—even though it offers no tax relief to employees.What is an ex gratia payment?An ex gratia payment is a voluntary amount paid “out of kindness.” The term comes from Latin and refers to compensation offered without any legal or contractual obligation. Employers may offer it during retirements, restructuring, or special



circumstances. Governments may offer ex-gratia assistance after disasters or accidents.Crucially, there is no formula, no minimum or maximum limit, and no mandatory criteria. It is entirely at the payer’s discretion—based on goodwill, financial ability or a desire to compensate losses. HDFC Bank announced an ex gratia payout of Rs 1,500 crore after its merger with HDFC Ltd. It was positioned as a one-time ‘thank you’ for the staff’s extraordinary effort through the integration process. While

this boosted morale and motivated employees, it also raised questions about taxation.Why companies prefer ex gratia over bonusesTax advisory platform Tax Buddy and other financial experts explain why corporates often choose ex-gratia:Reward extraordinary effort without revising salary structures.Retain employees during mergers or transitions.In other words, ex gratia offers flexibility—a major advantage for large organisations navigating sensitive or unusual situations.

IRB Infrastructure wins Rs 9,270 crore NHAI project

New Delhi: Announced a significant project win through its arm, the IRB Infrastructure Trust. The private INVIT has secured a Letter of Award from the National Highways Authority of India (NHA) for a large toll-operate-transfer (TOT) project in Uttar Pradesh, valued at Rs 9,270 crore. The project, designated as TOT-17, covers tolling, operation, maintenance, and transfer responsibilities across a 366-km network spanning key highway corridors. The bundle includes the high-traffic Lucknow–Ayodhya and Ayodhya–Gorakhpur stretches of NH-27, along with the Lucknow–Sultanpur section of NH-731. The concession requires an upfront payment of Rs 9,270 crore to NHA for a 20-year revenue-linked period.Virendra D. Mhaikar, Chairman & Managing Director of IRB Infrastructure Developers, described the order as a pivotal accomplishment, highlighting the importance of the religious tourism corridor. He noted that the award solidifies the com-



pany’s position in the sector, raising its market share in the TOT space to a commanding 42 per cent. Mhaikar added, It strengthens our platform and enables us to move rapidly towards the 1 lakh crore asset portfolio mark. IRB Infrastructure Developers reported a 41 per cent jump in consolidated net profit for the September quarter, rising to Rs 141 crore from Rs 100 crore a year earlier. Total income for the period also increased to Rs 1,800 crore from Rs 1,752 crore, according to a regulatory filing.Building on this momentum, the board declared a second interim dividend of 7 per cent for FY26. Shareholders will receive Re 0.07 per equity share with a face value of Re 1, with November 18 set as the record date.On Friday, shares of IRB Infrastructure Developers closed 1.32 per cent higher at Rs 42.91 on the BSE, compared with the previous close of Rs 42.35. The company now commands a market capitalisation of Rs 25,913 crore. IRB Infrastructure Developers has

bagged a Rs 3,400-crore road project from the NHA in Uttar Pradesh to be developed on build, operate and transfer basis. The scope of the work includes six laning of the 99.86 km stretch on Hapur Bypass, from Hapur to Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh, the company said in a statement today. “We have a proven track record in the BOT space. With this project, the company’s construction order book now stands at Rs 15,300 crore. This boosts the construction order book visibility for next three to four years,”

Andhra Pradesh bags Rs 5.2 lakh crore clean energy investments

Mumbai: Andhra Pradesh Energy Minister G. Ravi Kumar announced that the state secured investment commitments worth Rs 5.2 lakh crore, with the potential to create more than 2.6 lakh jobs across the energy sector, in just two days. The minister said these pledges were made on November 13 and 14, the inaugural day of the 30th CII Partnership Summit in Visakhapatnam. The deal spans renewable energy, green hydrogen, pumped storage, biofuels, manufacturing, and hybrid RE projects. On November 13, the state signed investment deals valued at over Rs 2.94 lakh crore, expected to create nearly 70,000 jobs. Similarly, agreements worth over Rs 2.2 lakh crore, with the potential to create nearly two lakh jobs, were finalised on November 14. According to Energy Minister Kumar, the investment pledges reflect a decisive shift in investor confidence, reinforcing Andhra Pradesh’s position as India’s fastest-growing hub for clean energy and green hydrogen. The UK-based green energy major ReNew En-



ergy Global announced an investment of Rs 60,000 crore (\$6.7 billion) in Andhra Pradesh to set up multiple green energy projects in the state, bringing its total fresh investment in the state to Rs 82,000 crore (\$9.3 billion). The global renewable energy major has already committed Rs 22,000 crore worth of investment to the state in May 2025 to set up one of India’s largest hybrid renewable energy projects in the country.

Sebi proposes concise IPO summary to prospectus

Mumbai: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has proposed simplifying the lengthy and complex initial public offer (IPO) prospectus to make it easier for retail investors to understand and access key company information.In a consultation paper released on Thursday, Sebi suggested that disclosures in IPO offer documents be streamlined and a concise summary be introduced to improve investor engagement and informed decision-making. The proposed “Offer Document Summary” would provide a clear snapshot of essential details such as a company’s business model, financial highlights, key risks and the objectives of the issue. It would be made available on the websites of the issuer, Sebi, the stock exchanges and the lead managers.Sebi said that with the introduction of this summary, the current requirement



for an abridged prospectus could be eliminated, reducing duplication and easing documentation for issuers. This move aims to simplify the IPO process and enhance the ease of doing business. The regulator highlighted that existing offer documents are often “voluminous and complex”, which discourages retail investors from reviewing them. The difficulty in navigating these documents leads many investors to rely on unregulated sources such as grey market trends or social media for IPO information. Sebi

warned that such unofficial inputs are often inaccurate and could mislead investors, hampering orderly market growth.By providing a concise and standardised summary, Sebi hopes to improve transparency, encourage informed participation, and reduce dependence on unreliable information. pledged pre-IPO shares to be treated as “locked-in” under a new depository-managed framework. This measure would prevent procedural delays for issuers and offer clarity to lenders regarding pledged shares before listing.

In Indian real estate, NRIs are secretly making significant gains thanks to a currency ploy

Mumbai: Indian home loan rates are now almost equal to the government’s cost of borrowing—making them the narrowest mortgage-to-sovereign spread in the world and giving both resident Indians and NRIs a unique advantage in the global real estate market.According to market analyst Anubhav Kapoor, top Indian banks like HDFC Bank and State Bank of India are offering home loans at just 7.4 percent, barely 16 basis points above the 30-year Government of India bond yield of 7.24 percent. “Indian salaried families borrow almost at sovereign rates—a rare global privilege,” Kapoor wrote in a LinkedIn post breaking down the global comparison.In contrast, the spread between home loan rates and long-term government bonds is much wider in developed economies. In the United States, for instance, the spread stands at 1.6 percentage points, or roughly 35 percent above the sovereign rate. Canada, the UK, and Australia all show similar gaps ranging from 33 to 61 percent.This razor-thin spread in India means that middle-class borrowers are accessing capital at rates nearly equivalent



lent to what the Indian government pays—an economic anomaly that makes mortgage financing exceptionally affordable by international standards.Kapoor also pointed to a strategic advantage for non-resident Indians. “NRIs earn in USD, CAD,

GBP, or AUD, but invest in Indian real estate priced in INR,” he noted. Since the Indian rupee has historically depreciated by 3 to 4 percent per year against major foreign currencies, this currency movement acts as a tailwind, boosting returns

for overseas investors. The unique convergence of near-sovereign borrowing costs for residents and a currency-linked return edge for NRIs helps explain why Indian real estate remains resilient in the long run. While many global markets have experienced cooling or correction phases, India’s housing sector continues to attract consistent domestic and international interest “When a country lets its citizens borrow at government-level rates, and its NRIs invest with a currency tailwind,” Kapoor noted, “you understand why Indian real estate never loses its long-term strength.” This razor-thin spread in India means that middle-class borrowers are accessing capital at rates nearly equivalent to what the Indian government pays—an economic anomaly that makes mortgage financing exceptionally affordable by international standards. Since the Indian rupee has historically depreciated by 3 to 4 percent per year against major foreign currencies, this currency movement acts as a tailwind, boosting returns for overseas investors

IFTDA Files Complaint After Paparazzi Invade Dharmendra's Home Privacy

Directors' body seeks action over paparazzi intrusion

The Indian Film and Television Directors' Association (IFTDA) has formally approached Mumbai Police after a section of paparazzi and digital media allegedly crossed serious boundaries while veteran actor Dharmendra was unwell. The organisation wants strict action against those who, according to them, ignored basic ethics and intruded on the Deol family's private space.

In a complaint addressed to the Senior Inspector of Juhu Police Station, IFTDA President Ashoke Pandit raised concerns about how certain photographers behaved outside Dharmendra's home. The letter stated that these individuals "breached privacy" by entering the compound and "recording footage and images of his family members without consent," lat-



er circulating them online. The association strongly criticised the behaviour, calling it inhuman and unethical. Dharmendra, 89, was recently hospitalised at Breach Candy Hospital for a minor illness and is now recovering at home. His health scare attracted heavy media presence outside the Deol residence, leading to growing public frustration with paparaz-

zi conduct. Earlier on the same day the complaint was filed, Sunny Deol confronted the photographers standing outside his house. Visibly emotional, he told them, "Aap logon ko sharam aayni chahiye... Aapke ghar mein maa-baap hain, bacche hain..." He folded his hands, asking the media to show sensitivity during a difficult moment for the family. The backlash didn't

stop there. Several well-known filmmakers voiced their disapproval of the situation. Karan Johar called the scene a "media circus" in his Instagram Story, saying the lack of courtesy and sensitivity was deeply upsetting. Director Madhur Bhandarkar also urged for responsible coverage, writing, "It's high time for the media to respect the Deol family's personal privacy. Let's offer them the peaceful space they truly need, especially during challenging times."

IFTDA also released an official statement denouncing false online rumours about Dharmendra's death, emphasising the need for responsible reporting. Dharmendra is currently at home, surrounded by family and continuing his recovery while industry voices rally behind the call for media discipline.

Rajkummar, Patralekhaa welcome baby girl on anniversary

Mumbai: Rajkummar Rao and Patralekhaa have welcomed their first child, a baby girl, turning their fourth wedding anniversary into an unforgettable milestone. The couple shared the happy news on November 15, marking a double celebration filled with love and gratitude. In a heartfelt joint post, they wrote, "We are over the moon. God has blessed us with a baby girl. Blessed parents - Patralekhaa and Rajkummar." They also described their daughter as God's "greatest blessing", making it clear how much joy she has already brought into their lives. The moment the announcement went live, friends from the industry and fans rushed to shower the new parents with warm wishes. Neha Dhupia commented, "Congratulations, you guys. Welcome to the



best hood ... parenthood." Sonam Kapoor simply wrote, "Congratulations," while Varun Dhawan added, "Welcome to the club guys." Kriti Sanon joined in with, "Congratulations guysss." The comments section quickly filled with love, emojis, and blessings from well-wishers across social media. This happy moment follows their pregnancy announcement earlier in July. At the time, the couple shared an adorable Instagram post featuring a graphic illustration with

a cradle at the centre and a sweet message that said, "Baby on the way." The post received overwhelming support and excitement from fans. Rajkummar and Patralekhaa's relationship has been admired for years. Their journey began with the 2014 film Citylights, which also marked Patralekhaa's Bollywood debut. The on-screen partnership soon grew into a strong bond off-screen, and after several years of dating, the couple married on November 15, 2021.

Salman, Stebin sing Jaane Jaana



Mumbai: Salman Khan recently sat for a press conference in Qatar to begin his highly-anticipated Dabangg Tour. During the press meet, the actor was also clicked vibing to his famous song O Oh Jaane Jaana. They turned a casual media interaction into a fun one with their heartfelt. While Stebin began singing, Salman and Tamannaah joined right after.

The press meet was also attended by Sunil Grover, who was sitting beside Salman. Jacqueline Fernandez was also present to show her support. The celebrities grooved to the tunes of the iconic song from Pyaar Kiya To Darna Kya as Salman enthusiastically joined them. Da-Bangg: The Tour Reloaded is set to begin on November 14, 2025. The first stop is Doha, where Salman and his team are set to groove and enjoy with the fans. The performers for the tour include Prabhu Deva, Tamannaah Bhatia, Stebin Ben, Sonakshi Sinha and Manishes Paul. Many photos and videos have surfaced on social media, where the performers are seen rehearsing to their tracks and at times, with Salman.

Dhanush & Kriti Sanon's Fiery Romance Looks Intense

Tere Ishk Mein Trailer

Mumbai: The trailer for the film Tere Ishk Mein has been released by the makers. This film, directed by Aanand L Rai, is a passionate love story and is considered a spiritual successor to his 2013 film Raanjhanaa, which featured Sonam Kapoor. Tere Ishk Mein stars Dhanush and Kriti Sanon and shows a story of intense, possibly unrequited, love that causes problems for both people involved.

The trailer opens with Dhanush's character, Flight Lieutenant Shankar, arriving as an Indian Air Force Officer. Kriti's character is then shown with a tense expression, followed by a scene of Shankar flying an aircraft. Kriti's character then confronts him, remarking, "Still aggressive and angry, you love this image of yours, right?" The trailer then transitions to a flashback, showing their toxic relationship, with Dhanush beating up a man and Kriti intervening. She then expresses her intention to help him become a kind, non-violent individual. He warns that if he were to fall in love with her, it might lead to him "burning down Delhi." We are also shown glimpses of their joyful romance, filmed during Delhi's winter. The story gradually escalates, showing the two lovers in conflict, distancing



themselves from each other. Tere Ishk Mein also shows Aanand L Rai's distinctive style, evident in its portrayal of heartbreak and the yearning of lovers. This AR Rahman musical features songs that have already gained huge popularity on social media. While Dhanush and Kriti share a pleasing on-screen chemistry, it is the director's unique storytelling approach that truly distinguishes this romantic and intense story. Fans quickly took to the comments section of the trailer post on social media to express their thoughts. One of them wrote, "The dialogues, the background music, the actress, the actor, the song, everything looks perfect." Tere Ishk Mein has been written by Himanshu Rai and Neeraj Yadav, and the film also stars Sushil Dahiya and

Prabhu Deva, among others. The movie is scheduled for release on November 28 in theatres. A.R. Rahman's haunting score, paired with Irshad Kamil's lyrics, elevates the emotional stakes, promising a soundtrack that will linger long after the credits roll.

While many fans have lauded the trailer's emotional intensity and visual storytelling, some netizens have questioned the recurring theme of revenge in Bollywood romances, asking, "Is it necessary to shove a revenge theme?" Nonetheless, the trailer has sparked widespread curiosity, with many eager to see how the story unfolds. Tere Ishk Mein is being positioned as a spiritual successor to Raanjhanaa, but with a modern, gender-subverting edge.

Nia DaCosta on Queer Hedda, Tessa Thompson Bond

New York: Filmmaker Nia DaCosta puts a modern and a queer twist to Henrik Ibsen's 1891 play Hedda Gabler, with her latest film Hedda. Instead of traditional re-telling, Nia brings in major narrative shifts, the most significant being the introduction of a queer storyline. Eilert Lovborg, originally Hedda's ex-lover, becomes Eileen Lovborg, a women who not only shares a past with Hedda but is also vying for the same professorship as Hedda's husband, George Tesman. Speaking at a global press conference, where Filmfare was present, Nia opened up about these choices and what excited her to dig into the many layers of this story. She shared, "My initial read of Hedda was when I was falling in love with theater and falling in love with Ibsen. The play is so fascinating. Hedda is so enigmatic, ineffable and horrifying but also vulnerable, funny, sexy, loathsome and lovable. She is a complex creature. I wanted to follow all the things that really got under my skin about the play. Changing Eilert Lovborg to Eileen Lovborg was one of the first things I thought of."

Explaining the reason behind it, Nia continued, "It was really a series of questions and what ifs after reading the play. What if Eilert were a woman? What if we set this in the 1950s? What if Tessa Thompson played Hedda? And how could I still main-



tain the beating heart of the original piece, the thing that made it so vital in its time? And I was also thinking how can I make it vital in mine? That was the beginning of the road for me." When I wrote the movie and described all the characters as if it's kind of a play, I basically wrote her. It also speaks about the depth of our relationship, not just as friends, but also as people who love each other's work and love each other's minds creatively. And her brain is so beautiful, she's so smart, and it's such a relief to be able to cast an intelligent actress, when you are tackling ideas."

Deepika Padukone Stands Firm on 8-Hour Shifts, Burnout & Motherhood



Mumbai: Deepika Padukone's request for an eight-hour work schedule has created a major discussion on social media, especially after she reportedly exited from the films, Spirit and Kalki 2. Following these controversies, the actress has now spoken publicly about why she believes shorter workdays are important, particularly after becoming a mother. In a recent interview with Harper's Bazaar, Deepika shared how motherhood has reshaped her priorities. Using very honest words, she said, "One hundred per cent. Every cliché is true. When mothers say, 'You'll understand when you become one,' it's true. I have so much more respect for my mother now." She also added that although she had planned out how she

would manage her career after having a child, things turned out differently in reality. As she explained, "You can plan how you think you'll navigate work and motherhood, but the reality is very different."

Deepika expressed that companies need to support women returning to work, saying, "I feel strongly about how new mothers

need to be supported when they return to work. That's something I want to focus on." She also addressed the larger problem of long working hours in the film industry, remarking, "We've normalised overworking. We mistake burnout for commitment." According to her, a healthy work system is essential for better performance "Eight hours

of work a day is enough for the human body and mind. Only when you're healthy can you give your best. Bringing a burnt-out person back into the system helps no one."

Deepika explained that her own office practices this rule: "In my own office, we work eight hours a day, Monday to Friday. We have maternity and paternity policies. We should normalise bringing children to work." Talking to CNBC-TV18 about workplace conditions and pay issues, she stated, "I have done this at many levels; this is not new to me... I am someone who has always fought my battles silently." Reports earlier said that the makers of Spirit and Kalki 2 could not meet her demands for a fee hike and shorter hours, leading to her exit.

Tamannaah's Films Fans Love

Mumbai: Tamannaah Bhatia has built a long and diverse career across Tamil, Telugu and Hindi cinema, moving effortlessly between grand action dramas, emotional stories and light comedies. Over the years, she has created a mix of memorable roles that show her range, screen presence, and charm. Here are some of her finest films where she truly stood out and left a strong impact on the audience.

Tamannaah completely steps out of her earlier image with her role as Avanthika. She appears as a determined warrior who has trained her entire life for a mission, and she carries that intensity in every scene. Her introduction fight is powerful and instantly tells you that this character has depth, discipline and purpose. Even with the grand scale of the film around her, she holds her own and leaves a lasting impression.

Her role becomes more emotional in the second film. Avanthika is shown as someone who has lived through pain and is fighting not only for freedom but also for justice. Tamannaah brings a gentle strength into the character, showing both resilience and sensitivity. Even with limited screen time, her presence adds balance and emotional grounding to the story.

In this Tamil action drama, Tamannaah plays Yamuna, a bright and warm character who brings stability to the hero's chaotic lifestyle. She fits into the energy of the film with ease. Her chemistry with Suriya feels natural, especially in the emotional scenes where misunderstandings create tension. She lifts the lighter moments with her charm and contributes significantly to why Ayan became such a popular entertainer.



Jr NTR prepares for intense, extended shoot of Prasanth Neel's untitled film

Mumbai: Jr NTR is back in action mode as his highly anticipated collaboration with director Prashanth Neel, tentatively titled Dragon, prepares to roll. The film is gearing up to be an ambitious action saga. It is entering its next phase with a long and power-packed shooting schedule. Interestingly, the director is said to have meticulously planned a marathon shoot that will span several months. It will establish the film's massive action sequences and larger-than-life scale.

To make matters even more interesting, Prashanth Neel is looking at restyling Jr NTR's character. He recently tested a brand-new look for the actor and the results have left everyone on the team stunned. A source close to the development said, "The transformation stunned all of us. Once the new look was tested on NTR, the whole unit was shocked at how perfectly it fit the character and the film's tone. That's why Prashanth Neel has designed a marathon shooting schedule. The upcoming stretch is massive, extremely demanding and will run for several months. He wants to capture every ounce of NTR's energy and physicality on screen." The makers had released a photo as Neel and NTR discussed his look, though his face



wasn't revealed. The caption had hinted that the actor had taken his physical prep to a whole new level.

Coming to his physical transformation, Jr NTR is currently maintaining a leaner and sharper physique for the role. He was also spotted looking visibly fitter. A few months ago, a viral gym video of NTR doing intense workout had fans hyped about his upcoming transformation. Sources reveal that the actor's intense training and diet were aimed at achieving an agile and athletic look for the film's action choreography. Not much has been revealed

about NTRNeel but fans are already excited about the film. Adding to the intrigue, there's strong buzz that Prashanth Neel might expand the story into two parts. However, the makers are currently keeping the details tightly under wraps. They are aiming to release the film in theatres on June 25, 2026. Despite earlier rumors of creative differences and delays, the production team has put speculation to rest with behind-the-scenes photos and updates. The latest announcement has reignited excitement among fans, who are eagerly awaiting more glimpses of the film's progress.

With Jr NTR stepping into a rugged, action-heavy role and Neel pushing the boundaries of scale and style, NTRNeel is poised to be a landmark release in 2026. The film's success could further cement both artists' reputations as pioneers of pan-Indian cinema.

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5 Christmas Cakes From Around The World That Will Make Your Holiday Extra Sweet

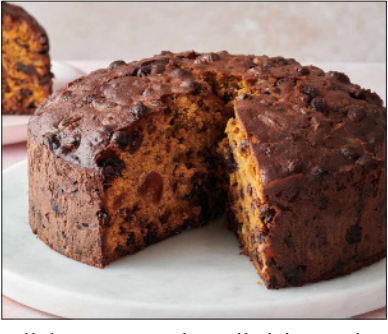


Christmas is all about red and green outfits, lots of feasting, decorating everything with lights, and having a good time with friends and family. Among the many holiday traditions, Christmas cakes hold a special place on dessert tables worldwide. While most people are familiar with the plum or rum cake, there is a range of delicious and special Christmas cakes in different parts of the world. This Christmas, embrace the global spirit of celebration with cakes from around the world.



1. Christmas Cake - EnglandThe England-style Christmas cake has become a beloved holiday dessert worldwide. This dense fruit cake is packed with candied or dried fruits, nuts, and warm spices - all soaked in spirits like brandy, rum, or cognac. The flavours of the cake are a unique mix of sweet, spicy, and boozy.

2. Buche de Noel - FranceIn France, Buche de Noel is a popular Christmas cake. This iconic dessert is



a light sponge cake rolled into a log shape. The outer layer is coated in chocolate or coffee - flavoured buttercream and textured to resemble tree bark. To add a Christmas-special touch, it is decorated with powdered sugar, edible leaves, and meringue mushrooms.

3. Bolo Rei - PortugalPortugal's traditional Christmas cake looks fascinating and tastes amazing. Bolo Rei means 'King's Cake,' and that's what it looks like. The cake is shaped like a crown with a hole in the centre. Just



like bright gems, it is adorned with candied fruits and nuts. As per tradition, a fava bean is hidden in the cake, and whoever gets that slice has to buy the cake next Christmas.

4. Panettone - ItalyItaly's classic recipe is another favourite Christmas cake across Europe and beyond. This sweet cake is dome-shaped and has a bread-like texture-light, airy, and yeasty - similar to sourdough bread. Panettone also contains raisins and candied fruits. The true origin of Pa-



nettone lies in the medieval custom of enriching the daily bread during the Christmas period.

5. Bibingka - PhilippinesChristmas is a cherished holiday in the Philippines, celebrated with a holiday-special cake called bibingka. This traditional rice cake is made with coconut milk and wrapped in banana leaf moulds, giving it a unique aroma and interesting presentation. It is often topped with caramelized coconut strips.

A Powerhouse Pairing



Imagine some classic food pairings: wine and cheese, fruit and nuts, steak and potatoes ... iron and vitamin C? For a variety of people, including vegans and endurance athletes, getting enough iron can be a challenge. Even minor levels of iron deficiency can lead to impaired endurance, as well as fatigue, loss of concentration and decreased immune function. While animal-based sources of iron (red meat, poultry, egg yolks and shellfish) tend to be better absorbed than plant-based sources (dark leafy greens, beans, lentils, tofu, some grains and even spices), there are other factors that can improve or inhibit iron absorption. Natural compounds in some foods called phytates and oxalates can inhibit absorption of minerals. They're present in certain dark leafy greens (spinach and Swiss chard) and in some nuts and seeds (sesame). Interestingly, many of these foods tend to be extraordinarily rich in iron, maybe to combat the effect of the phytates and oxalates. Tannins found in tea, coffee or red wineOver-consumption of other minerals (zinc, calcium, manganese)verse of antioxidants Heme iron and meat protein factor (compounds found in animal sources only)Food sources of vitamin CIn general, to maximize the absorption of iron at a meal, aim to have a source of vitamin C with your iron-rich foods, and avoid coffee or tea within an hour of mealtime (before and after).

Rashami Desai opens up about financial struggles and the darkest days of her life

Financial challenges can push individuals into deep emotional and psychological turmoil. Actor Rashami Desai recently shared how she hit rock bottom after purchasing a house and taking on a massive debt of ₹3.5 crore. In an interview with Brut India, she revealed, "I had bought a house and I had a loan of 2.5 crore on me, and apart from that I remember having a total debt of around 3.25 to 3.5 crore. I felt that everything was fine, normal... my show came to an abrupt halt."She continued, "I was on the streets for four days... I had an Audi A6 in which I used to sleep. I had stored my belongings at my manager's house, and I completely distanced myself from my family." Desai recalled that she ate rickshaw drivers' food worth just ₹20 from plastic bags and would sometimes find pebbles in them. "Those four days were very difficult in my life. I realised that I haven't even thought about myself. I got so caught up in everything that I forgot about myself." The actor continued to talk about how all her relationships took a backseat. "I got divorced, then with my friends, they thought that I was very difficult as I didn't express much, then my family thought that all my decisions were wrong." She developed psoriasis, which significantly impacted her self-esteem as she experienced severe hair loss and substantial weight gain. These physical changes further compounded her challenges, deepening her sense of distress. Her story is a stark reminder of how unchecked financial commitments can snowball into overwhelming stress, impacting mental well-being and everyday life. She adds, "Start by assessing your safety net — savings, insurance, or resources like family support—and make peace with the fact that asking for help is not a sign of weakness but a step toward stability."Psychologically, Baruah states that it's vital to maintain a sense of agency. "Financial stress can create a feeling of helplessness, which may lead to avoidance behaviours like ignoring bills or procrastinating on taking action. Break this cycle by creating a clear picture of your finances: list your income, expenses, debts, and assets. This might feel daunting, but knowledge is power — it's the foundation for making deliberate decisions rather than reacting out of fear." Engage in mindful spending, prioritising needs over wants, and reframe budgeting as a tool for control, not deprivation. Spending less isn't just about survival; it's a way to regain control and create breathing space. Baruah adds, "Tap into behavioural insights as well. For instance, set small, achievable financial goals to create momentum, whether paying off one bill or saving a modest amount weekly. Leverage loss aversion by reminding yourself of what you stand to gain by cutting expenses or finding additional income sources." Importantly, avoid 'doom loops' — those repetitive, self-critical thoughts that sap your energy.



Replace them with constructive action: renegotiate debt, take on a side gig, or consult a financial advisor for clarity. These steps, no matter how small, help rebuild confidence. "Finally, keep your long-term vision alive, even amid a crisis," notes Baruah. Think of this period as a reset — not just financially but mentally. Use it to reevaluate your relationship with money, build healthier habits, and commit to future financial resilience, whether through creating an emergency fund, obtaining proper insurance, or diversifying income streams. A financial crisis may be challenging, but with emotional steadiness and thoughtful planning, it can become a transformative chapter rather than a defining one.

Katie's Healthy Bites: Winter Salads

Salads aren't just for summer -- there are plenty of ways to glorify your greens throughout the winter. Salads are a fun, colorful and creative way consume a diverse number of vitamins, minerals and nutrients that are essentials for a healthy you! Create your own savvy salads using this winter salad ingredient key, or take a bite of favorite salads from Food Network chefs.

The Base: Opt for crunchy, hearty winter lettuces and greens like kale, chard, chicory,radichio, endive and frisee, or flavorful greens like peppery arugula.

Something Sweet: 'Tis the season for citrus fruits, like oranges, blood oranges and grapefruits and specialty fruits like pomegranates. Hearty fruits like apples and pears are also great on greens. Craving summer flavors in the winter? Use dried fruits like cherries, apricots, mangos and cranberries to add some out-of-season sweetness. Fruits add antioxidant power to a salad as well as bright, beautiful colors.

Something Crunchy: Nuts are a great way to add texture and heart healthy fats. Try walnuts, almond slices, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, even pistachios and sesame seeds. Choose unsalted varieties to cut back on sodium.

Pantry Veggies: Many summer veggies are out of season, but you can still keep them in your salad-topping rotation if you opt for jarred roasted peppers, sundried tomatoes or pickled veggies. Winter root veggies are a great salad addition as well. Roast beets, sweet potatoes, regular potatoes and hearty squash for a flavorful, nutrient-dense and filling addition to your creation.**Pack on the Protein:** Make your salad a complete meal with a protein-rich topping. Nuts can do double-duty here, or try these other tasty proteins atop your greens: a hard-boiled, poached or fried egg (the drippy yolk is like a natural dressing), pungent cheeses like ricotta salata, shaved Parmesan, gorgonzola or goat cheese (a little goes a long way) or creamy beans like cannellini or bright-green edamame. Shellfish pairs well with citrus, and meats like prosciutto and pancetta crisp up nicely and crumble as a perfectly salty topping to finish your masterpiece.

The rise of the slow living movement

How does the idea of doing nothing for a year sound? No work, no emails, no career progression, no striving or achieving or being productive. For many of us, such a thought might once have brought its own anxiety attack – surely, work is status, earning money is achievement, and being busy is a brag? But these days, a year of nothing is more likely to sound dreamy, even aspirational – there has been, as they say, a vibe shift. Millennials are embracing the concept of #SlowLiving – the hashtag has been used more than six million times on Instagram (despite posting on Insta being fairly antithetical to its principles of a mindful, sustainable lifestyle, with much reduced screen-time). Gen Z, meanwhile, have pioneered quiet quitting and “lazy girl jobs”, where one does the minimum at work to preserve your energy for the more meaningful parts of your life, be that hobbies, relationships, or self-care. And people across the generations are united to wanting to work less: in the UK, the concept of the four-day week is gaining serious traction.To be facetious about it: hustle is out, and rest is in. And this is something Emma Gannon knows all about: the prolific author, podcaster, and Substack entrepreneur published A Year of Nothing – her account of taking an entire 12 months off – earlier this year. It quickly sold out when published earlier this summer, and has proved so popular it will now be reprinted and available to buy in November. Not that it was, initially, a lifestyle choice: Gannon suffered such extremely bad burnout, she had no choice but to stop working. Her account of her year of rest and recuperation is now published in two small, sweetly readable volumes by The Pound Project, charting her journey back to health via gentle activities such as journaling, watching children's TV, birdwatching, and the inevitable cold-water swimming (which Gannon knowingly acknowledges is a cliché for “Millennial writers with their bobs and tote bags”, but comes to love anyway).Having been fully on-board with the girl-boss culture of the 2010s, Gannon had already stepped away from that with her last book, The Success Myth: Letting Go of Having It All, which explored how relentlessly striving for success rarely brings true happiness. But it was experiencing complete burnout that forced her to really confront the importance of rest. "Looking back, there were lots



of red flags – feeling very confused, pulsating headaches, not being able to focus on things in the room, quite scary stuff. But I over-rode it, [thinking]: 'I'm busy, I've got to crack on',' she recalls. Suddenly, in 2022, her body went into a forced shut-down mode. "Couldn't look at a phone, couldn't look at a screen, couldn't walk down a street without feeling fragile. It was the feeling that, 'oh you can't muddle your way through this – you have to stop'. Many people with chronic burnout have to get to that point before they'll take time off [work], because we're so conditioned in this society to push through at all costs. "But we were designed to have naps, and [walks in] the park. To go for a swim, and look at the sky. That stuff's really important," Gannon insists. And she's determined to carry the lessons from her burnout, and her recovery, into a slower, more spacious life. "Nothing is worth your health."But she's far from ploughing a lonely furrow, here – a scan of the self-help or pop philosophy sections of your local bookshop, or indeed a glance at the list of recommended reading at the back of A Year of Nothing, reveals a flourishing crop of books encouraging us to slow the heck down.Jenny Odell's How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy became a sensation in 2019, linking our frazzled brains to how profit-hungry technology and social media use

up our attention and distract us. She advocated re-wiring our awareness to the natural world around us, and to our own interiority.Odell is also part of a wave of writers encouraging active resistance to the relentless “goal-oriented” expectation that, “in a world where our value is determined by our productivity”, every hour and minute of our time should be put to good use – if not at work, then in self-improvement. Resisting the pressure to always be optimising can also be found in Oliver Burkeman's surprisingly comforting 2021 book Four Thousand Weeks – which reminds us that life is brief, and we will never get everything on our to-do list done. Rather than seeking to be ever-more efficient, he argues that we should focus on what really matters (spoiler alert: it's probably not hitting inbox zero), ditch perfectionism and completism, and live more fully in the present. And it seems the idea of doing nothing is catching on: you may have noticed the recent proliferation of titles about niksens, the Dutch term for “doing nothing, intentionally”. Olga Mecking's book Niksen clearly chimed with readers when published in the pandemic, and has been followed by a wealth of others, many in the Little Book of Hygge mould; it seems we love to take easily-digested lifestyle advice from northern European nations. Even the word “rest” itself has become something of a buzz term.

Why eating colourful food is good for you

Most of us are faced with the same choice numerous times a day: what to eat. Along with price, accessibility and preference, we'll often use a food's healthfulness to help us make a decision.But when we zoom out to inspect our overall diets, how do we know we're getting the nutrients we need?It's widely accepted by researchers that we need a varied diet, and that one way to do this is by eating all the colours of the rainbow. But is colour the best guide to getting all the nutrients we need?The proof may be in the Mediterranean diet, which contains a lot of fruit, vegetables and healthy fats such as extra virgin olive oil, and is frequently rated the healthiest diet by scientists.It's no coincidence that the diet is packed with different colours, says Francesco Sofi, associate professor of clinical nutrition at the University of Florence.“Eating a traditional Mediterranean diet means you consume different nutrients and phytonutrients,” he says. Phytonutrients are small chemical compounds produced by plants that help us to digest larger nutrients and also play a role in removing toxins from our bodies.“However, the diet doesn't always contain every colour – it depends on the season, as followers of the diet eat seasonally and locally, and grow their own fruit and vegetables.”Really, he adds, the colours are no different to other vegetable-based diets, such as the vegetarian diet. There are also other reasons the Mediterranean diet is among the healthiest. Mediterranean populations traditionally boil, rather than fry, their vegetables, which preserves nutrients, Sofi says. But the diet's abundance of fruit and vegetables can't be ignored. The health benefits of a diet rich in fruit and vegetables on our brain and heart are among the most consistent findings within nutrition science, says Deanna Minich, functional nutritionist and adjunct faculty at the University of Western States in Portland, Oregon.Eating lots of colours may lower your risk of missing out on all vital nutrients.“If we're missing a colour of the rainbow, we may be missing a function of that food,” says Minich.This is because plant foods contain thousands of natural compounds called phytonutrients, including carotenoids and flavonoids, which have anti-inflammatory benefits. And different coloured plants come with different benefits.Blue and purple foods, including blueberries, have a high content of the plant pigment anthocyanin, which has been linked to lowering the risk of heart disease and type two diabetes. Flavones, which give foods a yellow colour, may reduce the risk of heart disease. "Certain plant pigments travel to certain parts of the body and take residency there," Minich says. "For example, lutein is found in a variety of yellow and green foods, and travels to the macula at the back of the eye, where it may help reduce the risk of macular degeneration." Some studies show flavonoids may improve brain health, by blocking neurotoxicity in the brain, which is associated with Alzheimer's disease.After following the diets of 50,000 people for more than 20 years, Tian-shin Yeh, research fellow in epidemiology at Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, found that those who eat more flavonoid-rich foods, including oranges, peppers, celery and grapefruit, have lower levels of cognitive decline and dementia.While there's currently no cure for dementia and cognitive impairment in later life, Yeh says, eating more flavonoid-rich foods can help to lower the risk.

Explore true Icelandic culture in the country’s less-travelled north

Iceland wasn’t always the blockbuster travel destination it is today; in the early 1990s, the country saw just a little more than 130,000 visitors a year. By 2023, however that number had surged to 2.21 million, far outpacing Iceland’s tiny population of around 380,000. Experts chalk it up to a mix of savvy marketing, social media virality and sheer natural spectacle. The 2014 #MyStopover campaign turned layovers into week-long adventures, flooding Instagram with images of steaming hot springs, glacier lagoons and volcanic black-sand beaches. Soon, Iceland was no longer just a niche destination for intrepid explorers; it was on every traveller’s bucket list. But with soaring popularity came new challenges, pushing the country to grapple with the pressures of overtourism. Most visitors touch down in the capital city of Reykjavik and make a beeline for the Blue Lagoon or the well-trodden Golden Circle. But as Iceland’s tourism boom shows no signs of slowing, the country is looking for ways to ease the strain on its most popular spots. The conversation around overtourism has become impossible to ignore, and one solution is clear: encouraging travellers to venture beyond the usual highlights. The country’s north, with its dramatic fjords and geothermal hotspots, offers a quieter yet equally spectacular alternative to the capital, with idyllic towns like Akureyri and Húsavík providing a gateway to breathtaking landscapes without the crowds. Húsavík is the country’s oldest settlement as well as its whale capital. The small coastal town was once known for its whaling industry, and indeed Iceland is still one of only three countries that allows commercial whaling. However, many former whale hunting boats are now being converted to whale watching vessels in an effort to attract more visitors. “I’ve been told there’s a 97% chance of seeing a whale on any trip you take here,” said BBC Travel Show presenter Roma Wells. “Depending on what time of year you visit, you can see all sorts of different species.” That’s because a variety of whales, including humpbacks, orcas and minke, migrate through this area. In addition, many whale-watching vessels use electric rather than diesel engines, creating a quieter, more relaxing experience for both passengers and sealife. The northern part of the country is also a great place to get a glimpse of Icelandic history and culture. Start in the town of Sauðárkrúkur, around 200km west of Húsavík, visitors can explore 1238: The Battle of Iceland – a museum and virtual-reality experience that allows visitors to be a part of the renowned battle of Örylgstaðir, which is recounted in one of the country’s most famous Icelandic sagas. The exhibition also includes historical items from the 11th Century that provide tangible proof of the country’s Viking past. “Every generation has the responsibility to preserve history and to mediate it in a way that can be understood,” said museum manager Freyja Rut. “I think we’ve come to the next step. We need to use technology to kind of make it more interesting.” Another piece of Iceland’s history is its iconic turf houses. These grass-covered dwellings, inspired by Viking longhouses, blend seamlessly into the landscape like something out of a fairy tale. Built with wood and stone and insulated with thick layers of turf, they stand as a testament to the resilience of Icelanders who found ingenious ways to survive in an unforgiving climate. The north is home to some of the country’s finest examples, including the Glaumbær turf farm, a cluster



of beautifully preserved homes, and the striking Viðmýri Turf Church. Sheep farming and knitting are also central to Icelandic heritage. The region’s hardy, free-roaming sheep – believed to be direct descendants of those brought by Viking settlers – produce the wool used for Iceland’s famous lopapeysa sweaters. Recognised worldwide for their warmth and distinctive circular yoke patterns, these sweaters are a living connection to Iceland’s pastoral traditions that remain a cornerstone of rural life. “Icelandic people only survived here because of the sheep,” quipped Hélène Magnússonis, one of the country’s leading knit designers. Visitors interested in purchasing an authentic lopapeysa sweater should look for a label that says “Hand-knitted in Iceland” – a mark of quality that according to

Magnússonis, often includes the knitter’s name. Operators such as Green EdVentures offer tours where travellers can learn more about Icelandic life and practice their knitting skills with a local lopapeysa expert. Along with the boost in tourism, Iceland has had to wrestle with environmental degradation and unsafe behaviours from visitors, such as taking selfies too close to active volcanic sites. In 2017, the country proposed the Icelandic pledge, which encourages responsible and considerate behaviour in visitors. The hope is that the combination of this pledge and the push to encourage visitors to explore more of the country will help Iceland remain on the top of everyone’s visitor list, without further damage to the local ecosystem or culture.



Could yogurt help protect against colorectal cancer?

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer worldwide, with the World Health Organization (WHO) reporting Trusted Source that it makes up more than 10% of all cancer diagnoses. Lifestyle factors, such as being sedentary, smoking, obesity and excessive alcohol consumption, as well as high intake of processed meats and low intake of fruits and vegetables, can all increase a person’s risk of developing colorectal cancer. Eating a healthy, high-fiber diet, with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, calcium and dairy products is associated with a lower colorectal cancer risk. A study led by researchers from Mass General Brigham — and published in the journal Gut Microbes — has now found that yogurt could also decrease the risk of some types of colorectal cancer. The researchers found that people who ate 2 or more servings of yogurt containing live bacteria each week had a 20% lower risk of developing colorectal tumors that were positive for Bifidobacterium, a strain of bacteria that is common in the gut microbiome. “While this study has shown a correlation between long-term consumption of yogurt and lower rates of proximal colorectal cancer positive for Bifidobacterium, more work is required to understand any causative role of Bifidobacterium and the mechanisms involved if so,” she added. “Live” yogurt contains several strains of bacteria. Lactobacillus bulgaricus and Streptococcus thermophilus are commonly used to ferment milk to form yogurt, but many other bacterial strains, or probiotics, may also be added. Research has suggested that probiotics may boost the immune system, improve gut health, reduce the risk of osteoporosis, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and could even reduce the risk of some cancers Trusted Source. To investigate whether yogurt consumption affects colorectal cancer risk, the researchers in this study used data from the Nurses’ Health Study and the Health Professionals Follow-up Study Trusted



Source, which have followed more than 100,000 female nurses since 1976 and 51,000 male health workers since 1986. Participants in both studies answer frequent lifestyle, diet and health questionnaires, which include questions about intake of both plain and flavoured yogurts, as well as other dairy products. For those people diagnosed with colorectal cancer, researchers assessed tissue samples for Bifidobacterium DNA. Of the cohort, 3,079 people developed colorectal cancer and, of these, the researchers could access Bifidobacterium data for 1,121. A total of 775 people had Bifidobacterium negative colorectal cancer, and 346 were Bifidobacterium positive. Although researchers did not see a significant difference between long-term yogurt intake and overall incidence of colorectal cancer, they found a 20% lower rate of incidence of Bifidobacterium-positive tumors in those who ate more yogurt. Kelsey Costa, MS, RDN, a registered dietitian nutritionist and owner of Impactful Nutrition, not involved in this study,

explained for MNT how Bifidobacterium might affect colorectal cancer risk. “This study does not suggest that yogurt reduces Bifidobacterium in the gut; just the opposite. In fact, it highlights that Bifidobacterium is an important bacterial strain in yogurt that produces short-chain fatty acids (SCFA) in the gut and has anti-cancer properties through antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and immune-boosting effects,” she

pointed out. According to her: “The research suggests that the Bifidobacterium found in Bifidobacterium-positive tumor tissue could reflect impaired intestinal barrier function. And cited studies show that Bifidobacterium may improve the intestinal barrier by reducing harmful inflammatory proteins like tumor necrosis factor and interleukin 6.” “Yogurt may help strengthen the gut barrier and support Bifidobacterium’s beneficial role in suppressing Bifidobacterium-positive tumor growth, rather than suppressing Bifidobacterium itself,” she added. “There are different subtypes of Bifidobacterium in the human gut and different strains have different functions, including the metabolism of dietary carbohydrates, for example. This study did not explore whether there is a causative role for the microbiome, or Bifidobacterium, or any potential mechanisms involved,” she told MNT. While live, natural yogurts are a good addition to a balanced diet, not all yogurt is good for you. Flavoured and fruit yogurts often contain high quantities of added sugar, and other added ingredients that are not healthful. However, natural, live yogurts contain plenty of nutrients, including calcium, phosphorus, potassium, vitamin A, vitamin B2, and vitamin B12, protein and essential fatty acids. They are also a good source of probiotics — live microorganisms which, when consumed in adequate amounts as part of food, confer a health benefit on the host.



New test may predict which IBD patients have higher colorectal cancer risk

Previous research shows that people with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) — including ulcerative colitis and Crohn’s disease — are at an increased risk of developing colorectal cancer compared to people who do not have IBD. People with IBD are at a higher risk of developing colorectal cancer, also known as bowel cancer, due to the chronic inflammation associated with IBD, which can cause the growth of abnormal cells — known as dysplasia — and cause the development of precancerous polyps in the intestinal tract. Currently, people with IBD are screened for colorectal cancer every one to three years Trusted Source through a colonoscopy. However, past studies show that detecting pre-cancerous cells in people with IBD can be difficult. Now, researchers from The Institute of Cancer Research in London have developed a new test that they report can predict bowel cancer risk in people with IBD with more than 90% accuracy. According to Trevor Graham, PhD, professor of genomics and evolution and director of the Centre for Evolution and Cancer at The Institute of Cancer Research in London and senior author of the study, although people with IBD have an increased risk of developing bowel cancer, there is no good way to predict that risk at the moment. “For people who are thought to be imminently at risk of developing cancer, the only effective treatment is surgery to remove some or all of the large bowel,” Trusted Source, Graham explained to Medical News Today. “This surgery can be lifesaving. But because we cannot, currently, be sure if someone really does need the surgery, people are having unnecessary surgery which has life changing consequences.” “On the other hand, for people whose risk of bowel cancer we think is low and for whom we don’t operate, these people continue to have anxiety about the uncertainty of their cancer risk,” he added. During the study, researchers found that people with IBD who had pre-cancerous cells that lost or gained multiple copies of DNA had an increased risk of developing bowel cancer. From there, the scientists created an algorithm to calculate future colorectal cancer risk by using the exact pattern of the changed DNA in the pre-cancerous cells. “In the UK, people with IBD have regular colonoscopies — a camera pushed up their bottom — to look for early signs of cancer,” Graham explained. “If something unusual is spotted, a biopsy — small tissue sample — is collected.” “Our test is a genetic test that we perform on the biopsy. We compared the genetic signals from people who did go on to develop cancer to those who did not, and we have created a test to predict someone’s risk based on the genetic signals in their biopsy,” he said. During the study, Graham and his team found that their new test was able to predict which study participants with IBD who developed pre-cancerous cells would go on to develop colorectal cancer within five years with more than 90% accuracy. “We hope that the accuracy with which we can predict who really is at risk of cancer will mean that we can give treatment appropriately,” Graham said. “For those at high risk of developing cancer, they can have surgery to remove their bowel and their risk of cancer. For those at low risk, we can spare them unnecessary worry and unnecessary treatment. For patients to be able to benefit from this, we need to show that our predictions hold true in clinical trials that we hope to run in the future,” he explained. MNT also spoke with Rudolph Bedford, MD, a board certified gastroenterologist at Providence Saint John’s Health Center in Santa Monica, CA, about this study, who praised the study as “wonderful, great, and amazing.” “The fact of the matter is that our patients who have IBD, we’re doing frequent colonoscopies, biopsies looking for dysplasia or cells or tissue that can lead to cancer. Then we have to have these discussions with them. If they do have these low-grade dysplastic cells, do we take out your colon, or do we do more frequent surveillance? What do we do?” Bedford explained. “If somebody is going to give me a test that has a 90% accuracy as to those patients with inflammatory bowel disease that might develop cancer, then that’s a wonderful study,” he continued.

Siobhan Haughey Notches Impressive Victory in 200 Freestyle at Chinese National Games

New Delhi: Forced out of last summer’s World Championships in Singapore due to a back injury, Hong Kong’s Siobhan Haughey put her talent on display during the fourth night of finals at the Chinese National Games. Racing the 200-meter freestyle, the four-time Olympic medalist turned in a time of 1:54.85 to claim victory over Li Bingjie, who finished in second place with a mark of 1:55.67. Placing third was Liu Yaxin in 1:56.01. Although she was unable to participate in the sport’s most recent global showcase, Haughey has used the Chinese National Games as a launching point toward the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. By dipping under 1:55, she became the fifth athlete this year to crack the barrier. For her career, Haughey owns a two silver medals and a pair of bronze medals from her Olympic appearances. Just before



Haughey earned her win in the 200 freestyle, 18-year-old Zhang Zhan-shuo continued his superb meet. Following up on victories in the 200 freestyle and 400 freestyle, Zhang took top honors in the 800 freestyle, where he was timed in 7:46.69. That effort handed him a dominant margin over runnerup Fei Liwei, who

touched the wall in 7:51.43. The men’s 50 breaststroke witnessed an upset as Zheng Yinghao was the winner in 26.97, edging the 27.04 of Yan Zibei. Qin Haiyang was originally third in the event, but was disqualified. Prior to the DQ, Qin posted a time of 27.19, well off the 26.75 he managed during the

semifinals. Meanwhile, in the final of the men’s 200 butterfly, Xu Fang registered a convincing triumph as his mark of 1:54.74 was more than a second clear of the 1:56.06 of Wang Xizhe. In semifinal competition, 13-year-old Yu Zidi cruised to a 2:07.95 performance in the 200 butterfly, good for the top seed. She was followed by veteran Zhang Yufei in 2:08.34. Yu set an Asian record of 2:07.41 in the 200 individual medley earlier in the meet. In the men’s 100 freestyle, world-record holder and Olympic champion Pan Zhanle clocked the fastest time into the final, going 48.13. Wang Shun, the 2020 Olympic champ in the 200 individual medley, was fastest in the semifinals of his prime event, going 2:00.10, and Wan Letian was tops in the semifinals of the women’s 50 backstroke, thanks to a swim of 27.64.

Devon Conway confirms CSK exit ahead of IPL 2026 retentions

Mumbai: Devon Conway has confirmed his release from the Chennai Super Kings ahead of the IPL 2026 retention, marking the end of his three-season tenure with the team. The decision follows Chennai Super Kings’ disappointing performance in the IPL 2025 season, prompting the franchise to make significant changes to their squad for the next edition. Conway made his debut for CSK in 2022 and quickly established himself as a key player, but his recent form in 2025 did not meet expectations. After a standout 2023 IPL season, where Conway scored 672 runs in 15 innings at an average of 51.69, his performance in IPL 2025 saw a sharp decline. Returning to the squad after missing the 2024 season, he managed only 156 runs in six innings with an average of 26 and a strike rate of 131.09. Despite being bought for Rs 6.25 crore in the mega auction, his output

was not on par with previous years, leading to the franchise’s decision to move on from the New Zealand opener. Conway’s departure is part of a broader restructuring effort by CSK. The team is reportedly releasing several other players, including Rahul Tripathi, Deepak Hooda, Rachin Ravindra, Vijay Shankar, and Jamie Overton. They are also part of a major trade that will see Ravindra Jadeja and Sam Curran hhe scored 252 runs in seven innings with an average of 42 and strike rate of 145.66. His standout campaign came in 2023, finishing as the third-highest run-scorer in the league. Conway played a key role in CSK’s 2023 final win against GT as the southpaw scored 47 off 25 balls. During his three-year stint with CSK, Conway played 29 matches and scored 1080 runs at an average of 43.20 and a strike-rate of 139.72.



Ankita, Dhiraj win gold in recurve events Archery Championship

Mumbai: Ankita Bhakat capped a sensational day, stunning Paris Olympics silver medalist Nam Suhyeon of South Korea 7-3 while Dhiraj Bommadevara also won his final as India clinched gold medals in both men’s and women’s event at the Asian Archery Championship here on Friday. Dhiraj defeated compatriot Rahul 6-2 in the final to make it a 1-2 for India. Ankita had earlier knocked out her longtime senior teammate, former world No.1 Deepika, in the semifinals. Locked at 5-5, both archers shot a nine in the shoot-off, but Ankita’s arrow was closer to the centre, sending her into the title clash. Ankita began the final in commanding fashion, firing two 10s to take the opening set 29-27. The second set ended in a scrappy 27-27 draw as both archers faltered. Ankita slipped to an 8 while Nam dropped to a 7. Nam levelled the match by claiming the third set 28-26, with Ankita unable to find a single 10. But the Indian hit back brilliantly in the fourth, nailing two 10s in a superb 29-28 effort to lead 5-3. Showing steely composure in the decider, Ankita once again delivered two 10s to clinch the gold, completing a breakthrough triumph against one



of Asia’s most consistent performers. India also secured the women’s recurve bronze after Sangeeta edged out veteran five-time Olympian Deepika Kumari 6-5 in a dramatic shoot-off. Indian contingent ended its campaign with 10 medals --- six gold, three silver and one bronze medal to top the standings. In the men’s final, having lost the first set, Dhiraj was near flawless to knock out 33 year-old veteran Jang Chaehwan 6-2 to enter the final. The Indian lost the first set by one point, but came back strongly with three 10s and take the second set and bring it 2-2 level. He continued his menacing form with two successive 10s and one 9 to take the third set 29-27 and make it 4-2. He drilled in another hat-trick of 10s to seal the win.

England remains flawless while France advances to the FIFA 2026 World Cup

Mumbai: France became the second European nation to book their place at the 2026 World Cup finals thanks to a resounding victory over Ukraine. Kylian Mbappe scored twice as France eased into the 2026 FIFA World Cup finals with a 4-0 success against Ukraine in the European qualifiers. Ukraine defended resolutely in the first half, but Kylian Mbappé eased French nerves in the 55th minute, nonchalantly chipping a penalty straight down the middle to break the deadlock. With the visitors unable to muster much attacking response, Michael Olise spun and finished inside the box to make it 2-0, and Mbappé scrambled in a third before cueing up Hugo Ekitiké for his first ever France goal. Victory sends Didier Deschamps’ side to the World Cup finals as Group D winners, while Ukraine and Iceland’s Sunday meeting will settle the runners-up slot. England continued their perfect record in World Cup qualifying with a 2-0 win over Serbia at Wembley. Bukayo Saka volleyed home just before the half hour mark to put the Three Lions ahead before Eberechi Eze secured all three points with a curled finish late on. England had already sealed qualification with a 5-0 victory in the reverse fixture in Belgrade in September, but Thomas Tuchel’s men produced a professional performance to make it seven wins from seven in Group K without conceding



a goal. Just before the half-hour mark, Bukayo Saka pounced with an eye-catching volley after debutant Nico O’Reilly’s shot deflected into the winger’s path. England dominated proceedings in their search for a second goal, and the pressure finally told late on when substitute Eberechi Eze swept home effortlessly after a pass from fellow replacement Phil Foden. The visitors’ best opportunities to draw level came via a pair of Dušan Vlahović chances, but this loss, coupled with Albania’s victory away to

Andorra, ensured the Orlovi could no longer finish second in the section. Alexander Sørloth and Erling Haaland both scored twice in a dazzling 12-minute spell as Norway beat Estonia 4-1 in Group I to move to the brink of automatic qualification. Haaland’s double took him to 14 goals in seven qualifiers, extending his lead at the top of the individual scoring charts. Italy remain three points behind Norway, who they host on Matchday 10, after beating Moldova with late headers from Gianluca Mancini and Pio Esposito.

South Africa win toss; opt to bat in first Test, India pick four spinners including Axar Patel

Mumbai: South Africa skipper Temba Bavuma won the toss and elected to bat against India in the opening Test at the Edens Garden here on Friday. “I think the only toss that I’m going to win is hopefully in the WTC finals. Yeah. Looks like a good surface. Hopefully, we’ll get some movement early, hopefully we’re able to extract that. This Test bunch is very hungry and is always determined to perform every time we come out,” said Shubman Gill after losing yet another toss. “These two test matches for us are very crucial and we’re as hungry as ever. It’s going to be a good surface for the first day or a couple of days. And then, hopefully, we’ll get some turn as the game goes on. Rishabh comes back in place of Reddy since we last played. And Axar is also back in the side,” Gill added. A fit-again Rishabh Pant, who had suffered an injury in England in July, replaced all-rounder Nitish Kumar Red-



dy, while Axar Patel was back in side in place of Sai Sudharsan in the playing XI as India opted to go with four spinners. For South Africa, premier pacer Kagiso Rabada missed out due to a rib injury with Corbin Bosch replacing him. Temba Bavuma has

spoken after winning the toss and says that aim is to carry momentum from the Pakistan series. “We need to just carry the momentum we have from Pakistan. I was with the A team here in India, just getting my loads up. We have done as much as we could with

the preparation.” “It is exciting to play here. Looking forward to everything. My Test since the WTC final. Yeah, but first. Looks like it’s on the drier side. Typical Indian wicket. Runs on the board is key,” Bavuma said.

Kylian Mbappe ruled out of World Cup qualifier due to injury

New Delhi: France captain Kylian Mbappe will miss Les Bleus’ World Cup qualifier against Azerbaijan this weekend with an ankle injury, the French Football Federation (FFF) announced on Friday. Real Madrid attacker Mbappe, 26, scored twice in Thursday’s 4-0 win over Ukraine, which secured France’s place in next year’s World Cup, but will be sidelined for Sunday’s Group D game in Baku. France captain Kylian Mbappe will miss Les Bleus’ World Cup qualifier against Azerbaijan this weekend with an ankle injury, the French Football Federation (FFF) announced on Friday. Real Madrid attacker Mbappe, 26, scored twice in Thursday’s 4-0 win over Ukraine which secured his country’s place in next year’s tournament but will be sidelined for Sunday’s Group D game in Baku. “Kylian Mbappe has felt an inflammation in his right ankle that requires tests,” the FFF said. “He will undergo them today in Madrid,” it added. France coach Didier Deschamps will also be without Eduardo Camavinga due to injury and the suspended Manu Kone for their final game in the campaign. France striker Kylian Mbappe will not travel with the national squad to Azerbaijan after the two-time champions secured their place at next year’s World Cup, the French Football Federation confirmed on Friday. The Real Madrid forward is experienc-



ing inflammation in his right ankle and will require medical tests in the Spanish capital later today. Mbappe had scored his 399th and 400th senior career goals during France’s 4-0 victory against Ukraine in Paris on Thursday, booking their spot in the tournament. Michael Olise and Hugo Ekitike also got on the scoresheet as France produced a dominant second half performance after failing to find a breakthrough in the opening 45 minutes. Mbappe will hope he has avoided a serious injury ahead of a busy period for his club side.

Be honest with Mohammed Shami: Pujara tells BCCI to give selection clarity to pacer

Mumbai: Cheteshwar Pujara urged the selection committee to be honest with Mohammed Shami as he continues to be ostracised from the Test team. Shami last played for India in a Test match during the World Test Championship final at the Oval in 2023 and wasn’t part of the team for the England tour this year. The BCCI chief selector Ajit Agarkar, said that the pacer’s fitness and game time weren’t enough to consider him for a place in the side and asked him to play domestic cricket. Shami has since picked up 15 wickets so far in the ongoing Ranji Trophy season, but wasn’t considered for the South Africa series. Speaking during an interaction with the media ahead of the first Test in Kolkata,

Pujara said that the team management and the selectors need to have a clear communication with the pacers about the plan moving forward. “Someone like Mohammed Shami should be having – I mean, the selectors and the team management should have a very honest conversation with him. What’s the plan going forward? Whether they want to pick him or whether they are looking at the young players,” said Pujara. Pujara said that if BCCI had decided to move on from Shami and look at youngsters, then the pacer should be conveyed the message so that he can move forward and assess his options. “If he is being informed that they are not looking at him, then it is always

Shami’s personal call whether he wants to carry on playing first-class cricket, whether he still wants to – I mean, he is part of the IPL as well. So, he would want to carry on playing cricket.” The communication from the team management has to be very, very clear and it should be very honest conversation and Shami should be part of it,” said Pujara. Ahead of the first Test, India captain Shubman Gill said that while Shami’s quality is still there, they can’t ignore the performances of the current crop of bowlers, who did well during the England tour. So far, Shami has played 64 Tests and has picked up 229 wickets at an average of 27.71.