

In Brief

GAFF 2026 Film Lineup Announced

Guwahati: The Guwahati Asian Film Festival (GAFF) is set to return for its second edition from January 22 to 25, 2026, at Jyoti Chitran, following the success of its inaugural event in February 2025. Organized by Trending Now Media with support from the National Film Development Corporation and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the festival will feature the opening film “Sunday” from Uzbekistan and the closing film “In the Land of Brothers” from Iran. Esteemed filmmaker Girish Kasaravalli will serve as Chief Guest, and actress Sonali Kulkarni will attend the closing ceremony. GAFF aims to celebrate Asian cinema, with participation from 10 countries and screenings of 26 films in various Indian languages. The festival will also host masterclasses, panel discussions, and interactive sessions focusing on cinematic techniques and storytelling, reinforcing its role as a vital cultural platform for filmmakers and audiences in the region.

Congress Pushes ‘Raijor Padulit Raijor Congress’ Campaign

Guwahati: The Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) is actively campaigning for a people-centric manifesto for the 2026 Assam Assembly elections, led by President Gaurav Gogoi. The campaign, named ‘Raijor Padulit Raijor Congress’, includes meetings with various organizations, grassroots outreach, and public feedback collection across districts. Chairman of the Congress Election Manifesto Committee, MP Pradyut Bordoloi, emphasized that the manifesto will be based entirely on public opinion rather than created in isolation, with extensive interactions held across more than 1,000 organizations. The campaign’s concluding phase will take place in Guwahati on January 10 and 11, with additional outreach activities having occurred in Nagaon district.

Female tiger found dead in Kaziranga National Park

Guwahati: A female tiger was found dead in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, Assam, on January 4. Discovered during a routine patrol in the Paschim Bimoli area, officials report that the carcass belonged to a tigress estimated to be eight to ten years old. A comprehensive examination by an official committee, adhering to National Tiger Conservation Authority standards, commenced following its discovery. Preliminary assessments indicate the tigress likely died from an encounter with another tiger, a common occurrence in the wild. A post-mortem was conducted with senior forest officials and veterinarians present, with further tests pending to determine the exact cause of death. In an unrelated incident, the Biswanath Wildlife Division’s forest teams recovered the bones of a Royal Bengal Tiger, leading to the arrest of five individuals for possessing illegal wildlife parts while attempting to sell them. Identified suspects include Eilaram Doley, Ripun Pegu, Kerani Kaman, Pulish Kutum, and Depen Pegu, with investigations also revealing connections to prior rhino poaching activities.

AGP leaders demand party candidate for newly formed Boko–Chaygaon seat



on Assembly seats. He said that the same system should continue even after the reorganisation of constituencies.

Medhi appealed to the central leadership of the alliance to officially allot the Boko–Chaygaon seat to AGP,

saying that party workers had already begun preparations on the ground. He also confirmed that AGP lead-

ers Naren Rabha and Deben Boro had expressed interest in contesting from the new seat and had started preliminary campaign activities. The press meet was also attended by former Boko MLA Jyoti Prasad Das, who extended his support to the demand and interacted with party workers present at the meeting. According to party sources, the newly formed Boko–Chaygaon constituency includes 22 village panchayats and has a total voter strength of around 2,15,240 electors. As informed by Medhi, nearly 70,000 voters from the previous Chaygaon seat and about 1,45,000 voters from the former Boko

constituency are now part of the new constituency. The voter profile shows a diverse population. Around 93,167 voters belong to Scheduled Tribe communities, while 24,057 voters are from Scheduled Caste backgrounds. The constituency also includes approximately 25,931 Muslim voters, 22,076 Bengali Hindu voters, and around 50,009 voters from other communities. AGP leaders said that the party has a strong organisational base in the area and expressed confidence that the alliance would consider their long-standing presence and historical representation while finalising the candidate.

GAFF 2026 Film Lineup Announced; Festival to Be Held in Guwahati from January 22 to 25

Guwahati, Jan 05: The organisers of the Guwahati Asian Film Festival (GAFF) on Monday announced the official film lineup for the second edition of the festival at a press conference in Guwahati. Following the success of its inaugural edition, GAFF 2026 will be held from January 22 to January 25 at Jyoti Chitran in Guwahati.

The festival is being organised by Trending Now Media with support from the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. The opening film of GAFF 2026 will be the Uzbek feature Sunday, directed by Shokir Kholikov, while the closing film will be the Iranian feature In the Land of Brothers, directed by Alireza Ghasemi and Raha Amirfazli. Renowned Indian filmmaker Girish Kasaravalli will attend the festival as Chief Guest, and noted Bollywood and Marathi film actress Sonali Kulkarni will be the Special Invited Guest at the closing ceremony.

GAFF aims to celebrate the diversity of Asian cinema and has emerged as an important cultural platform that brings together filmmakers, critics, scholars, and audiences from across the region. The festival promotes cross-cultural dialogue through curated film



screenings and interactive engagements.

The first edition of GAFF, held in February 2025, received an encouraging response with participation from several Asian countries. The festival featured a wide range of films along with panel discussions and interactions with filmmakers and critics.

Speaking at the announcement, GAFF Honorary Festival Director Monita Borgohain said that the response to the inaugural edition motivated the organisers to scale up the festival. She said GAFF 2026 would feature a broader and more diverse selection

of films, with increased participation from outside India. According to her, over 200 films were submitted for this edition, including 90 entries from overseas.

The second edition of GAFF will showcase films from 10 Asian countries, including Vietnam, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Myanmar, Iran, Kazakhstan, and China. In addition, films from various parts of India will be screened in multiple languages such as Marathi, Bajjika, Malayalam, Hindi, Tulu, Nepali, Assamese, Karbi, Bodo, Mishing, Manipuri, and Bengali.

A total of 26 films will be screened during the four-day festival, including eight films in the competition category. The event will also feature masterclasses, panel discussions, and interactive sessions conducted by filmmakers, critics, and industry professionals, focusing on cinematic craft, storytelling, and contemporary trends in Asian cinema. Positioned as the only Asian film festival of its kind in the region, GAFF continues to strengthen its presence in Northeast India by providing a dedicated platform for Asian cinema and fostering cultural exchange through film.

Congress Pushes ‘Raijor Padulit Raijor Congress’ Campaign



Guwahati, Jan 05: The Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) has intensified its statewide campaign, ‘Raijor Padulit Raijor Congress’, aimed at drafting a people-centric manifesto for the 2026 Assam Assembly elections under the leadership of APCC President Gaurav Gogoi. As part of the campaign, Gogoi on Monday met representatives of various organisations and political groups in Charaideo district. He later held organisational meetings with party leaders and workers to strengthen grassroots outreach. Simultaneously, Congress MP Rakibul Hussain gathered public feedback in Bongaigaon district in the presence of MLA Abdul Batin Khandakar and senior leader Ashok Sharma. Another Congress team, led by former APCC president Bhupen Bora, is scheduled to visit Baksa district on Tuesday. Addressing a press conference, Chairman of the Congress Election Mani-

festo Committee and MP Pradyut Bordoloi said the party’s manifesto would be drafted entirely based on public opinion collected from across Assam. He stated that Congress teams are visiting every district to directly interact with citizens rather than preparing the document behind closed doors. Bordoloi said the campaign has received an overwhelming response, with interactions held with representatives of over 1,000 organisations statewide. “We are not preparing a manifesto from drawing rooms or party offices. We are listening to people on the ground and incorporating their voices,” he said. The concluding phase of the campaign will be held in Guwahati on January 10 and 11. Similar outreach activities were also conducted in Nagaon district by a team led by former MP Ripun Bora, which included MLA Nurul Huda and other senior Congress leaders.

Himanta Biswa Sarma: BJP District Presidents should not demand tickets

Guwahati, Jan 05: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma today said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Assam has reached a stage where many constituencies now have only one serious party aspirant for election tickets. He said this is happening because the party has focused on development over the last ten years, and this has strengthened the organisation across the state. Speaking to the media, the Chief Minister said that he does not agree with reports that the BJP is overcrowded with ticket seekers. He said that the party does not face heavy competition in most seats. According to Himanta Biswa Sarma, in nearly half of the constituencies in Assam, there is only one main candidate who is considered for the party ticket. He said that although people believe there are many leaders competing for tickets, the situation on the ground is quite different. In some constituencies, he said, there may be two aspirants, but both are comfortable with whoever gets selected in the end. He also said that the media often highlights stories about multiple BJP leaders seeking tickets, but such



cases are limited to only about 10 to 12 constituencies. In most other seats, he said, the situation is stable and peaceful within the party. The Chief Minister further stated that BJP district presidents have been clearly told that they should not seek party tickets while holding the post. He said the party wants district presidents to work across all constituencies in their districts, instead of concentrating only on one seat for their own political future. He said that when a person becomes a district president, they are informed

that they should not expect an election ticket for themselves. This, he said, helps them remain neutral and active across the district, instead of focusing on one particular constituency. Himanta Biswa Sarma added that most BJP district presidents have accepted this guideline and do not demand party tickets. He said many of them also do not have such personal political ambitions at present. Only in rare cases, he said, there may be exceptions where a district president wishes to contest. The Chief Minister said that this system has helped the BJP maintain a

stronger structure at the grassroots level. According to him, party functionaries now work more for organisational development rather than for individual ticket aspirations. He also suggested that this disciplined approach is one of the key reasons behind the BJP’s growing strength in Assam over the past decade. The Chief Minister said he would personally be happy if district presidents continued to avoid seeking tickets or filing nominations in future elections as well, as this keeps the party machinery more focused and organised.

Mega project taking shape to transform Tripura into major tourism hub

Agartala, Jan 05: A Rs 106-crore tourism project is taking shape over 35 acres of land at Sachindranagar in Jirania with a vision to transform Tripura into a major tourism hub. Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha along with Tourism Minister Sushanta Chowdhury on Monday laid the foundation stone for the Tripura Heritage Village and Sangeet Experience under Swadesh Darshan 2.0 along with an Amusement Park funded by SIDBI, under the Tourism Department. The amusement park will be developed on the model of Kolkata’s Nicco Park, with a strong focus on eco-tourism. This project will be developed over 35 acres of land, including 12 acres of khas land, while the remaining 23 acres have been acquired from local landowners. The project is scheduled to be completed within one and a half years, and SIDBI has already contributed Rs 50 crore. Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Saha said the tourism sector requires less investment but offers higher returns and Tripura’s natural beauty provides vast scope for eco-tourism. He recalled that during a national

A Rs 106-crore tourism project is being established on 35 acres in Sachindranagar, Jirania, aimed at positioning Tripura as a prominent tourism destination.

clav of Chief Ministers, the Prime Minister had urged Chief Ministers of all states to develop unique tourism destinations which the entire world should recognise as a unique attraction of that region. ‘This project is now being implemented in line with this vision,’ Saha said. He also stated that this project will establish the destination as a tribal ethnic hub, which highlights the cultural heritage of the state.

He further informed that efforts are underway to set up a Tourist Police Cell. Speaking on the occasion, Tourism Minister Sushanta Chowdhury said that according to data released by the Tourism Department of India, Tripura has recorded over seven lakh tourist footfall last year. “Tripura now stands second among Northeastern states in foreign tourist arrivals, after Sikkim. Therefore, restoring and renovating old tourist destinations, along with the creation of new projects, is crucial for strengthening the tourism sector,” Chowdhury said.

Nagaland’s Tungjoy village celebrates



Dimapur, Jan 05: Tungjoy (Veymai) village celebrated its Glory Day under the motto “Avei-Atro (Glory)” with a two-day programme held at Tungjoy Local Ground, Senapati, Manipur. The inaugural session on Sunday was graced by Timikha Koza, president of Tenyimi People’s Organization (TPO), as chief guest, and Veziihii Keyho, president of Chakhesang Public Organization (CPO), as guest of honour.

In his address, Koza highlighted the cultural unity of the ten Tenyimi tribes, cautioning against divisive forces that threaten their solidarity. He urged the people to preserve forests and water resources, noting the ecological importance of the Barak River and lamenting the decline of hornbills due to deforestation. Calling for tree plantation and conservation, he exhorted the gathering to uphold unity, forgiveness and peaceful coexistence.

Guest of honour, Veziihii Keyho lauded the villagers for preserving their rich cultural heritage through such celebrations. He said Glory Day was an occasion to glorify God and remember His blessings, while also strengthening faith, identity and unity. He recalled the tradition of elders blessing villagers before sowing seeds, stressing their role as pillars for future generations. Keyho also commended the settlement of past land disputes and urged amicable resolution of differences.

He praised the Friendship Treaty between Tungjoy and three Nagaland villages—Leshemi, Lashumi and Zapami—and encouraged youth to pursue education without forgetting their roots, while elders were urged to lead by righteous example.

Earlier, in his welcome address, chairman of the event Th. Daniel informed that Tungjoy Glory Day (Veymai Teithe) is celebrated annually on January 4 and 5. He said the celebration was a reaffirmation of values of equality, justice, virtue, honesty and simplicity for harmonious living. The day also marked gratitude to the Supreme Deities through dance, song and storytelling, while heralding the end of Thouni (New Year) festival and the onset of spring, reminding farmers to return to the fields.

The programme featured cultural presentations including cotton spinning, traditional Yohoing and work chants. The second day was scheduled to witness competitions in folk songs, war cries and jaw harp performances.

NFR sets new benchmark in railway workshop modernisation in Assam’s New Bongaigaon

Guwahati, Jan 05: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has set new benchmarks in railway workshop modernisation with the upgradation of its New Bongaigaon workshop in western Assam, railway officials said on Sunday.NFR’s Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Kapinjal Kishore Sharma said that the railway zone achieved notable infrastructure and operational milestones at the New Bongaigaon workshop during December 2025.He said that the New Bongaigaon workshop reaffirmed its continued focus on modernisation, operational efficiency and excellence in rolling stock maintenance in alignment with Indian Railways’ wider reform and upgradation initiatives.Further adding to this achievement, the C&W Workshop, New Bongaigaon was conferred Ministry of Railway, Rajbhasha Shield along with a cash award of Rs 14,000 by the Railway Board for outstanding implementation of Rajbhasha during 2024, bringing pride to NFR.Sharma said that during the month of December (2025), New Bongaigaon Workshop also developed an indigenous test bench for assembled DEMU DPC bogies, enabling pre-installation testing of traction



motors and early detection of defects.The system includes mandatory one hour run tests, real time monitoring of vibration and bearing temperatures and precise backlash measurement using high-accuracy dial gaug-

es, significantly saving time and manpower, he stated.Mid-Life Rehabilitation (MLR) of LHB coaches has been successfully initiated at New Bongaigaon Workshop following the allotment of a Rolling Stock Programme for

25 coaches.According to the CPRO, through effective planning and optimal utilisation of available resources, interim arrangements were created by utilising the old Coach Lifting Shop (CLS) after relocating ICF Periodic Overhauling (POH) activities to the new Light Coach Repair Shop (LCRS). These proactive measures have enabled the smooth commencement of MLR activities, while a proposal for a dedicated MLR shed is being progressed to strengthen longterm maintenance infrastructure.The official said that the NFR has successfully relocated all POH activities of DEMU rakes from the old Wagon Paint Shop to a newly commissioned DEMU shed at New Bongaigaon Workshop. Planned under the 2021-22 infrastructure development initiatives, the modern covered facility has enhanced operational efficiency, streamlined workflow and improved safety and productivity, strengthening rolling stock maintenance capabilities.These achievements underscore Northeast Frontier Railway’s continued emphasis on infrastructure, innovation and operational efficiency, reinforcing safe and reliable railway operations, the NFR CPRO stated.

In Tripura, security personnel demolish ganja plantations worth Rs 108 crore

Agartala, Jan 05: Security forces in Tripura, in two separate operations, have destroyed over 23 lakh ganja (marijuana) plants worth around Rs 108 crore in Tripura’s Sepahijala district, officials said on Sunday.A police official said that personnel of the Tripura Police, Tripura State Rifles (TSR), Border Security Force (BSF), Forest Department and Excise Department, in two separate operations, destroyed more than 23 lakh ganja plants spread over 414 acres of mountainous land in Sepahijala district.“In the ongoing anti-narcotics drive, the illicit ganja plants were destroyed in the Anandapur and Ghatigarh forest areas of Sepahijala district over the past three days,” the official said.He said that during the same period, several lakh illicit ganja plants were also destroyed in other districts, including South Tripura and Khowai.On December 27, TSR personnel, under the Unakoti district, conducted a special operation in the Kuli Basti forest area near Machmara Tea Garden and destroyed around 15,000 to 17,000 mature ganja plants spread across eight plots of land. The anti-narcotics operations were led by the District Superintendent of Police or the Additional District Superintendent of Police.Several people involved in illegal cultivation were arrested under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985.The police official said that dry ganja produced in Tripura is not consumed lo-



cally and is smuggled to various states, including Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, where it fetches a higher price.During transportation, consignments of dry ganja are often seized from trucks and passenger trains. Residents, including women, claimed that they cultivate ganja in hilly and inaccessible areas as part of their livelihood.The police official said it was found on many occasions that forest land and other govern-

ment land had been encroached upon and illegally used for cannabis cultivation.He added that the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, makes it illegal for any person to cultivate, possess, sell, buy or consume narcotic and psychotropic substances.Violation of these provisions can attract heavy fines and imprisonment of up to 20 years, the official said.

The chief minister of Tripura encourages voters to support the BJP in TTAADC

Agartala, Jan 05: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Sunday urged voters to support the BJP in the upcoming elections to the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) for peace and development.The 30-member tribal council, currently ruled by the Tipra Motha Party (TMP), is scheduled to go to the polls in March.Addressing a BJP programme at Bar-mura in Khowai district, Saha said development and peace had gained momentum in the state after the BJP came to power.“Tripura has secured the second position in GSDP and per capita income among the north-eastern states, while NITI Aayog has declared it a front-runner state. If you want peace and development to continue, vote for the BJP in the TTAADC elections,” he said. Accusing the communists for engineering ethnic riots in 1980, he said around 3,000 tribal and non -tribal people had become victims of the ethnic flare-up.“They had created outlawed groups such as National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) to carry out bloodshed (during late 90’s) but the BJP has managed to bring them back to the national mainstream by signing peace agreements”, he said. Accusing the communists for engineering ethnic riots in 1980, he said around 3,000 tribal and non -tribal people had become victims of the ethnic flare-up.“They had created outlawed groups such as National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) to carry out bloodshed (during late 90’s) but the BJP has managed to bring them back to the national mainstream by signing peace agreements”, he said.Without naming Tipra Motha Party (TMP), the chief minister lashed out at its ally for attempting to issue diktat to



the BJP on certain issues. “I have already stated in the Assembly that the government favours maintaining the status quo on the Kokborok script, meaning students can write in both Bengali and Roman scripts. I have found that only a few students at class 10 and 12 levels opt for the Roman script,” he said.Recently, TMP supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarama strongly advocated that Roman script should be introduced for Kokborok language respecting the sentiment of indigenous people. PTI PS MNB“Those who are now vocal about thanas (unity) were forced to remain mute spectators during the communist regime. We want the alliance to continue, but the behaviour should be that of a younger brother, not a big brother,” he said.The CM said, “The BJP will never allow a force whom it has created to meddle in our domain. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah too will not allow”.

Saha said the government would

welcome any indigenous script for the mother tongue of most tribal communities.Without naming Tipra Motha Party (TMP), the chief minister lashed out at its ally for attempting to issue diktat to the BJP on certain issues.“Those who are now vocal about thanas (unity) were forced to remain mute spectators during the communist regime. We want the alliance to continue, but the behaviour should be that of a younger brother, not a big brother,” he said.The CM said, “The BJP will never allow a force whom it has created to meddle in our domain. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah too will not allow”.

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Kolkata, North East Integration Rally gets underway

Dimapur, Jan 05: The North East Integration Rally commenced from Kolkata on January 4, marking the start of a month-long initiative aimed at strengthening regional integration and enhancing people-to-people ties across the North Eastern states.The inaugural session witnessed the participation of public representatives, professionals, cultural figures and members of civil society. Those present included MLA and former minister A.L. Hek; vice chairperson of Dumdum Municipal Corporation Lopamudra Dutta Choudhury; Dr Prof. Sukumal Deb; Col. Shanti Kumar Singh (retd); author R.K. Maheshsena; engineer Tapash Roy; artiste K. Bobin; Kh. Gajendra Singh; Dr Sharmistha Raha of Prasara Bharati; Biplab Das of Kolkata Police; and an adventure enthusiast.The programme was compered by Biswadeep Gupta, head of KRC Foundations.Speakers lauded the initiative, describing it as a modest but meaningful step that could evolve into a larger movement for unity and mutual understanding. Several speakers shared their personal and professional associations with the North Eastern states, emphasising the need for sustained engagement between regions.The next leg of the rally is scheduled to be held in Malda. A cultural highlight of the programme was a performance by K. Bobin, who rendered the official title song of the rally.During the session, speakers reiterated the rally’s objectives, which include promoting infrastructure development, expanding economic opportunities, encouraging cultural exchange and deepening people-to-people engagement across states.The rally also received a warm welcome at Panihati in Kolkata, where members of Udayer Pathe greeted the participants and expressed support for the initiative and its objectives. The pre-launch ceremony of the rally was held on December 24, 2025, at The Countryside Retreat in Lamshang, Imphal, marking the beginning of preparations for the 2026 edition.Centred on the theme “Peace, Progress and Prosperity,” the North East Integration Rally seeks to highlight development, connectivity and social cohesion across the region. The rally is scheduled to conclude on February 4, 2026.

Jakha Town Baptist Church in Nagaland commemorates

Dimapur, Jan 05: Jakha Town Baptist Church celebrated its Golden Jubilee from January 3–4, 2026 at Jakhama Local Ground with a series of thanksgiving services and special programmes.

The jubilee speakers included Rev. Dr. Rachulie Vihienuo, executive director, Angami Baptist Church Council (ABCC); Rev. Dr. Mechiehol Savi, managing director, Baptist High; and Rev. Dr. Zotuo Kiewhuo, senior pastor, Koinonia Baptist Church (KBC). On January 3, a monolith was unveiled to commemorate the jubilee, with Rev. Zapolvil Sophie, senior pastor of Jakhama Baptist Church, ministering the act.During the culmination service on Sunday evening, Rev. Dr. Zotuo Kiewhuo delivered a message based on “My House Shall Be Called a House of Prayer” (Luke 19:46). He reminded the congregation that God has ordained three divine

institutions—Church, Marriage and Government—with the Church standing as the highest institution. Citing Matthew 16:18, he emphasized that the foundation of the Church rests on the faith and declaration that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah, making the Church a house of prayer where people encounter God, find hope and receive salvation. Tracing the rise of the Church from Acts 2, he highlighted the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and Peter’s sermon that brought thousands to faith, underscoring the power of prayer, witness and the Spirit in building the body of Christ.Rev. Dr. Kiewhuo further reflected on the transformation of Naga society through the gospel brought by American missionaries 150 years ago. He said Nagas, once headhunters living in darkness, were changed not by government or religion but by the gospel of grace and truth.

Female tiger found dead in Kaziranga National Park

Guwahati, Jan 05: A female tiger was found dead inside Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve in Assam on January 4. The carcass was recovered from the Paschim Bimoli area under the Western Range at Bagori, officials said. Forest staff spotted the body of the tigress during a routine patrol early in the morning and immediately informed senior authorities. The tigress is believed to have been around eight to ten years old. According to Kaziranga officials, the carcass was located deep inside the protected forest. A detailed examination was carried out by an official committee, following the guidelines of the National Tiger Conservation Authority. Kaziranga National Park Director and Divisional Forest Officer Arun Vignesh said preliminary findings suggest that the big cat may have died due to infighting with another tiger. He said such conflicts are common among tigers in the wild and are considered a natural cause of death.



A post-mortem was conducted in the presence of senior forest officers and veterinarians. Further tests are expected to confirm the exact cause of death. Meanwhile, in an earlier and unrelated incident, forest teams of the Biswanath Wildlife Division had recovered bones of a Royal Bengal Tiger and arrested five persons for illegal possession of wildlife parts. Officials said the accused were trying to sell the tiger remains

when they were caught on November 22. Field Director Dr. Sonali Ghosh said the operation was carried out jointly by the Eastern Range, Gamaria unit and the Crime Investigation Range of the Biswanath Wildlife Division. The accused have been identified as Eilaram Doley, Ripun Pegu, Kerani Kaman, Pulish Kutum and Depen Pegu. Investigations have also revealed links to earlier rhino poaching activities.

Series of IED blasts in Manipur's Bishnupur sparks panic; two residents injured

Imphal, Jan 05: Panic spread through parts of Manipur's Bishnupur district on Monday morning after a series of improvised explosive device (IED) blasts took place at an abandoned house in the Saiton-Nganukon area. The explosions happened in the early hours of the day and left two people injured, leading to security forces rushing to the spot and launching search operations. According to local reports, the first two blasts were heard between 5:40 am and 5:55 am, when most residents were still inside their homes. A third explosion took place later at around 8:30 am, further alarming people in the neighbourhood. The abandoned house where the blasts occurred is located under Phougakchao police station limits and falls within an area covered by CRPF security deployment.

Officials said that explosive devices had been planted inside the deserted house. The repeated blasts caused fear in nearby localities as loud sounds echoed through the area. Residents said the early-morning silence made the explosions sound even more frightening, and many people came out of their homes in confusion and concern.

During the second blast, two local residents were injured when they reportedly went near the abandoned house to check what had happened after hearing the first explosion.

The injured have been identified as:

* Nongthombam Indubala Devi (37), wife of late N. Bishworjit Singh of Saiton Haiyaikon Maning Leikai

* Soibam Sanatomba (details awaited)

Both sustained injuries due to the impact of the explosion. They were soon assisted by neighbours and later shifted for medical attention. Authorities said further medical updates would follow once assessments are complete. Soon after the blasts, security personnel reached the location and cordoned off the area. A thorough search and sanitisation operation was carried out to ensure there were no more explosive devices left nearby. Teams carefully inspected the house and surrounding localities to prevent any further risk to residents. Police are still trying to determine who planted the IEDs and whether the house was deliberately targeted. Investigators are also looking into whether the blasts were meant to cause injuries or simply to create fear in the region.

Jaishankar says Arunachal Pradesh will always remain a part of India

Guwahati, Jan 05: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has once again made it clear that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India. He said this during an interaction with students at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, after a student raised concerns about China's repeated claims over the northeastern state. The minister was responding to a question from Tarh Haniya, a third-year civil engineering student from Arunachal Pradesh. Haniya is also the president of the Students' Association for the Development of India's North East Region at the institute. He drew attention to the recent case of Prema Wangjom, a resident of West Kameng district, who was detained for almost 18 hours at Shanghai airport. Chinese authorities reportedly told her that her Indian passport was "invalid" because they do not recognise Arunachal Pradesh as part of India. Haniya also said that this was not the first time such incidents had happened. He mentioned that several people from Arunachal Pradesh have faced similar problems during international travel, which has caused worry and uncertainty among residents of the state. The minister also pointed out that international travel is guided by globally accepted conventions, and India expects all countries to respect these rules.

US-Based Couple Adopts Two Brothers from Majuli

Jorhat, Jan 05: Majuli district has witnessed its first-ever inter-country adoption, with a couple based in the United States adopting two brothers from the river island on Saturday.

Rimpi Borah, coordinator of the Specialised Adoption Agency (SAA), Majuli, said the siblings, aged eight and seven, were formally handed over to the adoptive parents—an Indian-origin couple—during a ceremony held at the conference hall of the Majuli Dis-

trict Commissioner's office complex. Majuli Deputy Commissioner Ratul Chandra Pathak officially completed the adoption process in the presence of district administration officials, police personnel, the District Child Protection Officer, and members of the Child Welfare Committee. A representative of the Authorised Foreign Adoption Agency (AFAA), the foreign social welfare agency recognised by the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)

to facilitate international adoptions, was also present on the occasion. Borah said the two children had been residing at the Specialised Adoption Agency Centre since its establishment in 2024. The centre is currently run by an NGO, Surjudaya, and the State government has recently initiated steps to take over its management. She added that the adoption was carried out strictly in accordance with established procedures. Prospective adoptive par-

ents are required to apply through the CARA portal under the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development. Once approved by CARA, the application is forwarded to the State Adoption Resource Agency (SARA), after which the adoption is finalised following due verification and legal formalities. The adoption marks a significant milestone for Majuli in facilitating child welfare through international adoption mechanisms.

Governor Interacts with Mizoram delegation for Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2026

● Governor Vijay Kumar Singh of Mizoram met with 14 selected youth representatives and state officials in preparation for the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue (VBLYD) 2026.

Aizawl, Jan 05: Mizoram Governor General Vijay Kumar Singh, (Retd), today met with 14 selected youth representatives and officials from the state ahead of the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue (VBLYD) 2026. The send-off event took place at Durbar Hall, Lok Bhavan, where the Governor warmly welcomed them and wished them success. Governor Singh highlighted Mizoram's vast potential across key sectors and lauded the exceptional talents of its youth. He noted that the 14 participants, selected for their outstanding performances, will represent Mizoram at the national event in New Delhi.

Urging them to prepare diligent-



ly with a winning mindset and strong self-confidence, he expressed optimism that they would return victorious, bringing home prizes. During the session, the Governor discussed their assigned topics and preparations in detail. The young

leaders thanked the government for the opportunity and the Governor for this inspiring interaction, pledging to deliver their best for Mizoram. The event was attended by Joseph Lalrinawma, Additional Secretary to the Governor; H. Dolianbuaia, Joint

Secretary, Department of Sports & Youth Services; H. Lalhmingthan-ga, Director, Department of Sports & Youth Services and other officials. The Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2026 is scheduled for January 9-12 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

Himanta Biswa Sarma: Miya community forced to pay Congress even for marriages



Guwahati, Jan 05: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma today said that the Miya community has been facing continuous financial pressure from the Congress party, alleging that members of the community are made to pay money not only during elections but even for family occasions like marriages. Speaking to reporters in Darrang, the Chief Minister said, "It is the misfortune of the Miya community that they have to give money to the Congress. They also have to give votes, and even for marriages at home the Congress collects advance money." He further claimed that some Congress leaders were demanding very high amounts of money in return for party tickets ahead of elections. According to him, the figures range from Rs 3 crore to Rs 5 crore, and more details would become public in the coming days. Sarma also alleged that a few Congress politicians have even asked for advance money by citing personal events. He said there have been instances where leaders requested funds for arranging marriages at their homes, while promising election tickets in return. The Chief Minister stated that such practices were affecting several constituencies. He claimed that Congress leaders were seeking money in at least 22 to 23 constituencies, especially from members of the Miya community. Calling it unfortunate, Sarma said that the community not only votes for the Congress but also ends up giving them money, which places financial and emotional strain on many families. He further said that when eviction drives take place, the Congress does not support the affected people. Referring to an eviction drive in Tezpur, he stated that nearly 5,000 bighas of land were cleared recently, but Congress leaders did not come forward to help those who were displaced.

Rongker Karkli Celebrations Underway as Karbi Anglong Land Dispute Nears Key Legal Milestone

Karbi Anglong, Jan 05: The Karbi community across Assam's hill districts is celebrating the traditional Rongker Karkli Festival, 2026, even as a major legal development related to land rights unfolds in the region. The two-day-long post-harvest festival began on Sunday and is being observed across Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong and other Karbi-inhabited areas of the state. Rongker is one of the most significant cultural and religious festivals of the Karbi people, centred on prayers to local deities seeking protection from calamities, agricultural prosperity and collective well-being. Villages are witnessing vibrant rituals, traditional dances, ceremonial offerings and community feasts, reflecting the deep-rooted cultural heritage of the Karbi community.

Meanwhile, January 5 marks an important stage in an ongoing land rights case before the Gauhati High Court. The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and

the Assam government are set to submit a joint affidavit in response to three pending writ petitions — WP (C)/3524/2024, WP (C)/5117/2024 and WP (C)/3718/2024.

The petitions concern alleged encroachments on Professional Grazing Reserve (PGR) and Village Grazing Reserve (VGR) lands in the Kheroni area under the Donkamokam Revenue Circle of West Karbi Anglong. The High Court had earlier stayed eviction proceedings in these matters, preventing any immediate action against settlers.

The forthcoming affidavit is expected to clarify the status of the disputed grazing reserve lands. The court's eventual verdict will determine whether eviction processes can proceed, an issue that has sparked debate and concern among local communities. As festive celebrations continue, residents remain attentive to the legal proceedings, hoping for a resolution that upholds cultural traditions while ensuring fairness in land rights and governance.

IIT-G develops sunlight-driven catalyst to convert carbon dioxide into methanol fuel

Guwahati, Jan 05: In a significant step towards clean fuel and environmental protection, researchers at Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati have developed a photocatalytic material that can convert carbon dioxide (CO₂) into methanol fuel using sunlight.

The research addresses one of the most essential challenges — how to meet rising energy needs without further harming the environment.

Led by Prof. Mahuya De, Professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering, IIT Guwahati, along with her research scholar, Nayan Moni Baishya, the findings of the study have been published in the prestigious Journal of Materials Science.

Dependence on petroleum-based fuels continues to be a source of carbon dioxide emissions, causing environmental stress and global warming. To address this, researchers are working on designing photocatalytic methods to convert carbon dioxide into clean fuels.

Researchers worldwide have been working on addressing this critical challenge by utilising graphitic carbon nitride, a low-cost, metal-free, non-toxic material. However, due to limitations such as rapid energy loss and low fuel generation, no prominent solution has been developed so far.

To overcome this challenge, the IIT Guwahati research team combined graphitic carbon nitride with few-layer

graphene. Known for its electrical conductivity and energy transfer capabilities, this ultra-thin carbon material helped minimise energy loss within the catalyst.

Speaking about the research, Prof. De, said, "The present work is expected to contribute towards mitigating environmental problems with simultaneous contribution towards green energy. Converting carbon dioxide to greener fuel using solar energy is a promising technology towards this direction."

The study demonstrated that the incorporation of few-layer graphene improved the photocatalytic energy retention of carbon nitride under visible light/sunlight exposure. It kept the

catalyst active for a longer duration resulting in better light absorption and improved charge generation.

Among the composites tested, the catalyst with 15 weight percentage (wt%) graphene demonstrated the most efficient conversion of Carbon Dioxide to Methanol. It also displayed strong stability, an important quality for its practical applications.

The technology developed by IIT Guwahati team holds the potential to be used in industries such as thermal power plants, cement manufacturing units, steel production facilities, and petrochemical refineries, supporting the transition towards a circular carbon economy and a cleaner energy future.

Final Verdict Delivered in 2020 Delhi Riots Conspiracy Case

New Delhi, Jan 05: A Special Court in Delhi has finally delivered its verdict on the long-standing conspiracy cases related to the 2020 Delhi Riots. The judgment, delivered this morning, has led to the sentencing of several key individuals accused of orchestrating the violence. Legal experts are calling this a defining moment for the Indian judicial system's handling of complex communal violence cases. Security has been tightened in sensitive areas of the national capital following the announcement to prevent any retaliatory unrest.

"Epstein Library" Launches 50 Mirror Sites to Counter Cyber Attacks

New Delhi, Jan 05: Following the total server collapse on January 3, the U.S. Department of Justice has successfully launched 50 "mirror sites" to host the unredacted Epstein Library files. Officials confirmed that the archive was targeted by a sophisticated Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack, suspected to be an attempt to bury high-profile names. The new decentralized hosting system allows global users to access the documents without lag, though certain sectors of the files remain under "temporary protective seal" pending further court orders.

Congress Meeting Turns Violent in Sribhumi

Sribhumi, Jan 05: A Congress party meeting in Assam's Sribhumi district descended into violence on Monday after a senior party leader was allegedly attacked by another Congress worker at a restaurant in Nilambazar, sparking shock and unrest within party ranks. Jillur Choudhury, a District Council member, sustained serious injuries in the incident. He was initially taken to the Sribhumi Civil Hospital, but as his condition deteriorated, doctors referred him to Silchar Medical College and Hospital, where he is currently undergoing treatment. According to sources, the incident took place after a Congress organisational meeting held earlier in the day at Nilambazar. The meeting was attended by All India Congress Committee (AICC) Secretary Vikas Upadhyay, party observer for Sribhumi Nasir Khan, and several district-level office-bearers. Following the meeting, party leaders reportedly gathered at a nearby restaurant for tea, where an argument reportedly broke out.

“Civic Sense” need to be our main goal for the new year

Every year, we all make resolutions to improve our own lives—like eating healthy or saving money. But this year, I want to suggest a resolution that helps everyone: better civic sense. It is easy to blame the government for dirty streets or broken parks, but we often forget our own role. We keep our houses spotless, yet many of us don't think twice before throwing trash on the road or breaking traffic rules. We need to realize that public property belongs to all of us. If we don't look after it, no one else will. Having civic sense means more than being a good neighbour. It means waiting for your turn in a queue, not spitting or littering in public places and respecting public property as if it were your own. A city only stays beautiful when its people decide to keep it that way. Let's make 2026 the year we stop waiting for “someone else” to clean up and start taking responsibility ourselves. If we all make this small change, our city will be a much better place to live. The latest train fare hike reflects a troubling pattern: passengers are repeatedly asked to pay more without seeing proportional improvements in basic facilities. Overcrowded coaches, unhygienic bogies, malfunctioning toilets, delayed trains, and poor customer service remain routine realities for millions. Calling this “fare rationalisation” ignores the lived experience of ordinary commuters who depend on railways for affordable travel. Sustainability cannot come at the cost of dignity and safety. Before burdening passengers again, the Railways must first ensure clean coaches, punctual services, and humane travel conditions. Without accountability and visible upgrades, this hike appears less like reform and more like misplaced priorities. The deaths of several resi-

dents of an Indore colony in MP, linked to consumption of water contaminated by sewage, have drawn criticism from not just the Opposition, but also promising leaders of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Uma Bharti Friday expressed anger over the deaths and questioned the state's leadership over their failure to address the issue. The incident, which sickened hundreds of Bhagirathpura residents in Indore, was a matter of “shame” for the state and a crucial test of CM Mohan Yadav's leadership. Drinking contaminated water in Indore has shamed and disgraced the state, the government, and the entire system, leading to deaths by the end of the year, 2025. The irony lies in Indore being touted as India's cleanest city in the central government's Swachh Bharat rankings. Such ugliness, filth, and poisoned water have swallowed so many lives and continue to do so. BJP leaders slammed their state government for announcing Rs 2 lakh as compensation to the families of those who died due to suspected contamination. Severe atonement must be made for this sin. An apology must be sought from the affected people, and maximum punishment must be given to all the culprits from bottom to top. The BJP government has completely mismanaged the entire issue; they should have led efforts to provide relief and support to the victims and their families. But nothing of that sort was seen. Bangladesh is slipping, but it is slipping into schizophrenia, which it has always been in reality. It's forgetting history only to repeat it. It's splitting its personality between being Bengali and being Islamic. There's no Islamic Bengali, as one sits as a lord and master over the other. Every aspect of history which makes up the Bengali identity is a part of a heritage

which will always look upon Islam as an imposition and which Islam will look upon as reprehensible. This is coupled with the hierarchy of MLM conversion. Between the one who started early and the one who started later. When conflicted, they will then resort to the only glue that they can avail, a tribalism which is held together by a hate for India. That is a Luddite choice, but it's less painful than facing the inherent internal churn with criticality. But choosing that is equally denying one's own identity. In their rush to embrace the Islamic identity, they will have to brush a lot of history under the carpet. They want to nurse grandiose dreams of claiming a realm which was woven by syncretism, which they dream will somehow submit to their synthetic chauvinism. But, in doing all this, they have placed themselves as targets for disruption, while they have targeted not a grander vision, but a path of aggravation and abrasion. Moreover, it has opened its doors to those who hold no stake and are using it as a shell to escape punitive actions in return. It has decided to eject concordance for discordance. Winter has seldom been the most cherished season among writers. The chilly air, the misty mornings, the tawny apparel of trees, the sickly pallor of Mother Nature and the reverberating silence of night help winter maintain its sinister attitude. Nature knows winter isn't her glam girl era, and hence doesn't feel the pressure of being hyper-productive. She grows quieter as the temperature drops, and her stillness might seem ghostly; however, she isn't impuissant. She gently observes the world transform as she reclines and waits. Unfortunately, we, the mortal kids of Mother Nature, are growing too impatient, as we tend to embellish every single day with frills. In fact, the concept of boredom seems virtually im-

possible with all the memes and rage tweets orbiting the digital globe. With trends outpacing the trendsetters, our lives should be anything but monotonous. Yet, the rising mental health crisis reveals a different scenario. Scrolling through the dazzling pictures of people online living their best lives and comparing them to the bleak stagnancy of our own lives makes us question our reality. While drowned in this duality, we seem to lose our sanity. Accustomed to the digital noise, one finds the wait for clarity uncanny – unlike Mother Nature, who pauses without protest. She reminds us that we are unique and that we all bloom in different seasons. Therefore, it is okay to not always be on the vibrant side of life, to be uncertain, or to lack certain brilliance once in a while. Instead, let us turn to Mother Nature – she will shape us into her finest protégés. Dolphins in the Kuls River are facing a serious threat to their survival. The seven-hundred-metre-long channel, connecting Dorabeel wetland and the Kuls river in Kukurmara, has dwindled, and migration of fish to the Kuls river has stopped. Earlier, the aquatic mammals were available in and around the confluence due to abundant fish migrating from the wetland. Significantly, the spot, known as Janarmukh, witnesses high footfall of tourists throughout the year due to the presence of the playful mammal. The sorry state of the channel and the wetland is a matter of serious concern for a section of environmentally conscious people of the area. There is a need to take firm action against some unscrupulous traders who block the channel with earth during the lean season for easy movement of dumpers and earth movers, which is a main factor in the accumulation of sediments. This is, undoubtedly, in defiance of environmental laws. Ensuring the channel is unaffected for

the unhindered migration of fish through sustainable practices is the need of the hour for the conservation of Gangetic river dolphins in the Kuls River. Let us join hands and save the wetland and channel. India is witnessing an unprecedented surge in investment in artificial intelligence, with global technology giants such as Google, Microsoft and Amazon committing billions towards AI infrastructure and data centres. While this marks a significant milestone in India's technological ascent, it also raises important questions that deserve public debate. There is no doubt that AI can accelerate innovation, improve efficiency and place India at the centre of the global digital economy. However, unchecked expansion brings concerns regarding job displacement, data privacy and widening inequality. Automation may create new opportunities, but it also threatens traditional employment, especially for semi-skilled workers who may not easily transition into the AI-driven economy. Equally important is the environmental cost. Large data centres consume enormous amounts of electricity and water. Without clear sustainability norms, the long-term ecological impact could outweigh the immediate economic gains. What India needs is not blind adoption but thoughtful regulation. A strong policy framework must ensure ethical AI use, environmental responsibility and inclusive job creation. Investment should empower the workforce, not marginalize it. AI must serve society, not dominate it. Progress, after all, should be measured not only by speed but by balance. The recent gang rape case in Faridabad, Haryana, has once again shaken the nation's conscience and exposed the fragile state of women's safety in our country. Beyond political outrage and blame games, this incident forces us to confront a painful truth:

that law and order mechanisms continue to fail women when they need protection the most. What is most disturbing is not only the brutality of the crime but also the recurring pattern of delayed action, weak policing, and lack of accountability. When such incidents occur repeatedly, they indicate systemic failure rather than isolated lapses. Women cannot feel secure in a society where fear outweighs faith in justice. Safety should not become a tool for political scoring between ruling and opposition parties. It must be treated as a non-negotiable responsibility of the state. Strong policing, fast-track courts, survivor support systems, and strict punishment for offenders are essential, but equally important is changing the mindset that normalizes violence against women. The Faridabad case should serve as a turning point. Justice must be swift and exemplary, and governments across states must act decisively to ensure that women can live without fear, dignity intact. It is truly heartbreaking that Pragyashree Phukan, a bright degree first-semester student of Jagannath Barooah College, Jorhat, drowned during a picnic at the Baghmora picnic spot on 2 January. She set out with her friends in high spirits, only to have her life cut short in a most tragic manner. It is alleged that the managing committee has repeatedly turned a blind eye to the safety of picnic-goers, even though similar drowning incidents had taken place earlier. The administration also appears to have remained passive, failing to intervene when warning signs had already been raised. Once they collect entry fees, the authorities seem to absolve themselves of responsibility. If safety measures are not put in place without further delay at the picnic spots that have sprung up along riverbanks, such heartrending incidents are bound to crop up again in the days ahead.

Politics must not intrude into cricket



The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)'s recent decision to release Bangladeshi fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman from the Indian Premier League (IPL) has drawn significant criticism, being viewed as a troubling example of political interference in sports. This decision, allegedly influenced by far-right pressures rather than genuine sporting considerations, disrupts cricket's role as a unifying force between countries. The resulting outrage in Bangladesh is understandable, especially in light of rising concerns regarding the safety of Bangladeshi players during upcoming international events in India, notably the ICC T20 World Cup. Consequently, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has decided against sending its national team to participate in the T20 World Cup in India, reflecting broader apprehensions about international cricket in the current socio-political climate. Mustafizur Rahman, the sole Bangladeshi player in this year's IPL and a highly accomplished T20 fast bowler, was selected based on merit. His unexpected removal raises concerns that factors such as nationality or religious identity may outweigh merit and professional contractual obligations. This incident could exacerbate the already strained relations between Bangladesh and India, which have been tense since the Awami League government's decline. The post-uprising era has been marked by diplomatic sensitivities and heightened border tensions, further complicated by disinformation campaigns from certain Indian media outlets that depict Bangladesh as unsafe for minorities. In this context, Rahman's removal might intensify mistrust and solidify negative public sentiment on both sides. Cricket has long served as a significant bridge fostering connections between Bangladesh and India, particularly amid political tensions. The Indian Premier League (IPL) has garnered vast popularity among fans in Bangladesh, who follow the tournament with great enthusiasm. However, by permitting political factors to influence player participation, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) may jeopardize this goodwill and weaken the league's assertion of being a globally inclusive sporting platform. This situation underscores the importance of maintaining the integrity of the IPL as a unifying force amidst prevailing political scenarios. We urge the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to reconsider and overturn its decision concerning Mustafizur Rahman. Doing so would rectify a perceived injustice and demonstrate that sports can transcend political divisions. Criticism of the BCCI's action has emerged from within India, including from current Members of Parliament and former cricketers who have labeled the decision as deplorable and warned against the “mindless politicizing” of sports. In response, Bangladesh's cricket board plans to seek clarifications from both the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the governing body of the Indian Premier League (IPL). There is an expressed hope for appropriate intervention from these organizations, reinforcing the belief that cricket should serve as a unifying platform for fair play and engagement, particularly as both India and Bangladesh aim to improve their political and diplomatic relations.

Fastest-growing state: The implications of Assam's figures

The numbers are striking. Assam's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at current prices is projected to rise sharply from Rs 4.10 lakh crore in 2021–22 to Rs 7.41 lakh crore by 2025–26. At the same time, per capita income has increased by 54 per cent, reaching Rs 1.59 lakh, while the state's revenue has grown by 53 per cent. Taken together, these figures reflect not just expansion but a significant strengthening of Assam's economic base. For a long time, Assam's economy was characterized by slow growth, limited industrialization and high dependence on central transfers. Geography, connectivity challenges, and historical neglect played their part. The period from 2020 to 2025, however, appears to have altered that trajectory. The state's growth rate during these years is particularly noteworthy because it came amid global disruptions caused by the pandemic and subsequent economic uncertainty. That Assam managed to outpace most other states during such a period invites closer attention. One of the key drivers of this growth has been public investment in infrastructure. Assam has seen an unprecedented expansion of roads, bridges, flyovers, and connectivity projects,

improving access within the state and with the rest of the country. Better infrastructure reduces costs for businesses, improves mobility for people, and opens up new economic opportunities. It also creates employment, both directly and indirectly, contributing to higher incomes. Another important factor has been improved revenue mobilization and fiscal management. A 53 per cent increase in state revenue suggests that Assam is not only spending more but also collecting more. This points to better tax compliance, expansion of the formal economy, and improved administrative efficiency. Higher revenues give the state greater financial independence and flexibility to invest in development priorities such as health, education, and social welfare. The rise in per capita income to Rs 1.59 lakh is particularly significant because it reflects how growth is translating into higher average incomes. While per capita figures do not capture inequality or distribution, they are a useful indicator of overall economic well-being. A 54 per cent increase over a relatively short period suggests that economic activity has expanded beyond a few sectors or regions. Assam's economic trans-



formation has also been supported by a policy focus on attracting investment and improving the business environment. Initiatives to streamline approvals, improve ease of doing business, and promote sectors such as manufacturing, renewable energy, tourism, and logistics have helped reposition the state. People are increasingly highlighting Assam's strategic location as a gateway to Northeast and Southeast Asia as an economic advantage, not a constraint. Equally important has been the role of central support and alignment with national

priorities. Large infrastructure projects, improved rail and road connectivity, and greater integration with national markets have contributed to Assam's growth momentum. The combination of state-level initiative and central backing has created a more favorable environment for development. However, an editorial assessment must go beyond celebrating numbers. Rapid growth brings with it new challenges and responsibilities. Sustaining a 45 per cent growth rate over five years is impressive, but maintaining momentum

will require deeper structural changes. The quality of growth matters as much as its speed. The key question is whether this growth is creating enough productive and sustainable jobs, especially for Assam's large youth population. Agriculture remains a major source of livelihood in the state, and its transformation is essential for inclusive growth. While services and construction have expanded, agriculture needs greater investment in irrigation, storage, processing, and market access. Without this, income growth may remain uneven, particular-

ly in rural areas. There is also the challenge of regional balance. Growth concentrated in urban centers like Guwahati can widen disparities if smaller towns and rural regions are left behind. Infrastructure, education, and healthcare investments must therefore continue to spread across districts to ensure that growth is geographically inclusive. Another critical issue is human capital. Improvements in education quality, skill development, and healthcare outcomes must match higher per capita income and GSDP figures.

A healthier, better-trained workforce is essential to sustain growth over the long term. Without this, the state risks hitting a ceiling where growth slows due to skill shortages and low productivity. Environmental sustainability is another area that demands attention. Assam is ecologically sensitive and prone to floods and climate-related risks. Therefore, we must balance rapid economic expansion with responsible land use, disaster preparedness, and sustainable resource management. Growth that undermines environmental stability can prove costly in the long run. The rise in state revenue also brings expectations of better public services and governance. Citizens will judge the success of Assam's growth not just by headline figures, but by improvements in everyday life like quality roads, reliable healthcare, effective schools, clean water, and responsive administration. Economic growth creates the capacity to deliver these services, but delivery depends on institutional strength and accountability. From a national perspective, Assam's performance offers an important lesson. It shows that with focused governance, infrastructure investment, and fiscal discipline, even states that

start from a lower base can grow rapidly. Assam's experience challenges the notion that high growth is limited to already developed regions. At the same time, growth rates often look more dramatic when starting from a smaller base. As Assam's economy expands towards Rs 7.41 lakh crore, maintaining high growth will become more demanding. The next phase will require moving from infrastructure-led expansion to productivity-driven growth, innovation, and private sector-led investment. Assam's recognition as the fastest-growing state between 2020 and 2025 is therefore both an achievement and a test. It signals that the state is on the right path, but also that expectations will now be higher. The task ahead is to convert economic momentum into lasting prosperity, one that is inclusive, sustainable, and resilient. If Assam can build on these gains while addressing inequality, employment, and environmental concerns, its growth story can become not just a statistical success but a model of balanced development. The numbers tell an encouraging story. The challenge now is to ensure that this story is felt in the lives of all Assamese citizens, across regions and generations.

GDP data, Venezuela tensions likely to drive stock market

New Delhi: The Indian stock market is expected to stay active in the coming sessions as investors assess a combination of domestic economic signals and global developments. With the Q3 earnings season approaching, market sentiment will be guided by key data releases, geopolitical developments and trends in commodities and currencies. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, an analyst said that “on the upside, immediate resistance is placed at 26,400, followed by 26,500 and 26,600, while on the downside, support is seen at 26,200 and then at 26,100.” “A deeper breakdown below 26,000 could invite additional downside pressure,” analyst stated. On the domestic front, investors will keep a close watch on the final readings of the HSBC Services PMI and Composite PMI, which will offer clues about the pace of economic activity in the services sector. Market participants will also track India’s GDP growth data, along with updates on bank loan growth, de-

posit growth and foreign exchange reserves, as these indicators will help assess credit demand and overall liquidity conditions in the economy. Global cues are also expected to play an important role. Reports of US military action in Venezuela have added a fresh layer of uncertainty to global markets. Attention will also remain on key US economic data, especially the non-farm payrolls and unemployment figures. These numbers are crucial for shaping expectations around the US Federal Reserve’s interest rate trajectory and could affect global risk appetite and capital flows into emerging markets. Commodity prices will be another major trigger. Increased risk aversion and could influence sectors linked to commodities as well as overall market sentiment. The Indian rupee’s movement against the US dollar will also be closely tracked. The currency recently weakened past the 90 level, pressured by weak macroeconomic data and a stronger dollar globally.

Bank unions warn of Jan 27 nationwide strike over demand for five-day work week

New Delhi: Bank employees’ unions have warned of a nationwide strike later this month if the government fails to implement a long-promised five-day work week. If the strike proceeds, it will disrupt public sector banking operations for three consecutive days, with January 25 and 26 being holidays. Currently, bank employees get the second and fourth Saturdays off each month, apart from Sundays. The decision to declare all Saturdays as holidays was agreed between the Indian Banks’ Association and UFBU during the wage revision settlement in March 2024. “It is unfortunate that the government is not responding to our genuine demand. There would be no loss of man-hours as we have agreed to work an extra 40 minutes daily from Monday to Friday,” UFBU said. The union noted that RBI, LIC, GIC, stock exchanges and government offices already follow a five-day work week, arguing there was no justification for banks to lag behind. It has been decided to give the call for an all India strike



in all the banks on January 27, 2026, it added. UFBU is an umbrella organisation of nine major bank unions in India, representing employees

and officers across public sector banks and some old generation private banks. The statement further said the union’s social media campaign.

Explained Novo Nordisk is offering the Wegovy pill at \$149 a month

New Delhi: Novo Nordisk is set to sell its new oral Wegovy weight-loss pill in the United States at a much lower price for people paying out of pocket. This is aimed at expanding access beyond insurance coverage.

From January 5, 2026, self-pay patients can purchase the lower 1.5 mg and 4 mg doses for \$149 per month, and the higher 9 mg and 25 mg doses are priced at \$299 per month. The pricing applies only to patients who pay directly, without using private or government insurance, indicating a strategic shift in how obesity drugs are marketed in the US. Weight-loss medications in the US continue to face patchy insurance coverage, leaving many patients with high out-of-pocket costs or no

access at all. By introducing a fixed self-pay price, Novo Nordisk is bypassing insurance hurdles such as prior authorisations and reimbursement delays. The \$149 price point positions the Wegovy pill as the most affordable prescription semaglutide-based weight-loss option in the US so far, making it more competitive with other oral treatments and wellness alternatives. The pricing follows the US Food and Drug Administration’s approval of the oral version of Wegovy in late 2025. This marked the first time semaglutide, previously available mainly as a weekly injection, could be taken as a once-daily pill for obesity treatment. While earlier cash-pay programmes had already lowered prices for injectable Wegovy to about

\$199–\$349 per month, the pill introduces a simpler, needle-free option that broadens the drug’s appeal. Both the pill and the injection contain semaglutide, which works by reducing appetite, increasing feelings of fullness, and helping regulate blood sugar. The key difference lies in how the drug is absorbed. As Dr Yousef Said, Medical Director at GluCare. Health by meta[bolic], explains, “The real difference is not what the drug does, but how it enters the body. The injection is absorbed steadily under the skin, while the pill has to be absorbed through the stomach and intestine. That means the pill must be taken very precisely, on an empty stomach and exactly as instructed, to work well,” Said told Gulf news.

Major Financial Reform: LG public funds to be kept separately in Delhi

Mumbai: In a significant administrative and financial move for the “first time”, the Central government has notified January 9 as the date on which all public moneys received by or on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Delhi will be credited to a designated public account, formalising the accounting framework for such funds in the National Capital Territory (NCT). The decision has been taken by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in exercise of the powers conferred under sub-section (1) of Section 46A of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991. The notification, issued on January 2, provides for the creation and operationalisation of a specific public account titled “The Public Account of the Capital.” According to the notification, from January 9 onwards, all “other public moneys” received by or on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor will mandatorily be credited to this newly desig-

nated account. The term “other public moneys” broadly covers funds that do not form part of the consolidated fund but are received in the exercise of public authority, including certain deposits, remittances, and receipts handled under the LG’s authority. “In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 46A of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991 (1 of 1992), the Central Government hereby appoints the 9th day of January, 2026 as the date on which all other public moneys received by or on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor shall be credited to a Public Account entitled ‘the Public Account of the Capital’,” the notification stated. Officials in the MHA told ANI that the “purpose of this move is to establish a clear and uniform accounting mechanism for such moneys, ensuring they are maintained in a designated public account rather than being mixed with other government funds.” Earlier,



the official said, this fund was mixed with Central government funds.

“Puducherry enjoys a similar financial and administrative arrangement. For Delhi, it is the first such arrangement that empowers the national capital administration to take loans, utilise funds and purchase things.” Another official said, “The move is aimed at bringing greater

clarity, transparency and uniformity in the management of other public funds associated with the office of the Lieutenant Governor. By clearly demarcating the account in which such receipts are to be credited, the government intends to streamline financial administration and ensure a standardised accounting mechanism in line with statutory provisions.”

Nifty Bank tops 60,114 to new high, hits finish line Nifty50 in New Year 2026



New Delhi: The Nifty Bank index surged to a fresh record on Thursday, January 2, outperforming the broader market and reaching a new peak ahead of the Nifty50 in the New Year. The banking index touched an all-time high of 60,118.10 during intraday trade, crossing its earlier record level of 60,114 (1 Dec 2025). At the time of writing, Nifty Bank was trading at 60,080.25, up 368.70 points or 0.62 per cent. The index opened higher at 59,757.40, compared with its previous close of 59,711.55, and extended gains through the session on sustained buying interest in heavyweight banking stocks. Nifty Bank tops 60,114 to new high, hits finish line before Nifty50 in New Year 2026. A key positive development has been the return of foreign portfolio investors after three months of outflows. FPIs turned net buyers in October, supported by stronger earnings expectations, lower consumption taxes and progress in India-US trade negotiations. They have added nearly USD 1.3 billion since the start of last month. The early Diwali celebration with fireworks continued in the equity markets for the third consecutive session on October 17, as the Nifty 50 surpassed its June swing high and hit a fresh 52-week high.

The index closed above 25,700 for the first time since October 1, 2024, igniting strong confidence among market participants. As long as the index sustains above 25,700, it may close the long bearish gap of October 3, 2024, and set the stage for an upmove toward 26,000 and then 26,277 (record high). Support is placed at 25,500, followed by 25,400, which was earlier a strong resistance and has now turned into support, according to experts. The continuation of the higher high-higher low structure, healthy momentum indicators, renewed Nifty 50 gained momentum as the session progressed and hit a day’s high of 25,782 in the second half. The index finished the session at 25,710, up 125 points (0.49 percent), with above-average volumes. It formed a bullish candle with minor upper and lower shadows on the daily timeframe, signaling a positive trend. The index has decisively surpassed the crucial overhead resistance zone of 25,400–25,500 levels (down-sloping trendline as per daily/weekly charts). “The underlying trend of Nifty continues to be positive, and the market is likely to move up further in the short term,” said Nagaraj Shetti, Senior Technical Research Analyst at HDFC Securities..

Bondada Engineering bags Rs 627 crore BESS order

Mumbai: EPC company, Bondada Engineering has received orders worth Rs 627 crore from the Transmission Corporation of Andhra Pradesh (APTRANSCO) for setting up a battery energy storage project of 225 MW/450 MWh in the state, the company said in its regulatory filing. Bondada Engineering: Order details. The company added that it has received letters of award worth Rs 627,00,09,768 (Rupees Six Hundred and Twenty-Seven Crore Nine Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-Eight Only) from AP TRANSCO for the development of a large-scale standalone Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) project. Under the scope of work, the company will set up a 225 MW/450 MWh standalone battery energy storage project for AP TRANSCO. This project will be executed under the build-own-operate (BOO) model, which is a public-private partnership



model. Further, Bondada added that the order will considerably enhance the company’s financials. “This order is strategically significant for the Company as it establishes a long-term annuity-based revenue stream, thereby enhancing revenue stability, cash flow visibility and return predictability,” it added. As per the company’s regulatory filing, with this order win, the company’s cumulative BESS portfolio now stands at nearly 1 GWh. Further, it added that

this order win will help establish Bondada Engineering as a strong player in India’s energy storage ecosystem. “The project is expected to be executed within the stipulated timeline and will contribute meaningfully to revenues post the construction phase, while generating stable, long-term annuity income, thereby enhancing shareholder value and earnings visibility,” the company said in its official statement.

US move in Venezuela may help India recover USD 1 billion oil dues stuck

Mumbai: The US invasion of Venezuela may deliver a direct benefit to India, potentially unlocking close to \$1 billion in long-pending dues linked to the petroleum sector. ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) jointly operates the San Cristobal oilfield in eastern Venezuela, but output has been severely curtailed as US restrictions blocked access to critical technology, equipment and services — leaving commercially viable reserves effectively stranded. Venezuela failed to pay OVL \$536 million in dividends due on its 40 per cent stake in the field up to 2014, and a near-equivalent amount for the subsequent period for which Caracas has refused to permit audits, effectively freezing settlement of the claims. Analysts and energy executives said if sanctions are eased, OVL can move rigs and other equipment from places, such as its parent ONGC’s oil fields in Gujarat, to San Cristobal to revive output that has plummeted to 5,000-10,000 barrels per day, officials in the know of the matter told PTI. The onshore field can produce 80,000-1,00,000 bpd with more wells and better equipment, they said, adding that San Cristobal needs rigs similar to those operating in Gujarat, and ONGC owns many such rigs. US control of the Venezuelan oil sector also means exports to the world could restart in future, allowing OVL to recoup its past \$1 billion dues from San Cristobal, they said. In fact, OVL had sought a ‘specific licence’ sanctions



waiver, similar to one Office of the Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) had granted to Chevron to operate the oilfield and export oil from it. Moreover, OVL and other Indian firms can revive production

from the Carabobo-1 Area — another Venezuelan oilfield with Indian interest. OVL holds 11 per cent interest in Carabobo-1, while IOC and Oil India hold 3.5 per cent stake each.

Caracas ‘fort’ to New York court: Maduro’s capture in pictures



New York: The US says its military operation to capture Venezuela’s president took months of planning, but when Donald Trump gave the order to launch, “Operation Absolute Resolve” only lasted about 150 minutes. The surprise early-morning attack on Saturday marked an unprecedented event in modern politics and culminated in the arrest of Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores.

Captured by troops from an elite US army unit as they tried to flee into a fortified safe room, the pair are now being held in a detention centre in New York and face narco-terrorism charges. As the sun rose on Saturday, the scale of the military operation in Caracas, Venezuela’s capital, was clear. Pictures from Fuerte Tiuna, a huge military complex where top government officials live, show bombed out buildings and charred, smouldering cars.

It was at this compound that Maduro and his wife were captured, Venezuelan ruling party leader Nahum Fernández told the Associated Press news agency. Operation Absolute Resolve began with reports of explosions at about 02:00 in Caracas (06:00 GMT). The US cut power to the city, Trump has since said, describing it as “dark and deadly”.

The aim was to disable Venezuela’s air defences and clear the path for US military helicopters to get to Fuerte Tiuna. “We assessed that we had maintained totally the element of surprise”, Gen Dan Caine, the nation’s highest-ranking military officer, said.

The BBC has verified five strike locations, including the compound, a port and an airport. Pictures show Fuerte Tiuna on fire, with huge flames visible for miles. Venezuelans have described how US military helicopters flew low over Caracas, heading for Fuerte Tiuna. Some of the helicopters came under fire, but were still able to fly, Gen Caine said.

“It was a lot of gunfire,” Trump added. Once on the ground, troops from the US Army’s Delta Force, an elite special forces unit, moved quickly. They gained access to the compound at 02:01 local time, and the Maduros “gave up” without a struggle, Gen Caine said. But Trump gave more details. The Maduros tried to escape into a safe place, the US president explained, describing it as a military “fortress”. “The safe place is all steel, and he wasn’t able to make it to the door because our guys were so fast. “It was a very thick door, a very heavy door,” Trump told reporters. “He made it to the door. He was unable to close it.” But even if they had managed to get into the safe room, Trump said troops could have blown it open in about “47 seconds”. From Caracas to Manhattan

Now in US custody, Nicolás Maduro and his wife were transported some 2,100 miles (3,400km), to New York City. They were flown out of Caracas by helicopter, and taken to the USS Iwo Jima, a warship stationed in the Caribbean. The team was back “over the water” by 04:29, Gen Caine said.

It was on the ship that we got one of the defining pictures of the whole operation - Maduro in handcuffs, wearing ear protectors and a type of blindfold that looked like dark sunglasses.

US actions in Venezuela ‘constitute a dangerous precedent’: Guterres

New York: US President Donald Trump made the announcement on social media, and the US Attorney General said Mr. Maduro and his wife would face “the full wrath of American justice on American soil, in American courts,” based on a 2020 narco-terrorism indictment during the first Trump administration, in New York. The US operation began with overnight strikes in and around the capital, Caracas. Venezuela has declared a state of national emergency, with casualty figures and the extent of the damage yet to be confirmed. The Venezuelan Government denounced the act of “extremely serious military aggression” by the US, which followed months of increasing tension including a major military build up off the Venezuela coast and a series of deadly strikes on alleged drug trafficking boats.

The US ordered the seizure of sanctioned oil tankers in recent weeks amid threats that it would launch land operations to force Mr. Maduro from office. The Secretary-General is deeply alarmed by the recent escalation in



Venezuela, culminating with today’s United States military action in the country, which has potential worrying implications for the region,” said a statement issued by UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric. “Independently of the situation in Venezuela, these developments constitute a dangerous precedent. The Secretary-General continues to emphasize the importance of full respect - by all - of international

law, including the UN Charter.” the statement continued. “He’s deeply concerned that the rules of international law have not been respected.” Mr. Guterres called on all parties involved to engage in “inclusive dialogue” in accordance with human rights and international law. The UN human rights chief Volker Türk also called for restraint and full respect for international law. “The protection of the people

of Venezuela is paramount and must guide any further action,” he added.

Venezuela has formally asked the Security Council to meet in emergency session in New York and a meeting has been scheduled for 10am on Monday morning. During a press conference at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida late Saturday morning, President Trump said that the US intended to “run Venezuela” until there is a “safe, proper and judicious transition” of power. As the country with the world’s largest oil reserves, he added that US oil companies would modernise and renovate infrastructure “to make money for the country.” Responding to the crisis, President of the UN General Assembly, Annalena Baerbock, said the “guiding framework” in the days ahead must be the UN Charter, which is not an “optional document”.

She said Article 2 clearly stipulates that all Member States, including the US, need to refrain from the “threat or use of force” against the territory or political independence of any other nation.

PM of Denmark orders Trump to cease making “threats” against Greenland

London: Denmark’s prime minister has told Donald Trump to “stop the threats” about taking over Greenland. Mette Frederiksen said “it makes absolutely no sense to talk about the need for the United States to take over Greenland”, adding: “The US has no right to annex any of the three nations in the Danish kingdom.” Her remarks come after Katie Miller - the wife of one of Trump’s aides, Stephen Miller - tweeted a map of Greenland in the colours of the American flag alongside the word “SOON”. Trump has repeatedly raised the possibility of Greenland becoming an annexed part of the US, citing its strategic location and mineral wealth, and doubled down on his claims after Frederiksen’s comments. In her statement, posted on the Danish government website, Frederiksen said she was addressing the US “very directly”. She said Denmark - “and thus Greenland” - was a Nato member and covered by the alliance’s security guarantee. Denmark already had a defence agreement with the US that gave it access to Greenland, she said, and Denmark had upped its

investment in security in the Arctic region. “I would therefore strongly urge the United States to stop the threats against a historically close ally and against another country and another people who have very clearly said that they are not for sale,” she said. Hours later on Air Force One, Trump reiterated the goal. “We need Greenland from the standpoint of national security, and Denmark is not going to be able to do it,” he said. Earlier the Danish ambassador to the US responded to the post by Mrs Miller - a right-wing podcaster and former aide to Trump during his first term - with a “friendly reminder” that the two countries were allies and saying Denmark expected respect for its territorial integrity. The exchange comes after the US carried out a major military operation against Venezuela on Saturday, capturing its president Nicolas Maduro and his wife and removing them to New York. Trump later said the US would “run” Venezuela and US oil companies would “start making money for the country”. The US president has previously refused to rule out using force to se-



control of Greenland, a vast island in the Arctic. Trump has claimed that making it part of the United States would serve US security interests due to its strategic location and its abundance of minerals critical to high-tech sectors. The Trump administration’s recent move to appoint a special envoy to Greenland prompted anger in Denmark.

Greenland, which has a population of 57,000 people, has had extensive self-government since 1979, from Denmark, opinion polls show overwhelming opposition to becoming part of the US.

US snatches Maduro in raid on Caracas: what we know so far

New York: Venezuela’s president, Nicolás Maduro, has been apprehended and flown to the US where the US attorney-general has announced he will face charges of drug trafficking and narco-terrorism. The US military’s operation to snatch Maduro was carried out in the early hours of January 3 and follows months of steadily mounting pressure on the Venezuelan government. Now it appears that the US operation to remove a leader it has designated as a “narco-terrorist” has come to fruition. But whether the capture and removal of Maduro will lead to regime change in the oil-rich Latin American country remains unclear at present. The US campaign against Venezuela is the product of two distinct policy impulses within the Trump administration. The first is the long held desire of many Republican hawks, including the US secretary of state, Marco Rubio, to force regime change in Caracas. They detest Venezuela’s socialist government and see overturning it as an opportunity to appeal to conservative Hispanic voters in the US. The second impulse is more complex. Trump campaigned for election in 2024 on the idea that his administration would not become involved in foreign conflicts. But his administration claims that Venezuela’s government and military are involved in drug trafficking, which in Washington’s thinking makes them terrorist organisations that are harming the American people. As head of the country’s government, Maduro, according to the Trump administration’s logic is responsible for that. During Trump’s first administration, his Department of Justice indicted Maduro on charges of “narco-terrorism”. Now Bondi says there might be a new indictment which also covers Maduro’s wife, who was taken into detention with him. The fact that US law enforcement was involved in their capture reinforces the idea that they will now face those charges in a New York court, despite an early claim by opposition sources in Venezuela that Maduro’s departure may have been negotiated with the US government. The big question is what comes next in Venezuela, and whether either the Republican hawks or the “America first” crowd will get the outcome that they want: ongoing US military presence to “finish the job” or simply a show of US strength to punish its adversary which doesn’t involve a lengthy American involvement. The US has discovered time and again in recent decades that it is extremely difficult to dictate the political futures of foreign countries with military force. The White House might want to see the emergence of a non-socialist government in Caracas, as well as one which cracks down on the drug trade. But simply removing Maduro and dropping some bombs is unlikely to achieve that goal after nearly three decades of building up the regime under Maduro and his predecessor Hugo Chavez. The Trump administration could have learned this lesson from Libya, whose dictatorial government the US and its allies overthrew in 2011. The country collapsed into chaos soon after, inflicting widespread suffering on its own citizens and creating prob-



lems for its neighbours. In the case of Venezuela, it is unlikely that American military’s strikes alone will be enough to fatally undermine its government. Maduro may be gone, but the vast majority of the country’s governmental and military apparatus remains intact. Power will likely pass to a new figure in the regime. The White House may dream that popular protests will break out against the government following Maduro’s ousting. But history shows that people usually react to being bombed by a foreign power by rallying around the flag, not turning against their leaders. Nor would Venezuela’s descent into chaos be likely to help the Trump administration achieve its goals. Conflict in Venezuela could generate new refugee flows which would eventually reach America’s southern border. The collapse of central government authority would be likely to create a more conducive environment for drug trafficking. Widespread internal violence and human rights violations could hardly be portrayed as a victory to the crucial conservative Hispanic voting bloc. If the Trump administration dreams of establishing a stable, pro-American government in Caracas, it is going to have to do more than just arrest Maduro. Bringing about durable regime change typically involves occupying a country with ground troops and engaging in “nation building”. The US tried this with decidedly mixed results in Iraq and Afghanistan. Trump has pledged to avoid such entanglements and Rubio has said that, for now at least, the US has no plans for further military action against Venezuela. Trump has a penchant for flashy, quick wins, particularly in foreign policy. He may hope to tout Maduro’s capture as a victory and move on to other matters. In almost no recent US military intervention did the American government set out to engage in nation-building right from the beginning. The perceived need to shepherd a new government into existence has typically only come to be felt when the limits of what can be accomplished by military force alone become apparent.

Guinea’s junta leader is confirmed President-elect after first vote

New York: The Supreme Court in Guinea on Sunday (January 4, 2026) upheld the election victory of General Mamadi Doumbouya, cementing the junta leader’s transition to a democratically elected president four years after staging a coup in the West African nation. Mr. Doumbouya won the country’s first election since the 2021 coup after polling 86.7% of the votes, according to the General Directorate of Elections. His victory, which had been predicted by analysts, was confirmed by the Supreme Court in the capital Conakry. “Today, there are neither winners nor losers. There is only one Guinea, united and indivisible,” Mr. Doumbouya said in a broadcast late on Sunday, calling on citizens to “build a new Guinea, a Guinea of peace, justice, shared prosperity, and fully assumed political and economic sovereignty.”

Yero Balde, the runner-up who won 6.59% of the vote, had filed a petition accusing the electoral body of manipulating the results in Mr. Doumbouya’s favor. But authorities said he withdrew the petition a day before the Supreme Court verdict. The December 28 election was held under a new Constitution that revoked a ban on military leaders running for office and extended the presidential mandate from five years to seven years. Critics say Mr. Doumbouya has clamped down on political opponents and dissent since the 2021 coup, leaving him with no major opposition among the eight other candidates in the race. The weakened opposition “focused attention on Mamadi Doumbouya as the only key figure capable of ensuring the continuity of the state,” said N’Faly Guilavogui, a Guinean political analyst. “Guineans are waiting to see what



efforts he will make to ensure political stability and reconciliation,” Mr. Guilavogui added. Despite the country’s rich mineral resources including the world’s biggest exporter of bauxite, which is used to make aluminum, more than half of its 15 million people are experiencing record levels of poverty and food insecurity, according to the World Food Program. The junta’s most important initiative has been a mega-mining project at Simandou, the world’s largest iron ore deposit. The 75 per cent Chinese-owned project began production in December after decades of delays.

Who is Cilia Flores, Venezuela’s first lady captured by the US

New York: When US forces conducted a night raid on the Venezuelan capital Caracas, they didn’t just drag President Nicolás Maduro from his compound and put him on a boat to New York - they took his wife too. Cilia Flores, 69, has long been seen as one of the most powerful figures in Venezuela, a political operator in her own right who for decades has shaped the country’s fortunes. After years leading Venezuela’s National Assembly, she helped consolidate her husband’s grip on power after his 2013 presidential election victory. As First Lady, she was dubbed “First Warrior” by Maduro. But in that role she publicly took a backseat - presenting a more family-oriented face to what critics say was a brutal regime. She hosted a TV show, Con Cilia en Familia, and made occasional appearances on state television to dance salsa with her husband. But behind-the-scenes, she is thought to have been one of Maduro’s key advisers, and

an architect of his political survival.

Flores has faced allegations of corruption and nepotism, and in recent years her family members have been found guilty in US courts of cocaine smuggling. She will now face drug trafficking and weapons charges in a New York court, along with her husband. Flores met Maduro in the early 1990s, when - as a young up-and-coming lawyer - she took on the defence of the plotters of the failed 1992 coup attempt. Chief among them: Hugo Chávez, the man who would later become president. It was during those years that she met Maduro, who at the time was working for Chávez as a security guard. “I met Cilia in life,” Maduro recounted. “She was the lawyer for several imprisoned patriotic military officers years of struggle, and then, well, she caught my eye.” From then, both their fates became linked to Chávez and his political movement, known as Chavismo.

Ayurveda Explains How To Protect Your Body In Winter

Winter isn’t just a change in temperature. It’s a shift in how the body behaves. According to Ayurveda, the cold season intensifies Vata dosha, the principle associated with dryness, stiffness, poor circulation and low immunity. When ignored, this imbalance can lead to joint pain, sluggish digestion, low energy and frequent infections. The good news? Ayurveda doesn’t treat winter as something to ‘survive,’ but as a season to slow down, nourish deeply and rebuild strength. With a few mindful changes in food, daily routine and self-care, your body can stay warm, resilient and balanced through the coldest months.

Eat For Warmth And Strong Digestion

Ayurveda places digestion at the centre of winter health. Cold weather naturally weakens agni (digestive fire), which is why warming, cooked foods are essential. Favour meals that are freshly prepared, well-spiced and nourishing. Think khichdi, vegetable stews, soups, lentils, and slow-cooked grains. Spices like ginger, cumin, black pepper, cinnamon and turmeric help improve circulation and prevent the buildup of toxins (ama). Avoid cold foods, raw salads and iced drinks – even if you don’t feel immediately affected. These dampen digestion and aggravate Vata, making you feel colder from within.

Warm Beverages Are Not Optional
Sipping warm liquids throughout the day is one of Ayurveda’s simplest winter hacks. Hot water, herbal teas and spiced milk help maintain internal warmth and support detoxification. Try adding grated ginger, tulsi or a pinch of cinnamon to your tea. At night, a cup of warm milk with turmeric or nutmeg can calm the nervous system and improve sleep.

Oil Massage: Your Winter Armour
Abhyanga, or daily oil massage, is a cornerstone of Ayurvedic winter care.

Applying warm sesame oil before a bath improves circulation, keeps skin supple and protects against dryness and stiffness. Even a quick five-minute massage on joints, feet and scalp can make a difference. This practice not only warms the body but also calms the mind, especially important during darker, colder days when anxiety tends to rise.

Move Gently, But Move Daily
While winter invites rest, Ayurveda doesn’t recommend complete inactivity. Gentle movement keeps circulation flowing and prevents stiffness. Opt for yoga, stretching, walking or light strength training rather than intense cardio. Sun salutations, twisting poses and pranayama like kapalbhati or bhasrika

generate internal heat and boost lung health.

Protect Sleep And Daily Rhythm
Short days and long nights can disrupt the body clock. Ayurveda advises sleeping early and waking with the sun whenever possible. Consistent routines help stabilise Vata and improve immunity. Keep evenings calm. Limit screens, dim lights, and follow grounding rituals like journaling, meditation or warm baths. Winter Is For Nourishment, Not Restriction Unlike summer, winter is the season for nourishment. By aligning with nature instead of resisting it, Ayurveda teaches us that winter can be a season of strength, warmth and restoration and not discomfort.



Beauty Industry Learns The Language of Skin Longevity

In 2025, beauty stopped speaking the language of appearance and began speaking the language of longevity. Skincare, once dominated by promises of instant glow and visible correction, increasingly aligned itself with ideas borrowed from health, nutrition, and preventive science, resilience, repair, and long-term performance. This shift reflects a deeper understanding that skin is not just a surface to be perfected, but a living organ whose capabilities change with time, environment, and lifestyle. This evolution is not limited to consumer behaviour. Rachna Bahadur, founder & CEO of Flout Beauty, says, “It is being shaped at the highest levels of the global beauty industry. Major groups such as L’Oréal, Unilever, and The Estée Lauder Companies have invested heavily in skin biology research, barrier science, microbiome studies, and extended clinical testing models. The emphasis has shifted from fast trend cycles to longer scientific timelines, where products are designed and evaluated for how they support skin health over years, not weeks.” At the heart of this shift is a more nuanced understanding of what longevity means in skincare. Longevity is often mistaken for a softer version of anti-ageing. In reality, it represents a fundamentally different approach. Traditional



anti-ageing frameworks have largely been interventionist, focused on correcting visible signs after they appear. Longevity, by contrast, is supportive and preventative. It prioritises preserving skin’s core functions so that visible ageing progresses more gradually. Its ability to repair, renew, defend, and adapt. Importantly, this perspective does not position skincare against aesthetic procedures. Instead, it re-frames skincare as the long-term foundation that works alongside interventions, supporting skin before and after treatments and helping maintain results over time. This longevity lens has naturally brought skin barrier health into sharper focus. In 2025, the barrier was no longer a niche concern reserved for sensitive skin. It became widely recognised as central to how skin ages. Barrier breakdown is now understood to play a role in inflammation, pigmentation

irregularities, heightened sensitivity, and accelerated ageing. As a result, longevity-oriented routines emphasise strengthening barrier integrity while delivering actives in ways skin can tolerate consistently over the long term. This does not mean abandoning performance ingredients. Proven actives such as retinoids remain foundational, but they are being re-examined through a longevity lens, not for speed or intensity alone, but for sustainability, formulation balance, and long-term compliance. Alongside these, a new generation of emerging actives is being explored for their role in cellular resilience and repair signalling. Many of these are still in early scientific stages, and the industry is increasingly cautious, recognising that longevity rewards evidence accumulated over time, not novelty alone. As this global movement toward longevity matures, an-

other important realisation is gaining ground: skin does not age in a vacuum. Indian skin, in particular, operates under unique conditions – higher UV exposure, heat, humidity, pollution, and lifestyle stressors. All of which place sustained pressure on the skin barrier and inflammatory pathways. This means that longevity solutions developed for temperate climates or different skin types do not always translate effectively. What is changing is the recognition that Indian skin requires its own research frameworks, testing protocols, and formulation logic. Rather than importing global ingredient trends, the focus is shifting toward understanding how skin behaves in local environments and designing solutions that reflect those realities. As the conversation around longevity carries into 2026, consumer expectations are evolving faster than industry conventions.

Mark Your Calendars: India’s Most Anticipated Cultural Festivals Of 2026

If 2026 is the year you plan to travel with purpose, India’s festival calendar offers a compelling starting point. Across deserts, river islands, mountain valleys and historic cities, the country’s cultural gatherings blur the lines between travel, art and lived experience. From literature festivals that spark ideas to music gatherings rooted in local communities, these events offer more than spectacle. They offer context, connection and memory.

Jaipur Literature Festival – January

Often called the world’s largest free literary festival, the Jaipur Literature Festival transforms the Pink City into a global meeting ground for writers, thinkers and artists. Panel discussions, debates and book launches unfold against a heritage backdrop, making it as much a cultural immersion as an intellectual one. The 19th edition is scheduled for January 15–19, 2026.

Goa Carnival – February

Rooted in Portuguese tradition, the Goa Carnival is a burst of colour, music and theatrical parades. Floats roll through the streets, dancers take over public spaces, and food becomes a central attraction. In 2026, celebrations are expected between February 14 and 17.

Rann Utsav – Till February 2026

Set against the stark white expanse of the Rann of Kutch, this festival celebrates Gujarat’s crafts, folk traditions and desert life. Cultural performances, craft bazaars and starlit desert nights make it one of India’s most visually arresting experiences, running until February 28, 2026.

Kochi-Muziris Biennale – Till March 2026

India’s premier contemporary art exhibition takes over warehouses, heritage buildings and open spaces across Kochi.

Installations and performances explore political, social and cultural themes, offering a deeply immersive art experience until March 31, 2026.

International Flower Festival, Sikkim – May

Gangtok comes alive with rare orchids, rhododendrons and floral showcases during this month-long celebration. Beyond flowers, the festival features cultural performances, conferences and outdoor activities that spotlight Sikkim’s biodiversity.

Hemis Gompa Festival, Ladakh – June/July

One of Ladakh’s most significant Buddhist festivals, Hemis is known for its masked dances, sacred music and the ceremonial unfurling of giant thangkas. The event offers rare



insight into Himalayan spiritual traditions.

Nehru Trophy Snake Boat Race – August

Kerala’s famed snake boats cut through Punnamada Lake in dramatic synchrony, powered by hundreds of oarsmen chanting traditional songs. The race is both a sporting event and a cultural celebration.

Ziro Music Festival – September

Hosted by the Apatani community in Arunachal Pradesh’s Ziro Valley, this indie music festival blends global sounds with local culture in an intimate, eco-conscious setting.

Majuli Music Festival – November/December

Held on the world’s largest river island, this festival cel-



brates Assam’s musical heritage alongside contemporary sounds, framed by the Brahmaputra’s shifting landscapes.

Hornbill Festival, Nagaland – December

Known as the “festival of festivals,” Hornbill brings together Nagaland’s tribes through dance, music, crafts and food. It’s a fitting finale to a year rich in cultural discovery.



Rajesh Mapuskar discusses creating India’s first AI-generated theatre film



Mumbai: Chiranjeevi Hanuman-The Eternal, India’s first totally AI-generated theatrical production, is being directed by national award winner Rajesh Mapuskar and will be released in theaters on Hanuman Jayanti this year.He states, “This is an opportunity which has come my way,” in reference to this groundbreaking move. I want to see what I can do with this because I feel like I was picked for it. I enjoy the difficulties of venturing into uncharted territory. Rajesh Mapuskar responds, “When you make animation, you have complete control over even a little muscle

movement of your character,” when asked to distinguish animation from artificial intelligence. Even though AI is an interactive tool, it functions in parallel with your brain. It might not always act the way you want it to. However, you might be surprised by something you never considered. It’s like having a breathing person collaborate with you. Rajesh disagrees with the industry’s perception that AI poses a danger to human employment. “It is not a threat, in my opinion. Based on my little experience, AI won’t diminish employment prospects or replace people. The

procedure will be accelerated by AI. Whether you are controlling AI or allowing it to control you depends on how you approach it. AI has the potential to improve traditional filmmaking. My generative team is currently at least 200. I still require human strength and people’s combined efforts. “AI won’t be replacing any jobs,” he claims.Rajesh acknowledges that he learned from the recent release of the AI web series Mahabharat: Ek Dharmayudh and the reaction it received. “You have to be considerate of the audience’s input while working on a project like this that involves such rapidly changing technology because who are you creating this stuff for? I therefore read all of the comments regarding both the show and my released teaser. Those remarks may open my eyes and provide me with some insight into how others perceived my attempts at creation.

Hema Malini Responds To Dharmendra’s Separate Prayer Meeting In Delhi

Mumbai: Just two weeks before turning 90, film veteran Dharmendra passed away on November 24. After complaining of dyspnea in late October, the elderly actor was hospitalized to Mumbai’s Breach Candy Hospital. Sunny and Bobby Deol, along with their mother Prakash Kaur, organized a prayer gathering at Mumbai’s Taj Lands End Hotel on November 27 in the wake of his passing. On the same day, Hema Malini hosted a bhajan and puja at her Mumbai residence. Esha and Ahana, Hema Malini’s daughters, were absent from the Deols’ prayer gathering. On December 11, Hema Malini organized a second prayer gathering in New Delhi. After the separate prayer meetings, there was a lot of conjecture that highlighted the interpersonal dynamics between Dharmendra’s two families. In a recent interview, Hema Malini addressed the matter head-on and explained her position.”Yeh humare ghar ka personal mamla hai. We conversed with one another. Because everyone in my group is different, I

held one prayer meeting at my house. Then, because I work in politics and it was crucial for me to hold a prayer gathering for my friends in that industry, I kept one in Delhi. The people in my constituency, Mathura, are furious with him. I thus held a prayer meeting there as well. I’m pleased with my actions,” Hema Malini said. Salman Khan, Rekha, Vidya Balan, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, and numerous more celebrities were present for the Deols’ prayer meet. Amit Shah, Nir-mala Sitharaman, Kiren Rijiju, Om Birla, Kangana Ranaut, Ranjit, Anil Sharma, and other politicians and movie stars joined the Delhi prayer meet at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre in Janpath.In the same interview, Hema Malini recounted their wish that Dharamji would be well and be able to celebrate his 90th birthday with his family.”The shock was unbearable. It has been awful because we struggled for a month while he was ill. We were always attempting to deal with whatever was going on in the hospital. Bobby, Ahana, Sunny,

Esha, and I were all present. He had previously visited the hospital and returned home without any problems. Hema Malini remarked, “We thought iss baar bhi aa jayenge.”“He was having a pleasant conversation with us. He even sent me a birthday greeting on October 16. His 90th birthday was approaching on December 8th, and we were planning a lovely celebration. He abruptly vanished while the preparations were underway. It

was really hard to watch him sink firsthand. An emotional Hema Malini said, “Nobody should have to go through this kind of situation.”After overcoming her personal loss, Hema Malini makes a fresh commitment to her career. ”I’m going back to work immediately. I am on my way to Mathura. I’m going to start doing shows, performances, and jo jo kaam hai because that’s what would make Dharamji happy,” she declared.



“Pakistan Not To Be Trusted”: Following Dhurandhar Comparisons, Ikkis’ Disclaimer Goes Viral

Mumbai: On January 1, two Hindi movies debuted in theaters, creating the conditions for an uncommon box office battle. Dhurandhar, starring Ranveer Singh and Akshaye Khanna, returned to theaters with a revamped version while Ikkis, starring Dharmendra, Agastya Nanda, and Simar Bhatia, debuted in theaters. Social media users were quick to draw comparisons between the two movies, despite the fact that Dhurandhar has been airing successfully for more than a month. Both films center on themes of patriotism, the Indian Army, and India’s battle with Pakistan, albeit depicting quite different storylines. The disclaimer in Ikkis started going viral online during this discussion. ”The humane behavior of Pakistani Brigadier KM Sisar is only an exceptional incident,” the statement reads. Otherwise, our neighbor is completely untrustworthy. Pakistan’s armed forces have treated its soldiers and inhabitants with extreme cruelty and inhumanity, both in times of war and peace.”

It continues, “They have blatantly and repeatedly violated the Geneva Convention by torturing them. As responsible citizens, we must constantly be vigilant and ready in light of Pakistan’s sponsorship of terrorist actions. In just four days, Ikkis has made Rs 20.15 crore at the box office. The Sriram Raghavan-directed film made Rs 7 crore on Thursday, Rs 3.5 crore on Friday, Rs 4.65 crore on Saturday, and Rs 5 crore on its debut



Sunday, according to trade tracker Sacnilk.overall occupancy rate for the movie was 23.93%. The percentage of morning shows increased from 9.74% to 28.15% in the afternoon.

The greatest occupancy rate was 37.23% for evening shows and 20.59% for night shows.Dhurandhar, which has made Rs 772.25 crore at the domestic box office in just 31 days, continues to pose a serious threat to Ikkis. Ikkis, which takes place during the 1971 Indo-Pak war, is based on the true story of Second Lieutenant Arun Khetarpal, India’s youngest recipient of the Param Vir Chakra. It tells the narrative of the officer’s

bravery and selflessness after he was killed at the age of 21 in the Battle of Basantar. Arun Khetarpal is portrayed by Agastya Nanda, his love interest Kiran is played by Simar Bhatia, and Arun’s father, Brigadier M.L. Khetarpal (Retd.), is played by Dharmendra. Rahul Dev, Vivaan Shah, Sikander Kher, Jaideep Ahlawat, and Suhasini Mulay play supporting parts in the movie. After his death on November 24, 2025, this movie is Dharmendra’s last on-screen appearance.Binny Padda, Sharada Karki Jalota, Poonam Shivdasani, and Dinesh Vijan, the founder of Maddock Films, are co-producers of Ikkis.

Malayalam actor Kannan Pattambi passed away at the age of 62

Mumbai: While receiving treatment for a kidney-related disease, actor and well-known production controller Kannan Pattambi passed away on Sunday night. He was sixty-two. Filmmaker Major Ravi, his older brother, verified the news of his passing. The actor passed away in a private hospital in Kozhikode at approximately 11:40 p.m.The funeral will take place at his home in Njanganthiri, Pattambi, on Monday at 4 p.m.Major Ravi posted the depressing news in Malayalam on Facebook. He honored his younger brother and shared a picture of Pattambi with his followers, along with information regarding the time of death and funeral. For many years, Kannan Pattambi was connected to the Malayalam cinema business. He was well-known for working closely with his brother, Major Ravi, a former Indian Army officer who went on to become a filmmaker.Kannan worked on movies that Major Ravi either produced or directed. Mission 90 Days, which was based on Major Ravi’s experiences during the Rajiv Gandhi assassination probe, was one of the noteworthy projects. He also contributed to a number of Mohanlal-starring movies. Pulimurugan was one of them; it became the first Malayalam movie to earn more than Rs 100 crore at the box office.



Timothee Chalamet tells Kylie Jenner “I Love You” after winning Award for Best Actor



Mumbai: After receiving his first Critics Choice Award on Sunday, Timothee Chalamet praised Kylie Jenner, his longtime girlfriend.For his role in Marty Supreme, a movie based on the life and career of American table tennis champion Marty Reisman, Chalamet, 28, won Best Actor. After four prior nominations, it was his first Critics Choice victory. Before focusing on Jenner in the crowd, Chalamet delivered heartfelt shoutouts to his fellow nominees, Michael B. Jordan, Leonardo DiCaprio, Ethan Hawke, Joel Edgerton, and Wagner Moura, during his acceptance speech.”I am grateful to my three-year companion. I adore you. Chalamet looked to Kylie and said, “I couldn’t do this without you.” He said, “Thank you from the bottom of my heart.” Jenner’s emo-

tional response to Chalamet’s endearing statement was captured on camera as she grinned and put her hands under her chin before mouthing back, “I love you.”Josh Safdie, the director, producer, and co-writer of Marty Supreme, was also commended by Chalamet. “Josh, you made a story about a flawed man with a relatable dream; you didn’t preach to the audience about what’s right and wrong, and I think we should all be telling stories like that,” Chalamet added, describing the emotional heart of the movie.

I’m grateful for this dream. Some of the most impactful performances of the year were highlighted in the 2026 Critics Choice Awards’ Best Actor contest, which was ultimately won by Timothee Chalamet for his portrayal in Marty Supreme.

Samantha Ruth Prabhu, Raj Nidimoru, and Tamannaah Bhatia Share an Unseen Christmas Celebration Moment



Mumbai: Samantha Ruth Prabhu posted a lovely photo of her Christmas festivities on social media a few days after celebrating the new year with husband Raj Nidimoru in Portugal.

On her Instagram Stories, the actress shared a photo from the day. The duo was seen joyfully standing next to a Christmas tree in the picture. Actress Tamannaah Bhatia was among the

friends that encircled them. Raj donned a rust-colored shirt over a black T-shirt, while Samantha was dressed in green velvet. For the event, Tamannaah chose a grey co-ord out-

fit.Samantha Ruth Prabhu and Raj Nidimoru took a plane to Portugal for their New Year’s vacation after Christmas. On Instagram, the actress posted a fun carousel from their vis-

it to Lisbon. The pictures showed the couple touring famous sites including the colorful Arco da Rua Augusta, the imposing Padrao dos Descobrimentos (Monument to the Discoveries), and the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary at the Sanctuary of Fatima.In one cute picture, Raj was looking wistfully at a chocolate-glazed doughnut, and in another, Samantha was cuddled up in a pink beanie and enjoying the stunning city views. The couple’s travels and love for one another while seeing the city were exquisitely captured in the pictures. The remark on the side said, “How December goes.”On December 1, 2025, Samantha Ruth Prabhu and filmmaker Raj Nidimoru tied the knot in a private ceremony in Coimbatore. Their close relatives and friends attended the small wedding. Actor Naga Chaitanya was Samantha’s previous spouse. The ex-couple announced their split in 2021 after getting married in 2017.

Aaryamann receives a guitar worth Rs 2.12 lakh as a birthday present



Mumbai: Right now, Archana Puran Singh, her husband Parmeet Sethi, and their boys Aaryamann and Ayushmaan are on vacation in London. Archana’s son Aaryamann found his birthday presents via an exciting treasure hunt in her most recent vlog. The highlight was when Aaryamann’s fiancée Yogita Bihani gave him a Martin & Co. OOO-15M acoustic guitar for Rs 2.12 lakh.Aaryamann announces his 30th birthday as soon as he wakes up in the opening scene of the video. When he descends

the stairs, he finds an empty house that has been adorned for the event and a birthday card that gives him instructions to locate his family members and presents in a manner akin to a treasure hunt.To figure out the first clue, Aaryamann asks his father for assistance. Yogita Bihani, Ayushmaan’s fiancée, is waiting for him at the Disney Store after he follows his hint. Aaryamann expresses gratitude to her for the surprise, but she disappears while he is meeting his mother. When Archana gives him an envelope,

he responds, “This is too much, guys.” “It’s your 30th birthday,” Parmeet responds, followed by a family hug; the specifics of the gift are first kept a secret. Aaryamann follows the next clue and goes to London Guitar Studio after realizing Yogita is missing. After receiving a ukulele, he is handed a “bigger version,” which turns out to be Yogita’s Martin & Co. guitar. The ”You guys hear music; I can only hear money,” says Aaryamann, identifying it as the OOO-15M acoustic model, which costs £1,750, or about Rs 2.12 lakh. After doing a lot of study, Yogita says that his friends helped choose it. Despite her suggestions, he maintains that it’s ideal, which causes an emotional moment as Archana congratulates her on the surprise.

In August 2025, Aaryamann and Yogita posted a proposal vlog on Instagram to announce their engagement. Aaryamann is passionate about music in addition to vlogging.

Amit Shah Uses the Tour Finale of the Tamil Nadu BJP Chief as the Party’s Poll Pitch



New Delhi, Jan 05: In Tamil Nadu, Union Home Minister Amit Shah successfully sounded the Bharatiya Janata Party’s campaign horn on Sunday, turning a function intended to commemorate state BJP chairman Nainar Nagendran’s statewide tour into a full-fledged election launch ahead of the Assembly elections. Amit Shah gave an aggressive speech to party em-

ployees and supporters, projecting confidence that the National Democratic Alliance will win the state. He launched a scathing assault on the ruling DMK, accusing it of corruption, dynastic politics, and failing to protect women. “First it was Karunanidhi, then MK Stalin, and now Udhayanidhi,” stated Amit Shah, taking aim at the DMK’s founding dynasty. The crowd erupted in cheers as he said, “Mr. Stalin, your dream will not come true.” The Home Minister brought up the politically delicate Thiruparankundram issue and said that the DMK administration was depriving Hindus of their rights. The BJP has been emphasizing this accusation more and more in an effort to strengthen its base of support. He referred to the resurrected AIADMK-BJP combination as a “natural alliance” and made a strong case for it. Amit Shah stated that although the AIADMK and BJP running independently in the 2024 Lok

Sabha elections, their combined vote share demonstrated the strength of the partnership. He claimed that a unified NDA has a good chance of forming the next government in Tamil Nadu. “In 2024, though we fought separately, we could have won 26 seats going by the vote share each got,” he added. However, Amit Shah’s visit coincides with the NDA’s severe difficulties in the state. With party chairman Edappadi K Palaniswami hesitant to reinstate expelled leaders Sasikala, O Panneerselvam, and TTV Dhinakaran, the AIADMK continues to be a divided house. OPS and Dhinakaran have already left the NDA, the PMK is undergoing a public father-son struggle, and the DMDK, which was formed by the late actor Vijayakanth, has not yet decided on partnerships. Actor Vijay’s Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam, which is scheduled to make its electoral debut, would introduce a new factor into the political arena.

Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam in the Delhi riots case are not granted bail

New Delhi, Jan 05: In the 2020 Delhi riots plot case, the Supreme Court on Monday rejected bail to activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, emphasizing that public order and national security concerns take precedence over allegations of protracted pre-trial detention. However, five additional suspects in the case—Gulfisha Fatima, Meeran Haider, Shifa Ur Rehman, Mohd Saleem Khan, and Shadab Ahmed—were granted bail by a bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and NV Anjaria. The Supreme Court denied Khalid and Imam bail, stating that the prosecution had presented enough evidence to support their involvement in the alleged criminal conspiracy. In response to the accused’s separate pleas contesting the Delhi High Court’s September 2 decision denying them relief in the conspiracy case, the Supreme Court postponed its decision until December 10. Senior attorneys Kapil Sibal, Abhishek Singhvi, Siddhartha Dave, Salman Khurshid, and Sidharth Luthra represented the accused, while Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and Additional Solicitor General SV Raju represented the Delhi Police. The Delhi Police opposed bail, claiming that the violence in northeast Delhi was the product of a “pre-planned and well-de-



signed” plot to weaken India’s sovereignty rather than being an isolated incident. The prosecution insisted that all of the defendants were accountable for each other’s acts since they were all involved in a similar scheme.

Joe Root gets closer to Sachin Tendulkar after matching Ricky Ponting’s century total



New Delhi : According to the International Cricket Council (ICC), veteran England batsman Joe Root now holds the joint third-highest number of Test hundreds in international cricket. In the fifth and final Ashes Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground in Sydney on Monday, the right-handed batsman scored his 41st Test century against Australia, joining Australian legend Ricky Ponting. In 168 Test matches, Australian hero Ponting amassed 13378 runs at an incredible average of 51.85, including 41 hundreds and 62 half-centuries. On Day 2 of the Sydney Test, Root scored his 41st Test century in 146 deliveries during England’s opening innings. In the ongoing Ashes



series, it was Root’s second hundred. The veteran had earlier scored a century in Brisbane’s pink-ball Test. This was Root’s 24th Test hundred, the most since 2021. Root is only slightly behind Indian superstar Sachin Tendulkar (51) and South African great Jacques Kallis (45) in the elite list of Most Test hundreds. The English batsman presently has 13777 runs in 162 games and 296 innings, and he is also very close to 14,000 in the Test format. Root has an excellent average of 50.83. In the meantime, on Day 2, England established a dominant position at lunch. Will Jacks (3* off 11 deliveries) and Root (138* off 200 balls, including 14 fours) were unbeaten at the bat as

the Three Lions reached 336/6 in 78 overs in their opening innings. Thirteen runs off twenty balls is the partnership for the seventh wicket. Australian speedster Mitchell Starc began the second session by dismissing Brook for 84 runs off 97 deliveries, including six fours and one maximum on the fourth ball of the 48th over, shattering the massive 169-run partnership for the fourth wicket. Australia’s Marnus Labuschagne dismissed Jamie Smith for 46 off 76 balls, including six fours and one six, in the 75th over, ending the 94-run partnership for the sixth wicket. On Day 2, England scored 336/6 at lunch. Earlier, England chose to bat first after winning the toss. Due to rain and poor lighting, only 45 overs were bowled on Day 1 following the third session of the day. Ben Duckett (27 off 24 balls, with five boundaries) and Zak Crawley (16 off 29 balls, with three fours) put together a 35-run partnership for the first wicket. Before Root and Harry Brook stabilized the ship and assisted the visitors in surpassing the 100-run threshold in the first session, Jacob Bethell left after scoring 10 runs off 23 deliveries, including two fours. In the opening session, Australia’s Mitchell Starc, Scott Boland, and Michael Neser each claimed one wicket. England dominated the second session, reaching 155/3 after 33 overs as they continued to score boundaries. In the very next over, Brook scored his half-century after striking a four against speedster Beau Webster, while Root got his well-earned fifty in 65 deliveries. In the 42nd over, the visitors reached 200 runs. Before the third session on Day 1 was cancelled due to rain and poor lighting, Root and Brook reached a 150-run partnership for the fourth wicket in the 43rd over, putting the visitors in a commanding position as they went into tea without losing a single wicket in the second session.

Ousmane Dembele and Desire Doue Light Up the First Paris Derby in More Than 35 Years



New Delhi: The French capital experienced its first top-flight derby since 1990 as Paris Saint-Germain defeated Paris FC 2-1 on Sunday, marking the return of Desire Doue and Ousmane Dembele to the starting lineup. Thanks to goals from Doue and Dembele either side of half-time, Luis Enrique’s second-place PSG prevailed, bringing them within one point of unexpected league leaders Lens. “I think it was Ousmane’s best game (of the season) tonight, he’s back to his best,” Luis Enrique remarked about his star attacker, who has had a difficult season due to injuries. PSG’s most recent home loss to a recently promoted team occurred in May 2010, when

they were defeated 3-1 by Montpellier. Both teams are very different from what they were almost 36 years ago, and none of the starting on either side at the Parc on Sunday were even alive when that game was played. Supported by Qatar since 2011, PSG has won the Champions League last season in addition to 12 of their 13 domestic titles in France. If they are the top dogs in the City of Light, PFC’s impressive performance solidified their position as the second-best team in Paris. The Arnault family, who own LVMH, invested in them last season, and they quickly gained promotion to Ligue 1. When Doue surged into the box and was felled by

Otatio halfway through the first period, dominant PSG believed they had a penalty; however, a VAR review determined that the initial contact had been outside the box. The next time he found himself driving into the PFC area, however, the 20-year-old left nothing up to VAR. On minute forty-five, he expertly timed his run onto Fabian Ruiz’s pass and smashed the ball past Kevin Trapp. Willem Geubbels tied the score for the visitors at minute fifty-one, and Illya Zabarnyi upended Alimami Gory in the box to start the second period in a chaotic manner. But after just two minutes of parity, Ballon d’Or winner Dembele entered the game with a left-footed shot that was severely deflected as it passed a defenseless Trapp. Lucas Chevalier, the goalie for PSG, was used a few times for the remainder of the game, but the defending champions managed to keep PFC at bay to win the eagerly anticipated contest. “I want to participate in a lot more Parisian derbies. Luis Enrique continued, “We like having Paris FC in Ligue 1.”

Deepinder Goyal, CEO of Zomato, Discusses Childhood Trauma and Why Co-Founders Left

New Delhi, Jan 05: Deepinder Goyal, the CEO of Zomato, has given many explanations for why senior executives and co-founders have left the firm over the years, including burnout, leadership conflicts, changing objectives, and the costs associated with growing a huge organization. Goyal stated that the term “co-founder” should not be confused with permanence in an interview with businessman Raj Shamani on his podcast. “We need a founder’s mindset in the organization,” he stated, adding that Zomato rewards staff members who exhibit accountability, ownership, and long-term thinking. He pointed out that because of their dedication, several employees who joined later were unofficially referred to as “founders.” Goyal made it apparent that the co-founders’ departure was not due to a lack of skill. He explained, “They were co-founders because they were really good and had that mindset.” However, other factors entered the scene after they departed.



Their status as founders had nothing to do with it. Goyal stated that their leadership philosophies gradually “diverged,” referring to early co-founder Pankaj Chaddah. He explained this as a normal part of long entrepreneurial journeys. Goyal accepted the existence of burnout. He added that exits are not always final, saying, “That also happens.” “Over the course of Zomato’s existence, over 100 individuals have left and returned.” “Everybody has a cycle of energy. Goyal stated, “Life happens, priorities change.

“But a person cannot change the organization’s priorities.” Goyal acknowledged that he hasn’t always managed exits politely. Over the years, he admitted to getting angry with a few senior leaders and occasionally asking them to leave. He once remembered facing a top product leader who had secretly agreed to his suggestions in a meeting but publicly rejected them. “This is not where you belong. Goyal told the individual to “get out.” “I call and apologize nine times out of ten when I regret it,” he stated.

Real Sociedad Draw Dents Atletico Madrid’s Title Hopes

New Delhi: Atletico Madrid is now 11 points behind La Liga leaders Barcelona after only managing a 1-1 draw at Real Sociedad on Sunday. Diego Simeone’s team tied third-place Villarreal with 38 points, although they have lost more ground in the Spanish title race despite having played two more games than them. Early in the second half, Alexander Sorloth gave Atletico the lead, but Goncalo Guedes equalized five minutes later to give Pellegrino Matarazzo, the American coach of Real Sociedad, a point in his first game in charge. Real Sociedad, the hosts, got off to a strong start when Mikel Oyarzabal’s long-range shot went just wide and Jan Oblak had to push away Brais Mendez’s effort. Despite occasional threats from Atletico, who have only won two of their previous five league games, the Basque team was ahead and nearly took the lead before the interval. Sorloth, a striker for Rojiblancos, headed



into his own net, but Mendez, who stood in front of the Norwegian, disallowed the goal due to offside. Giuliano Simeone’s cross put his team ahead five minutes into the second half when Sorloth nodded into the same goal. Conor Gallagher had the opportunity to double Atletico’s lead, but when he went through on goal, he blasted wide of the near post and was quickly sent off. After Takefusa Kubo raced into the box and threw the ball across for

the unmarked Portuguese winger to finish, Guedes tied the score for Real Sociedad. Antoine Griezmann went through but was only able to shoot at the Spaniard from a narrow angle, forcing Alex Remiro, Oblak’s opposite number, to intervene as well. Oblak produced a deft low save to stop Kubo. In stoppage time, Carlos Soler had the opportunity to win for La Real, but his shot painfully missed the far post, dropping his team to 15th place.

India’s fastest man, craving more: For 2026, Animesh Kujur has great intentions

New Delhi: During his off-season, sprinter Animesh Kujur told India Today, “I want to hit 10-flat in 2026.” He has never discussed it in public before. However, Animesh is aware that dreaming in private is no longer sufficient after the type of year he has had. Animesh Kujur’s breakout year was 2025. His times rewrote record books, his pace attracted attention, and all of a sudden the topic of Indian sprinting gained a new moniker. Animesh became India’s fastest man last season. His chosen event, the 200 meters, took him 20.32 seconds, while the 100 meters took him 10.18 seconds. He just continued getting better at different times over the year, race after race and meet after meet. The 22-year-old’s rise has been gradual rather than abrupt, even though he was introduced to sprinting later than most. 2025 was not a freak increase, as those who have followed his progress closely are aware. Animesh accomplished all an Indian sprinter could hope for in a single season,

including breaking numerous national records, competing on the U23 Diamond League circuit, and running the heats at the World Athletics Championships. Meeting his hero, Usain Bolt, and getting up close and personal with the world’s greatest athletes were moments of wonder that lingered long after the spikes were removed. “The part about having fun is over,” he declares. “I want to stamp my authority now.” Animesh declared, “I want to be the first Indian to do 10-flat and 20-flat in the 100 and 200.” “I have a lot of stake in it. I intend to finish it during the Senior Federation meeting in May of 2026. Animesh thinks he will be a medal contender in at least two of the events he will compete in at the Asian Games in September: the 200-meter sprint and the 4x100-meter men’s relay. He declared, “This time, I’ll go to the Asian Games as a medal contender, not just to participate.” “My primary goals are the Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games.”

Neeraj CHOPRA

Despite his young age, Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has already etched his name in the history books by becoming the first and only track and field athlete from the country to win an Olympic medal – that too a gold. He is also a world champion - India's first-ever in senior athletics - and a Diamond League winner, also a first by any Indian. Neeraj Chopra's gold medal at Tokyo 2020 was also India's second individual Olympic gold medal after shooter Abhinav Bindra's 10m air rifle glory at Beijing 2008. Heading into the Tokyo Olympics, Neeraj Chopra was, at best, a dark horse in the men's javelin competition which featured a strong field consisting of overwhelming favourite Johannes Vetter, reigning world champion Anderson Peters, London 2012 gold medallist Keshorn Walcott, among others. Come the main event, though, the Indian stepped up in a major way. Neeraj Chopra topped the qualifying round with an 86.65m throw, finishing above Vetter's 85.64m. The challenge from Vetter in the final never materialised and Chopra led the field from start to finish. While his first throw measuring 87.03m put him on the perch, Neeraj Chopra consolidated his spot with an 87.58m second attempt – a throw that eventually proved enough to win him the historic gold medal. The win was the culmination of a remarkable, yet short, journey which began with a 13-year-old obese kid taking up sports to lose weight and gain confidence.

Neeraj Chopra was unable to defend his Olympic title at Paris 2024, but walked away with a silver medal as his best effort of 89.45m was second only to Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, who took the gold with an Olympic record-shattering 92.97m effort. Only four Indian athletes have won multiple individual medals at the Olympics to date - Neeraj Chopra, shooter Manu Bhaker, wrestler Sushil Kumar and badminton star PV Sindhu. However, none of the other three boast of a more impressive set than

Neeraj.Both Sindhu and Sushil have one silver and one bronze while Manu won both her bronze medals at Paris 2024.Neeraj Chopra took to javelin throw after watching the sport at the Shivaji Stadium in Panipat. With the ability to throw over 40m with no training, his talent for the discipline was obvious.Indian javelin thrower Jaiveer Choudhary recognised his potential and took Neeraj Chopra under his wings. With proper coaching, there was no turning back for the Haryana lad.Neeraj Chopra dominated the national scene at the youth level and won multiple international accolades. He shot to fame after winning the gold medal at the 2016 IAAF World U20 Championships in Bydgoszcz, Poland. His winning throw of 86.48m at Poland was the under-20 javelin throw record and made him the first Indian track and field athlete to become a world champion at any level and hold a world record. With the qualifying cut off for Rio 2016 men's javelin throw set at 83.00m, the attempt would also have qualified Neeraj Chopra for his maiden Olympics but unfortunately, it came a week after the qualification window had shut. Before that, injuries had hampered Neeraj Chopra's Rio qualification campaign.Undeterred, though, Neeraj Chopra continued shining on the international stage. He became the Asian champion in 2017 before winning gold at the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games and the Jakarta 2018 Asian Games.Neeraj Chopra missed the 2019 world championships due to an elbow injury, which required surgery and was sidelined for 16 months. The Indian, however, bounced back immediately after his return to qualify for Tokyo 2020 at a meet in Potchefstroom, South Africa in January 2020. Just a year after his Tokyo triumph, Neeraj Chopra became the first Indian to win a silver medal at the World Athletics Championships. At Oregon 2022, Neeraj Chopra logged a best effort of 88.31m to finish behind reigning champion Anderson Peters of Grenada, who managed a 90.54m throw to defend his crown.The Indian



javelin thrower's medal was India's second-ever at the worlds after long jumper Anju Bobby George's bronze medal at the 2003 Paris world championships. The following year, he did one better by becoming the undisputed world champion in men's javelin throw at Budapest 2023, with his 88.17m effort beating Arshad Nadeem and Jakub Vadlejch to the punch. Months later, the Indian ace successfully defended his Asian Games gold at Hangzhou, the People's Republic of China. Neeraj Chopra also won the

men's javelin throw Diamond League Trophy in 2022, making him the first Indian champion at the prestigious athletics series. Chopra, a 2018 Arjuna awardee, has also been in possession of the Indian national record in men's javelin throw since 2016 and has bettered his own marks consistently. Neeraj Chopra's standing national record is 90.23m, achieved at the Doha Diamond League 2025. When he's not competing, Neeraj Chopra serves as a commissioned officer in the Indian Army.



Saina Nehwal

Saina Nehwal (born March 17, 1990, Hisar, Haryana, India) is the first Indian badminton player to win an Olympic medal. During the 2012 Olympic Games in London, she captured the women's singles bronze medal. She has won more than 20 titles internationally, and in 2016 she received India's third highest civilian award, the Padma Bhushan. Nehwal, whose parents are both former professional badminton players, started playing the game in 1998, after moving from her hometown of Hisar to Hyderabad. There her father took her to the Lal Bahadur Shastri Stadium to learn the sport. Nani Prasad Rao, a coach at the stadium, noticed Nehwal's talent and encouraged her family to invest in her future in badminton. Her parents were supportive and made financial sacrifices to ensure that Nehwal would be successful. In 2004 she began training under badminton player and coach Pullela Gopichand and became a nationally recognized junior champion in India's National Badminton Championship; she won the title again in 2005. That same year Nehwal became an international champion, winning the Asian Satellite Badminton Tournament. Nehwal won a bronze medal in the mixed team event at the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne and claimed the Philippines Open title that same year. In 2008 she became the national champion of India and the world junior champion. She broke new ground at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing when she became the first Indian badminton player to reach an Olympic quarterfinal. Later that year she won the Chinese Taipei Open. Her breakthrough came in 2009, when she won the Indonesia Open, which made her the first Indian to earn a Badminton World Federation (BWF) series title. Her performances earned her the Arjuna Award in 2009 and the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award (now the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award) in 2010. She was also honored with the Padma Shri, India's fourth highest civilian award, that same year. In June 2010 Nehwal won the Singapore Open and was ranked second in the world. That October she claimed a gold medal in women's singles and a silver medal in the mixed team event at the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi. She capped off the year by winning the Hong Kong Super Series in December. In 2011 Nehwal won the Swiss Open Grand Prix Gold and became the first Indian singles player to reach the final of the BWF Super Series Finals.



Nehwal entered the 2012 Olympic Games in London determined to make up for her quarterfinal exit at the 2008 Olympics. Unfortunately, a week before the Games, she contracted a viral fever. Despite not being in peak condition during the tournament, she went on to win the bronze medal match against Chinese player Wang Xin, who withdrew during the match because of a twisted knee. Nehwal, who had not expected to win by default because of an opponent's injury, went across the court to comfort Wang. Earlier that year Nehwal won the Indonesia Open Super Series Premier, and she later added the Denmark Open to her victories. In 2014 she won the India Open Grand Prix Gold after defeating another Indian player, P.V. Sindhu, and she secured a bronze medal in the Uber Cup. In June she won the Australian Open Super Series, defeating Spanish player Carolina Marin. Later that year Nehwal started training under coach

thoroscopic surgery, which kept her off the court for four months. Nevertheless, she made a strong comeback in 2018, winning two gold medals (women's singles and mixed team) at the Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Australia, and a bronze medal at the Badminton

Vimal Kumar and won the China Open Super Series Premier, becoming the first Indian woman to claim the title. The following year, she won her maiden India Open BWF Super Series and was ranked number one in the world. In 2016 Nehwal helped India win a bronze medal in the Uber Cup women's team event. However, a knee injury at the Rio Olympics that same year led to her early exit. She underwent ar-

Asia Championships. Later that year Nehwal married her longtime partner and fellow badminton player Parupalli Kashyap. The couple separated in July 2025. Over the years, injuries continued to hamper her career, and she struggled with recurring knee issues. In 2024 she revealed that she has arthritis, which makes it difficult to train at full intensity. She acknowledged that her career was in its final phase and said that she would decide on retirement soon. Saina Nehwal has won numerous medals at international tournaments, making significant contributions to Indian badminton. Badminton, court or lawn game played with lightweight rackets and a shuttlecock. The roots of the sport can be traced to the old game battledore and shuttlecock, which was played in ancient Greece, China, and India. The game was taken from India to England, where it was first played in Gloucestershire, at the country estate of the 9th duke of Beaufort, Henry Somerset, about 1873. The sport is named for this Badminton estate. Historically, the shuttlecock (also known as a "bird" or "birdie") was a small cork hemisphere pierced by 16 goose feathers and weighing about 0.17 ounce (5 grams). This type of shuttle may still be used in modern play, but shuttles made from synthetic materials are also allowed by

the international governing body of the sport. Badminton rackets are made of aluminum, steel, or carbon fiber and are available in various sizes and weights to accommodate different player preferences. Nehwal signed an endorsement deal worth Rs. 400 million with the sports management firm Rhiti Sports in 2012.

