

Tripura opposition demands removal of Tribal Welfare Minister over controversial remarks against TMP

Agartala, Dec 15: Leader of the Opposition in the Tripura Assembly, Jitendra Chaudhury, on Monday demanded the immediate removal of Tribal Welfare Minister Bikash Debbarma from the Manik Saha-led Cabinet, accusing him of making unconstitutional and inflammatory remarks against the Tipra Motha Party (TMP), an important ally of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Raising serious concerns, Chaudhury alleged that Debbarma made threatening statements during a political rally held in Agartala on December 13.

According to him, the minister reportedly warned TMP leaders and supporters that he would “rip them apart like chicken” if they failed to control what he described as “hooliganism.” Chaudhury said such language from a sitting minister was unacceptable and dangerous in a democratic setup. The Tipra Motha Party, along with the Indigenous People’s Front of Tripura (IPFT), is a junior part-



ner in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in Tripura. Given this political arrangement, the Opposition leader said the remarks were not only provocative but also damaging to the stability of the ruling coalition. Chaudhury pointed out that several senior leaders were present

at the rally where the alleged remarks were made. These included Chief Minister Manik Saha, BJP state president Rajib Bhat-tacharjee, and cabinet ministers Sushanta Chowdhury and Tinku Roy. He questioned why no immediate objection was raised at the event and said the silence of se-

nior leaders sent a wrong message. In a video message shared on social media, the LoP strongly condemned Debbarma’s statements, calling them “totally unconstitutional and inflammatory.” He said that threatening language by a minister amounts to a cognisable offence and goes against the

basic values of the Constitution. “The manner in which the Tribal Welfare Minister threatened to rip apart TMP leaders and workers like chicken is unacceptable. Such statements violate constitutional norms and must be condemned,” Chaudhury said. While acknowledging that political parties may disagree and criticise each other, Chaudhury stressed that a minister has no authority to issue threats or use violent language against any political group. He said ministers are expected to act responsibly and uphold democratic values. Chaudhury urged Governor N. Indrasena Reddy and Chief Minister Manik Saha to take immediate action by removing Bikash Debbarma from the Cabinet. He warned that failing to act could worsen the already tense political situation in the state. “If immediate steps are not taken, the political environment in Tripura, which is already under strain, will deteriorate further,” he said.

In Brief

Golden Triangle Drugs Pour into Assam

Shillong: Drug misuse in Assam has escalated despite anti-drug efforts by local authorities. The region is heavily affected by the “Golden Triangle” drug trafficking network, which includes parts of Southeast Asia and northeastern India. Tamu, a border town in Myanmar, plays a pivotal role in determining drug routes into Assam, where heroin, opium, and other narcotics are prevalent. Drug addiction has led to a rise in antisocial behavior among youth, raising critical concerns about the impact on community safety and prevalence of crime. Moreover, Assam serves as a key market for traffickers, with drugs smuggled through established distribution channels, prompting questions about the future of drug use in the Northeast.

Anjaw accident

Itanagar: A senior official reported that three bodies were recovered from a steep valley in Arunachal Pradesh where a minitruck from Assam had fallen. State Disaster Management Secretary Dani Salu stated that 20 remains have been found since Friday. The bodies will be returned to their families for further transport. Salu mentioned that there were 21 laborers aboard, including the driver. Search operations will end once a confirmed count of the laborers is obtained. The recovery operation, resumed at dawn by a joint Army and NDRF team, followed the accident occurring on December 8, about 40 kilometers from Hayuliang.

Mizoram CM reviews progress of Tripura-Mizoram gas pipeline

Aizawl: Chief Minister Lalduhoma engaged with Subrata Das, CEO of Indradhanush Gas Grid Limited (IGGL), to evaluate the Tripura-Mizoram Gas Pipeline project’s progress and discuss implementation challenges. The pipeline will run from the Panisagar Receiving Terminal in Tripura through several towns before reaching the proposed Sihhmui Receiving Terminal near Mamit, spanning a total of 119.5 kilometers with a one-foot diameter. The project aims to provide household gas connections in Aizawl city via Tripura Natural Gas Corporation Limited. It is part of the North East Natural Gas Pipeline Grid, specifically Phase II, which includes an overall 723-kilometer pipeline connecting Guwahati, Agartala, and Aizawl.

Two women among seven militants held in Manipur

Imphal: According to officials on Sunday, security forces in Manipur have detained seven militants from various districts, including two female cadres, and recovered some weapons and ammunition in the last 24 hours. Five militants from the banned United National Liberation Front (UNLF) and People’s Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) were detained from various locations in the districts of Bishnupur, Imphal West, and Imphal East, according to a police official.

Golden Triangle Drugs Pour into Assam

Bokakhat, Dec 15: Drug misuse has taken on a horrifying new shape. Despite the success of the Golaghat police administration’s anti-drug efforts, drug trafficking persists through extensive networks by avoiding police detection. Assam is under risk due to the so-called “Golden Triangle,” which is made up of Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar, and Manipur and Nagaland in India. Known as one of the cursed zones of global civilization, this area is currently a source from which drugs are transported into Assam and then to other Indian states. The town of Tamu in Myanmar is close to the border between India and Myanmar, where National Highway 39, which begins in Numaligarh, ends. The amount and delivery routes of the medications

are determined by Tamu. In Tamu, the smuggling of electronics manufactured in China is widespread. Smugglers sell thousands of goods illegally notwithstanding an agreement between India and Myanmar for the trading of 23 commodities. Opium, marijuana, heroin, morphine, and other narcotics are made in the Golden Triangle using raw materials derived from poppy farming. Sources claim that our nation provides the chemicals needed to make these medications. These intoxicating chemicals are referred to as “Number Four” in that area rather than even being called drugs. The Northeastern states, especially Assam, are currently experiencing a drug overload. The majority of antisocial acts in the area involve young people who are drug addicts. They

completely lose their sense of right and wrong after using narcotics. When addiction takes hold, people use all available resources to purchase drugs, which leads to a variety of crimes. This poses a crucial question: when will drug use be eradicated in the Northeast? The disturbing truth is that the Northeast is the primary route used by drug traffickers from Myanmar. The area is close to Myanmar, and illicit shipments can easily pass through Manipur and Nagaland to reach Assam. Assam offers a profitable market. When drugs are brought into Assam in large quantities, several rackets with specialized distribution networks are established. Drugs are cleverly carried to locations outside of Assam via the Diphu–Lumding roads and National Highways 37 and 39.

Dr.Nivashree Deka’s book of poem’s ‘Life is a Feeling’ released

Guwahati, Dec 15: ‘Jiban Ki Anubhuti’, a book of poems in Hindi and Assamese language edited by Dr. Nibashree Deka, was released at the Radha Gobinda Baruah Auditorium at Sahitya Sabha Bhawan in the city on Sunday. The meeting, which was held under the chairmanship of Ranjita Das Lahkar, former associate and head of the Assamese department of Lalit Chandra Bharali College, began with the lighting of the bonfire. Former Principal of Pragjyotish College Dr. Dayanand Pathak lit the main lamp. Thereafter, in the memory of Late Umakanta Deka, his wife Dipali Deka lit the lamp and the programme was inaugurated. While releasing the book in the meeting, Dr. Dayanand Pathak gave a brief speech on poetry. Professor Asim Ranjan Sharma, Head of the Department of Education, Mirza Dakshin Kamrup College, attended the meeting as a distinguished guest. Deepali Deka and Yogesh Malla. Notably, the book is co-authored by Dr. Rajashree Deka, Gitashree Deka, Jayashree Deka Kalita, Juma Begum, Bidyashree Kalita, Dhriya Bujarbaruah. In all, Hindi and Assamese poems of 15 po-



ets have been included. Umakanta Deka ‘s poetry has also been included in the poetry book dedicated to late Umakanta Deka. Asim Ranjan Sharma, a distinguished guest invited to the meeting, gave a speech on the importance of writing and bilingualism of the poetry book in relation to his poetry and the released poetry book. At the end Rajashree Deka is the head of the department of Accounting at West Guwahati Commerce College.

Silchar Kicks Off EVM and VVPAT Checks ahead of Assam Assembly Elections

Silchar, Dec 15: For the Assembly election the following year, the First Level Checking (FLC) of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) units started at the EVM and VVPAT warehouse in Silchar. The practice would take place every day from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. till December 23 under strict security and surveillance protocols. Speaking to the representatives of recognized political parties in attendance, Cachar’s District Election Officer Mridul Yadav expounded on the comprehensive guidelines and standard operating procedures issued by the Election Commission of India, the Chief Electoral Officer of Assam, and the engineers from Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL), who are responsible for carrying out the FLC process. It was reaffirmed that only authorized election officials and representatives of political parties will be present during the full checking procedure. All parties are present while the warehouse is opened and the stored EVMs and VVPATs are inspected. Each approved political party del-



egate is given a separate identity card by the relevant office to enable controlled access and security; admission into the premises is strictly forbidden without one. The members were also informed by the District Election Officer that, in compliance with ECI regulations, a formal notification to the party in question would be required if no party representative was present for three days in a row during the FLC

process. For clarity and documentation, machines that are discovered to be malfunctioning are clearly marked with red stickers during the inspection process, while completely functional units are designated with green stickers. Political party representatives and authorized authorities are signing pink paper seals together, strengthening procedural accountability throughout the entire process. A comprehensive

test run, in which larger numbers of votes are cast in front of authorities and party representatives to confirm performance under simulated polling settings, is being conducted on a random selection of five percent of the EVMs in order to further bolster confidence in the system. In the presence of election officials and representatives from political parties, all operational EVMs and VVPATs shall be safely stored and locked in the warehouse or strong room following the inspection. According to the Election Commission of India’s set guidelines, defective devices will be returned to Hyderabad as soon as the appropriate authority gives the go-ahead.

The members were also told that, in order to preserve order and security throughout the procedure, just three cell phones are allowed on the property, solely for the purpose of scanning the equipment. The Election Commission of India and the Chief Electoral Officer of Assam are watching the entire FLC exercise live on the internet.

BJP appoints Baijayant Panda Assam poll in-charge



Guwahati, Dec 15: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), on Monday, unveiled several strategic organisational appointments to strengthen its election campaign for the upcoming Assembly elections in Assam and Tamil Nadu. Baijayant Panda, a National Vice-President and Member of Parliament, has been appointed as the Election In-Charge for Assam, signalling the BJP’s proactive approach towards the 2026 Assembly elections in the state. The elections are slated for April 2026, and the BJP is ramping up its preparations well in advance. The party also

named two prominent leaders as Co-In-Charges for the Assam elections: Sunil Kumar Sharma, an MLA and the Leader of the Opposition in Jammu and Kashmir, and Darshana Ben Jardosh, a former Union Minister. These appointments are part of the BJP’s strategy to bolster its organisational framework in Assam. In a related move, Union Minister Piyush Goyal has been entrusted with the responsibility of steering the party’s election efforts in Tamil Nadu, highlighting the BJP’s focus on consolidating its base in key states ahead of the polls.

Meghalaya introduces refundable ‘Green Deposit’ to tackle plastic waste at tourist sites

Shillong, Dec 15: In an effort to control growing plastic pollution at its most visited natural attractions, the Meghalaya government has introduced a refundable “green deposit” scheme for tourists entering selected eco-tourism destinations in the state. The scheme was rolled out on Sunday and will apply to high-footfall locations such as Cherrapunjee, Dawki and the Living Root Bridges. These areas have witnessed a sharp

rise in tourist numbers in recent years, which has also led to an increase in plastic waste, officials said. Under the new initiative, tourists carrying plastic items such as bottles, bags, food wrappers and packaged materials into notified areas will be required to pay a refundable deposit of ₹100 at designated entry points.

The amount will be returned when visitors deposit or hand over their plastic waste at authorised collec-

tion counters while exiting the site. Officials said the aim of the scheme is not to penalise tourists but to encourage responsible behaviour and reduce plastic litter in ecologically sensitive zones. Rivers, forests and limestone caves in these areas have been increasingly affected by discarded plastic, which poses long-term risks to wildlife and natural water systems. “The green deposit is meant to make visitors more conscious about what they

carry into these fragile ecosystems,” an official associated with the programme said. “If tourists return their plastic waste properly, they get their money back. It is a simple way to promote accountability.” The government has identified specific checkpoints at major tourist entry and exit routes where deposits will be collected and refunded.

Waste collected through the scheme will be sent to authorised recycling or disposal facilities.

Muster roll workers of Meghalaya demand regularisation of services

Shillong, Dec 15: The Joint Action Committee (JAC) of Muster Roll Workers on Monday expressed strong dissatisfaction with the Meghalaya Government, alleging prolonged delay and lack of sincerity in addressing long-pending demands related to wages, benefits, and regularisation.

The JAC criticized the government’s Muster Roll system for inadequate consultation and negative impact on vulnerable workers, highlighting irregular salary payments and oversight of deficit and casual workers. Meetings with officials did not alleviate their concerns.

NATIONAL

Bihar min Nabin is named working president by the BJP

Patna, Dec 15: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has appointed Nitin Nabin, a Bihar cabinet minister, as its new working president, with expectations of his elevation to the national president position next month. Nabin, 45, the youngest working president, is set to lead the party in upcoming assembly elections across West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Puducherry. Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised Nabin's organizational experience and success as a MLA, noting his dedication to the party's vision. Nabin has previously served in various organizational roles within the BJP, including as election in-charge for Sikkim in 2019 and state in-charge for Chhattisgarh in the recent elections. His appointment represents a generational shift in the party, aligning with the BJP's strategy of promoting younger leaders. Home Minister Amit Shah commended Nabin for his dedicated work within the party. Nabin's political journey began at a young age following his father's death, leading to significant involvement in state politics. The BJP continues to adapt its leadership strategies, focusing on younger members while adhering to constitutional rules for presidential terms and election processes. Nabin's ascent emphasizes both his local experience and the party's commitment to grooming future leaders.

So far in 2025, 236 police officers have been suspended for wrongdoing

Bengaluru, Dec 15: On November 19, a significant cash heist occurred in Bengaluru when individuals posing as officials, equipped with fake documents, stole ₹7.11 crore from a cash van.

Investigations revealed a police constable's involvement in the crime, highlighting systemic misconduct in Karnataka's police force, which has seen over 236 suspensions this year, largely in Bengaluru. Misconduct includes robbery and extortion, with serious issues like officers robbing victims and abusing their authority. Notable cases include a constable's theft from a seized vehicle and



two sub-inspectors robbing a jewellery artisan. The government has responded with stern warnings and measures for integrity checks and oversight within the police, indicating a need to restore public trust.

Education bill: three councils and a single regulator

New Delhi, Dec 15: A three-council commission will be established as the single regulator for higher education in India under the proposed Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, which aims to enforce outcome-based accreditation, set academic standards, and grant institutions graded autonomy. This bill, aimed at overhauling the education system and replacing existing bodies like the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), was approved by the cabinet and intends to regulate the establishment of higher educational institutes, imposing significant fines for those operating without government approval. The commission will consist of three councils: the Regulatory Council, Accreditation Council, and Standards Council, totaling twelve members, including two eminent academicians, five distinguished experts,



and a Union higher education secretary. The bill protects commission members from legal action for actions taken in good faith while holding institutions accountable for violating provisions, with fines potentially ranging from ₹10 lakh to ₹75 lakh for non-compliance, and severe penalties for establishing institutions without proper approvals. This initiative fol-

lows discussions that began in 2018 and aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, aiming to enhance independence and excellence in higher education. The Regulatory Council will oversee governance, ensuring accreditation and financial oversight, while the Accreditation Council will create an Institutional Accreditation Framework based on educational out-

The proposed reforms have faced opposition due to concerns over excessive centralization and inadequate state representation in the regulatory framework.

comes. The Standards Council will establish minimum academic standards and promote both internationalisation and the incorporation of Indian knowledge systems. Terms for council leaders are set for an initial three years, extendable to five, and they can be removed by the President of India. Experts emphasize the importance of balancing regulatory reform with institutional autonomy, cautioning against centralization that could stifle innovation. While the initiative has been hailed as a progressive shift, opposition voices have raised concerns over potential excessive centralization and a lack of state representation in governance.

The government plans to replace MGNREGA with the Viksit Bharat G Ram G rural job initiative

New Delhi, Dec 15: The Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government plans to replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (MGNREGA) with a new initiative called Viksit Bharat—Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) VB—G RAM G BILL, 2025. This legislative proposal aims to create a rural development framework reflecting the national vision of Viksit Bharat by guaranteeing 125 days of wage employment annually to rural households whose adult members engage in unskilled manual labor. This new structure emphasizes empowerment, growth, convergence, and saturation to enhance rural prosperity.

Under this program, the focus will be on public works that contribute to the Viksit Bharat National Rural Infrastructure Stack, specifically targeting water security, core rural infrastructure, and initiatives to address extreme weather con-

ditions. The bill proposes an increase in financial responsibility for state governments, with funding patterns of 90:10 for North Eastern States and others like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir, while allocating a 60:40 ratio for the remaining states and Union Territories, contrasting with MGNREGA's previous provision of 100% central government funding.

In a significant policy shift, the bill stipulates a ban on VB G Ram G-related works during peak agricultural seasons to ensure sufficient agricultural labor availability. Additionally, it includes a provision for a daily unemployment allowance for applicants not provided employment within fifteen days of their request.

The scheme will be overseen by a Central Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Council, consisting of representatives from both the central and state governments, as well as non-official members from various so-



cial sectors. Unlike MGNREGA, which was managed by the rural development ministry, the new initiative will be supported by a State Gramin Rozgar Guar-

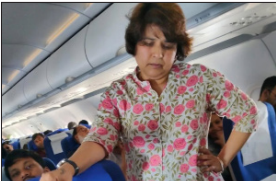
antee Council for localized monitoring and implementation.

A National Level Steering Committee will also be established to manage allo-

■ The Viksit Bharat—Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) VB—G RAM G BILL, 2025 proposes increased financial allocations from state governments. This initiative aims to enhance employment guarantees and improve livelihood opportunities in rural areas, thereby fostering economic development and addressing unemployment challenges confronted by local populations.

cations and provide oversight, reflecting a structured approach to governance. The bill allows Panchayati Raj Institutions at various levels to lead the planning and implementation of local programs. Furthermore, it states that the provisions of this Act will take precedence over conflicting laws, although states can opt to enforce their employment guarantee laws as long as they meet or exceed the standards set forth by this new Act.

Former Karnataka MLA saves American passenger



Bengaluru, Dec 15: Former Karnataka MLA Dr. Anjali Nimbalkar has been praised by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for her quick response during a medical emergency on a Goa-New Delhi flight, where she saved the life of an American woman. Nimbalkar, who is also an AICC secretary and a trained doctor, performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) after the passenger showed signs of distress, including shivering and loss of pulse. She monitored the woman closely throughout the flight and ensured she received medical attention upon landing. The incident drew appreciation from fellow passengers and the flight crew, prompting CM Siddaramaiah to commend Nimbalkar's exemplary actions on social media, highlighting her compassion and leadership. In her response, Nimbalkar humbly stated that her actions were part of her duties as a doctor, expressing gratitude for the Chief Minister's acknowledgment of her social commitment.

A journalist from Gujarat is granted temporary bail in a money laundering case by the Supreme Court

New Delhi, Dec 15: The Supreme Court granted interim bail to journalist Mahesh Langa in a money laundering case linked to alleged financial fraud, as filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in Ahmedabad.

A bench led by Chief

Justice Surya Kant mandated a day-to-day trial by a special court and prohibited Langa from publishing articles related to the ongoing case, warning that any violation could lead to bail cancellation.

The Solicitor General, Tushar Mehta, opposed

the bail, citing the gravity of the charges against Langa, who was represented by Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal. The next hearing is scheduled for January 6, during which the ED must present a status report on Langa's compliance with bail conditions.

The charges against Langa include fraud and criminal misconduct linked to two FIRs filed by Ahmedabad police. His initial bail plea was rejected by the Gujarat High Court due to concerns over potential prejudice to the prosecution. Langa was previously



arrested in connection with a GST fraud case in October 2024.

Shreyas and Alok protected from arrest in marketing scam case

New Delhi, Dec 15: The Supreme Court has granted protection from arrest to actors Shreyas Talpade and Alok Nath until the investigation concludes regarding allegations of cheating and breach of trust involving a cooperative society. During the hearing, Talpade's counsel argued that the actor was merely invited as a guest celebrity and had not profited from the society's dealings. Nath's lawyer pointed out that his client had not participated in any function and was implicated merely through the use of his photograph from a decade ago. The Justices questioned whether endorsement by high-profile individuals could result in liability should the associated company face legal issues. The court decided to extend the interim order of protection while considering the clubbing of multiple FIRs against the actors across different states, initiated by Vipul Antil, who claimed the actors misled investors by promoting the Human Welfare Credit Cooperative Society Ltd. The FIR filed on January 22 cites allegations of criminal breach of trust and cheating, indicating that the society is suspected of perpetrating significant fraud against the public through deceptive financial schemes.



Stalin: Bring the accomplishments of the DMK to every home to win votes

Chennai, Dec 15: Chief Minister and DMK President M.K. Stalin called on his party members to intensify their efforts to secure a seventh term for the DMK in the upcoming 2026 assembly elections.

Speaking in Dharmapuri district, he emphasized the necessity of door-to-door engagement to highlight the party's achievements, despite ongoing challenges posed by the BJP-led Union government. Stalin stated that the struggles faced by the DMK have been transformed into beneficial outcomes for families in Tamil Nadu, which need to translate into electoral support.

Stalin highlighted the DMK's flagship welfare initiative, the Kalaigal Magalir Urimai Thogai, which provides ₹1000 a month to



women heads of families, asserting its status as a benchmark for social security. He revealed that the program has been expanded to include an additional 17 lakh women, totaling over 1.30 crore beneficiaries statewide. Furthermore, he cited a recent Reserve Bank of India report indicating that Tamil Nadu achieved the highest GSDP growth in the nation.

Additionally, Thol Thirumavalavan, chief of DMK ally Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK), underscored

the importance of the DMK-led coalition in the 2026 elections, arguing that their unity is essential for the protection of Tamil Nadu and the Tamil language. He challenged Union Home Minister Amit Shah's assertion regarding the NDA's expected success in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, reflecting skepticism about such claims. Thirumavalavan expressed confidence that Chief Minister Stalin would successfully counter any adversarial conspiracy as he has in the past.

Timely trials depend on the judicial infrastructure: CJI

New Delhi, Dec 15: Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant emphasized the essential connection between timely trials and adequate judicial infrastructure during a symposium hosted by the High Court Bar Association of Orissa. He asserted that, regardless of well-intentioned laws, a lack of sufficient courts and facilities would undermine justice, leaving citizens in a prolonged state of expectation. CJI Kant highlighted judicial infrastructure as a long-term investment in the Republic rather than mere government expenditure, asserting that it constitutes the backbone of justice. He cited successful instances of specialized courts improving outcomes through better docket management and advocated for the establishment of exclusive courts for complex crimes.

The CJI pointed out the need for collaboration among the judiciary, executive, and legislature, comparing their interdependence to a tricycle. His aim has been to ensure justice is accessible and humane for common citizens, sharing anecdotes that reflect the human costs of judicial delays. He expressed concern over the chronic backlog of cases, which he



described as a system-wide issue affecting all levels of judiciary. The Supreme Court's efforts to resolve long-pending cases were framed as a means of instilling confidence in the system.

Justice Kant identified alternative dispute resolution, especially mediation, as a promising approach to alleviate delays but warned that cultural changes are necessary for its success. He addressed the role of technology in facilitating court operations while cautioning against over-reliance on it, suggesting that it must enhance, not replace, human judgment. In closing, he envisioned a "virtuous cycle" where reduced case pendency builds trust in the legal system, ultimately leading to fewer disputes. He reiterated the collective responsibility of the judiciary, legal practitioners, administration, and citizens in moving the justice system forward.

SC requests that the petitioner seek HC and declines to hear a plea about the cancellation of IndiGo flights

New Delhi, Dec 15: The Supreme Court declined to hear a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) regarding the cancellation of numerous IndiGo flights, directing the petitioner, Narendra Mishra, to address his concerns at the Delhi High Court, which is already considering related issues. The Delhi High Court had previously questioned the central government on its failure to address the crisis that has left many passengers stranded and necessitated high fares from other airlines. Mishra's plea sought the Centre's intervention to support and refund passengers affected by flight cancellations.



During the hearing, the bench, led by Chief Justice Surya Kant, acknowledged Mishra's concerns but noted that similar matters were already under the high court's jurisdiction. IndiGo's senior counsel, Mukul Rohatgi, highlighted that the Director-

ate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has established an expert committee to examine the cancellations and related concerns. The Supreme Court bench encouraged Mishra to participate in the ongoing high court proceedings, assuring him that if his grievances remain unaddressed,

he could return to the Supreme Court. Mishra articulated the significant distress caused to passengers due to ongoing flight cancellations. Nonetheless, the Supreme Court expressed its belief that the high court is sufficiently equipped to handle the situation. The case stems from IndiGo's disruptions attributed to new regulatory changes affecting pilots, which have resulted in many passengers being stranded across various airports in India. The Centre has acknowledged the situation and indicated measures are being implemented to resolve the crises caused by these cancellations.

The ongoing conflict between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar: What we know about the Delhi meeting with Sonia and other senior Cong leaders

Bengaluru, Dec 15: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar met with senior Congress leaders in Delhi to address the ongoing leadership stalemate within the party. However, the discussions did not yield any resolutions, leading to a continuation of uncertainty regarding the state's leadership.

The brief interactions were insufficient to satisfy Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi, resulting in the deferral of any leadership changes. Following the limited talks, Siddaramaiah returned to Belagavi for the winter session of the Karnataka legislature, while Shivakumar remained in Delhi to manage issues related to the National Herald case.

Both leaders attended a Congress rally at Ramlila Grounds, which aimed to protest alleged vote theft. At this

gathering, internal party tensions were evident; Siddaramaiah notably did not address the rally, allowing Congress lawmaker Jothimani to represent southern party leaders. The leadership debate has resurfaced due to the Congress government in Karnataka reaching the midpoint of its five-year tenure as of November 20, rekindling discussions around a possible power-sharing agreement established in 2023, which may involve splitting the chief minister role into two 2.5-year terms between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar. While neither leader nor the party has officially confirmed any such arrangement, Shivakumar has alluded to a "secret deal" recently.

A month prior, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge mentioned that the high command would address the leadership issue. Kharge, along with Sonia



and Rahul Gandhi, was expected to resolve the ongoing "confusion." In the meantime, both leaders attempted to downplay speculation about leadership changes through their public interactions, including shared meals. However, political maneuvering was evident as Shivakumar held a gathering with approximately 30 Congress MLAs, shortly after Siddaramaiah dined with his supporters. Adding to the speculation, Congress MLA H A Iqbal Hussain suggested there was a "99% chance" that Shivakumar would assume the chief minister position on January 6.

Longjang’s Mongsen Ait Club sustains Nagaland’s grassroots football tradition, 51 years

Longjang club sustains Mongsen Ait Trophy tradition

Kohima, Dec 15: The origins of the tournament date back to 1961, when a group of young Mongsen boys from Mongsen colony, Longjang village formed the Mongsen Youth Club and played football within the colony during Christmas. What began as informal festive matches gradually evolved into the Mongsen Ait Marok Football Trophy, which was organised annually as a community get-together centred around football. In 1998, the club was renamed the Mongsen Ait Club, giving the tournament a more formal structure.

The Mongsen Ait Trophy completed 50 years in 2023 and will kick off its 51st edition from December 16 to 18 at Longjang Playground, underlining its continuity and longevity. The tournament is considered one of the oldest football trophies in Mokokchung district and possibly in Nagaland. Longjang village, once known for its strong



football culture, has produced several state-level players over the years. Current players from the village include Tarepungsang, Nungshichuchang, Imlitoshi, Aotoshi, and Molusupong. Beyond the village, the Mongsen Ait Trophy itself has served as a platform for many players to display their talent, including Ayenmongba, Temjenmeren, among others. In an exclusive

interview with MT, the trophy committee including Imyujungba Aier, Convenor; and members Takosunep, Benjongningsang, Imrongtuden, and Pangjungtemsu said that while the Mongsen Ait Marok Football Trophy is open to all teams, its primary objective is to inspire young local players, encourage competition, and promote grassroots football.

BJP’s Strength Lies in Trusting Grassroots Leadership: Tripura CM Manik Saha

Agartala, Dec 15: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Sunday said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will continue to grow stronger by placing firm trust in its grassroots leadership, particularly its Pristha Pramukhs and dedicated party workers.

A Pristha Pramukh is a BJP worker entrusted with managing a single page of the electoral roll in a designated area.

Addressing a Pristha Pramukh conference of the Mohanpur Mandal in West Tripura district, Saha said the BJP’s organisational strength is rooted in its cadre-based structure and close engagement with ordinary citizens. “Our party is different from others. We do not rely solely on ideological rhetoric. We believe in the people and remain connected to the grassroots. I never want to forget my roots,” the Chief Minister said, drawing a comparison with the Left par-

ties. He credited local MLA and Power and Agriculture Minister Ratan Lal Nath for successfully organising the programme and reflected on his own journey within the BJP after joining the party. “After becoming part of the BJP, I worked as a pracharak and later took on responsibilities as a Pristha Pramukh and during the membership drive. I once said I could enrol three lakh members, but the party ultimately enrolled nearly seven lakh members across Tripura,” he said.

Saha alleged that the Communists, despite their claims, have failed to uphold democratic values and recalled incidents of violence during the CPI(M) regime. Referring to the Kalyanpur incident in Khowai district, he said his recent visit to the area left him deeply disturbed, as 26 innocent people, including children and the elderly, were brutally killed by militants.

“There is still widespread anger

among the people over that barbaric incident. During CPI(M) rule, killings were frequent, especially around elections, creating a climate of fear,” he alleged.

Emphasising the importance of building trust in leadership at every level—from Pristha Pramukhs to mandal and district presidents—the Chief Minister said such confidence is essential for strengthening the party further. He also expressed confidence in the BJP’s national leadership, naming party president J.P. Nadda, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi as guiding forces of the organisation.

The conference was attended by BJP state president Rajib Bhattacharjee, former Chief Minister and Lok Sabha MP Biplab Kumar Deb, Minister Ratan Lal Nath, state general secretaries Amit Rakshit and Bhagaban Das, along with several other senior leaders.

TSECL Bags National Energy Conservation Award from President Droupadi Murmu



Agartala, Dec 15: President Droupadi Murmu presented the Tripura State Electricity Corporation Limited (TSECL) with the Energy Conservation Award on Sunday in honor of National Energy Conservation Day in Delhi.

Tripura won second place in the Group 5 category of the National Energy Conservation Awards in 2025 after winning first place in the Group 4 category in 2024. This consecutive accomplishment, which highlights the state’s concentrated effort to energy conservation and responsible electricity use, is highly praised as a major feat for a small northeastern state. The award was given out at a national ceremony on Sunday at New Delhi’s Vigyan Bhawan. Dr. Subir Sen, Technical Director of TSECL, and Seema Das, AGM and Nodal Officer of the State Designated Agency under the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), received the award from President Droupadi Murmu of India. The State Ener-

gy Efficiency Index (SEEI) 2025 evaluation served as the basis for the awards, which were given out at the Ministry of Power’s initiative. President Droupadi Murmu stressed the increasing significance of energy saving in his speech. According to her, energy saving is now a requirement rather than just a choice. Every unit of electricity conserved, in the President’s opinion, demonstrates care for the environment and consideration for future generations. She added that India has made impressive strides in energy efficiency and sustainable energy, meeting a number of obligations ahead of time, which is a significant milestone in the nation’s decarbonization process. The National Energy Conservation Awards 2025 winners were congratulated by Union Minister for Power Manohar Lal, who was also present. The awards, he noted, amply illustrate how environmental preservation and development may advance together.

The Minister also emphasized the noteworthy involvement in the National Painting Competition on Energy saving, pointing out that thousands of students across helped spread the word about the significance of energy saving. Tripura placed second in Group 5 of the State Performance Award for Energy Efficiency. Chandigarh, Tripura, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Manipur, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, and Mizoram were among the eleven states and union territories that made up this group.

For the fiscal year 2024–2025, 36 States and Union Territories’ energy efficiency performance was evaluated by the SEEI 2025 index. Buildings, industry, transportation, agriculture, electricity distribution firms (Discoms), municipal services, and cross-sectoral activities were the seven main categories in which states were assessed.

Mizoram CM reviews progress of Tripura-Mizoram gas pipeline

Aizawl, Dec 15: Chief Minister Lalduhma today met the Chief Executive Officer of Indradhanush Gas Grid Limited (IGGL), Subrata Das, along with his team, at his office to discuss the progress of the Tripura-Mizoram Gas Pipeline project. The Chief Minister reviewed the work undertaken so far and also listened to the challenges being faced in the implementation of the project.

IGGL officials informed that the gas pipeline originates from the Panisagar Receiving Terminal in Tripura and passes through Kanhmun, Zawlnuam, Kawrthah, Tuidam and Darlak before reaching near Mamit. From there, it will proceed towards Lengte and terminate at the proposed Sihhmui Receiving Terminal. From the Sihhmui Receiving Terminal, household gas connections within Aizawl city will be undertaken by Tripura Natural Gas Corporation Limited.

The pipeline from Panisagar to Sihhmui will have a total length of 119.5 kilometers,



with a pipe diameter of one foot. The project is targeted for completion by December 2027.

This project is being implemented under the North East Natural Gas Pipeline Grid.

The Panisagar–Sihhmui stretch is part of Phase II of the project. Phase II as a whole covers the Guwahati–Agartala–Aizawl pipeline, with a total length of 723 kilometers.

Manipur BJP MLAs hold Crucial Delhi Meeting on Peace and Political Roadmap

Imphal, Dec 15: Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislators from Manipur met at the party’s national headquarters in New Delhi on Sunday to deliberate on the ongoing peace process and key political issues concerning the violence-affected northeastern state.

According to party sources in Imphal, the meeting was attended by over 30 BJP MLAs, including former Chief Minister N. Biren Singh and Manipur Assembly Speaker Thokchom Satyabrata Singh. The discussions were held in the presence of BJP National General Secretary (Organisation) B.L. Santhosh and the party’s

Northeast coordinator Sambit Patra. Manipur BJP President Adhikari-mayum Sharda Devi was also present.

In a statement shared on its official social media platform, the BJP said the meeting focused on peace, stability and the overall progress of Manipur.

Several BJP legislators from the state, including Biren Singh and Speaker Satyabrata Singh, arrived in Delhi on Saturday to attend the meeting convened by the party’s central leadership. Party leaders in Imphal indicated that the deliberations were expected to cover the current political situation in the state,

including the possibility of forming a new government.

The meeting assumes significance amid growing speculation over government formation, with a large number of BJP MLAs and leaders expressing their willingness to take responsibility for governance in the state. Before leaving for Delhi, former Chief Minister Biren Singh had said that the central leadership had directed all BJP MLAs from Manipur to attend the meeting.

The BJP currently has 37 legislators in the 60-member Manipur Legislative Assembly.

Manipur has been under President’s Rule

since February 13, following the resignation of N. Biren Singh from the Chief Minister’s post. The state assembly, placed under suspended animation after the imposition of President’s Rule, has a tenure extending until 2027.

Last month, senior BJP leaders B.L. Santhosh and Sambit Patra visited Manipur for three days and held multiple rounds of discussions with party leaders and legislators, further fuelling speculation about the formation of a new government.

Earlier, in October, 26 BJP MLAs, including Biren Singh, had met the two central leaders in Delhi and urged

• Senior BJP legislators from Manipur convened at the party’s national headquarters in New Delhi to discuss the ongoing peace process and political issues in the violence-affected state.

them to install a “popular government” in the state, expressing their readiness to govern collectively.

Biren Singh has reiterated that all BJP legislators in Manipur remain united in their efforts to form a popular government, adding that the process is already underway, while avoiding comments on individual views expressed within the party.

Anjaw accident claims 20 Lives

Itanagar, Dec 15: A senior official stated that three bodies were recovered on Sunday from a steep valley in the Anjaw area of Arunachal Pradesh, where a minitruck transporting people from Assam had fallen. According to a statement released today by State Disaster Management Secretary Dani Salu, 20 remains have been recovered from the accident scene since Friday. He continued by saying that when all formalities were finished, the bodies were given to the families for further transportation to their separate homes. According to unverified accounts, 21 laborers—including the driver—were on board the tragic minitruck, according to Salu. “Search operations will be closed once a confirmed report on the total number of labourers is received,” the secretary of state stated. After being halted the night before, a joint team from the Army and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) started the operation at six in the morning on Sunday, according to Salu. On the evening of December 8, the accident happened in the district around 40 kilometers from Hayuliang on the way to Chaglagam. One survivor made it out of the gorge and into a neighboring Border Roads Task Force (BRTF) labor camp on the evening of December 10. According to officials, the BRTF’s commanding commander then informed the district authorities.

2 women among seven militants held in Manipur

Imphal, Dec 15: According to officials on Sunday, security forces in Manipur have apprehended seven terrorists from various districts, including two female cadres, and recovered some weapons and ammunition in the last 24 hours.

Five militants from the banned United National Liberation Front (UNLF) and People’s Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) were taken into custody from various locations in the districts of Imphal West, Imphal East, and Bishnupur, according to a police official. According to him, two active female UNLF (Koireng faction) cadres from the Moirangkampu Sajeb Makha Leikai area in the Imphal East district had been detained by the central and state security forces.

The militants who were detained were named as Kongbrailakpam Rameshori Devi alias Langlen alias Bemma alias Buchu (19) and Takhellambam Sanathoi Chanu alias Loingakpi alias Sanathoi (19) from the Imphal East district. They were found in possession of two cell phones.



Baseimayum Yaibi, 47, a drug dealer from the Porompat Pangal Leirak region in the Imphal East district, was taken into custody by the Manipur Police. He was found in possession of heroin, which was hidden in seven soap cases.

The medications were estimated to be worth Rs 16 lakh. To apprehend persons engaged in extortion and criminal activity in the state, intelligence-based combing, cordon, and search operations are being conducted extensively in various Imphal

valley and hill districts.

Additionally, several weapons and ammunition were found by the security forces in the Kakching district. One Self-Loading Rifle (SLR) without a magazine, one locally manufactured bolt action sniper rifle with an empty magazine, one double-barreled bolt rifle, one single-barreled bolt rifle, one locally manufactured pistol with an empty magazine, and one 36 HE Hand grenade without a detonator are among the recovered weapons and ammunition.

Jitendra Chaudhury Demands Immediate Removal of Bikash Debbarma

Agartala, Dec 15: Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Tripura Legislative Assembly, Jitendra Chaudhury, on Monday, December 15, demanded the immediate removal of Tribal Welfare Minister Bikash Debbarma from the Manik Saha-led Cabinet.

He alleged that the minister had made unconstitutional and inflammatory remarks targeting the Tipra Motha Party (TMP), a key ally of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The Tipra Motha Party (TMP), along with the Indigenous People’s Front of Tripura (IPFT), is a junior partner in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in the state.

Chaudhury’s demand followed a statement allegedly made by Debbarma during a rally held in Agartala on December 13. According to the allegation, the minister threatened leaders and supporters of the TMP, saying that he would “rip them apart like chicken” if they failed to restrain what he described as “hooliganism.”

Notably, Chief Minister Manik Saha, BJP state president Rajib Bhattacharjee, and Cabinet ministers Sushanta Chowdhury and Tinku Roy were present at the event where the remarks were allegedly

made.

In a video statement released on social media, Chaudhury strongly condemned Debbarma’s remarks, describing them as “totally unconstitutional and inflammatory,” and asserted that such statements amount to a cognisable offence.

“The manner in which Tribal Welfare Minister Bikash Debbarma threatened to rip apart TMP leaders and workers like chicken is unacceptable and violates constitutional norms. I strongly condemn this statement,” Chaudhury said.

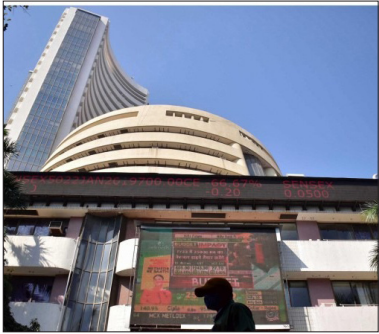
While acknowledging that political parties may have differing views regarding the alleged aggressive activities of the TMP, the LoP emphasised that a sitting minister has no authority to issue threats or make incendiary remarks against any political party.

Chaudhury urged Governor N. Indrase-na Reddy and Chief Minister Manik Saha to take immediate action by removing Debbarma from the Cabinet, warning that failure to do so could further destabilise the already tense political atmosphere in Tripura.

“If immediate action is not taken, the political environment in Tripura, which is already contaminated, will deteriorate further,” he cautioned.

Bajaj Finance loses Rs 19,000 crore in market valuation

New Delhi: Bajaj Finance emerged as the biggest loser among India’s most valued companies last week, as its market capitalisation fell sharply by Rs 19,289.7 crore amid a largely bearish trend in the stock market.Overall, eight of the top-10 most valued domestic firms together saw their market valuation erode by Rs 79,129.21 crore during the week.The weak performance came as the BSE benchmark index slipped by 444.71 points, or 0.51 per cent -- reflecting cautious investor sentiment in equities.Bajaj Finance’s market capitalisation declined to Rs 6,33,106.69 crore, making it the worst-hit stock among the top companies.ICICI Bank followed closely, with its valuation tumbling by Rs 18,516.31 crore to Rs 9,76,668.15 crore.Bharti Airtel also faced heavy losses, as its market value dropped by



Rs 13,884.63 crore to Rs 11,87,948.11 crore.State Bank of India saw its valuation fall by Rs 7,846.02 crore, taking its market capitalisation to Rs 8,88,816.17 crore.IT major Infosys lost Rs 7,145.95 crore from its valuation, which stood at Rs 6,64,220.58 crore at the end of the week.Tata Consultancy Services saw its market capitalisation decline by

Rs 6,783.92 crore to Rs 11,65,078.45 crore, while HDFC Bank’s valuation dipped by Rs 4,460.93 crore to Rs 15,38,558.71 crore.Life Insurance Corporation of India was the least impacted among the losers, with its market value eroding by Rs 1,201.75 crore to Rs 5,48,820.05 crore.In contrast, Reliance Industries and Larsen & Toubro were the only two gainers in the top-10 list. Reliance Industries added Rs 20,434.03 crore to its market capitalisation, which rose to Rs 21,05,652.74 crore.Larsen & Toubro’s valuation increased by Rs 4,910.82 crore to Rs 5,60,370.38 crore. Despite the mixed performance, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, TCS, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro and LIC remained among the most valued company in the country.

The Sensex drops more than 380 points, and the Nifty drops below 26,000

Mumbai: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined in early trade on Monday in-tandem with a weak trend in global markets and persistent foreign fund outflows.Also, uncertainty over an India-US trade deal weighed on investors’ sentiment, analysts said. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 384.39 points to 84,883.27 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty edged lower by 122.9 points to 25,924.05.From

the Sensex firms, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bharti Airtel, Trent, NTPC, Bajaj Finserv and Power Grid were among the major laggards. However, Asian Paints, Hindustan Unilever, UltraTech Cement, Bharat Electronics and Tata Steel were the gainers. In Asian markets, South Korea’s Kospi, Japan’s Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai’s SSE Composite index and Hong Kong’s Hang Seng index quoted lower. US markets ended low-

er on Friday.”Globally, Asian markets are trading lower this morning, led by weakness across Japan and South Korea, as investors turn cautious ahead of key economic data releases from China and the US. US equities closed lower on Friday, while Nasdaq futures continue to signal stress within tech-heavy segments,” Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs)

offloaded equities worth Rs 1,114.22 crore on Friday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth Rs 3,868.94 crore, according to exchange data.”A major drag on the market continues to be the elusive US-India trade deal which is impacting India’s exports to the US, widening of trade deficit and continuous depreciation in the rupee,” VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Kaynes Tech MFs sold Rs 500 crore worth shares selloff

Mumbai: Kaynes Technology India saw mutual funds trim their stake in the electronics manufacturing services player in November, amid a sharp selloff that intensified further in December.Data compiled by Nuva-ma showed that mutual funds sold about Rs 500 crore, or 10 lakh shares, of Kaynes Technology in November. Their holding declined to about 1.2 crore shares at the end of November from around 1.3 crore shares at the end of October. The stock fell sharply during the period.From a level of Rs 6,704.50 at the end of October, the scrip declined about 18 per cent in November to around Rs 5,490, followed by a further 24 per cent fall in December so far. Analysts attributed the November decline largely to disappointment over the company’s Q2 performance, particularly on cash flow generation, while the December weakness was triggered by a Kotak Institutional Equities report that raised concerns over accounting practices.Stock analysts noted that Kaynes’ working capital remained elevated in H1FY26, driven



by higher inventory levels at the end of the September quarter and an increase in trade receivables. Following the December selloff, Kaynes Technology hosted a conference call to address investor concerns. Its management provided clarifications on the accounting treatment of goodwill and intangible assets arising from the Iskraemeco and Sensonic acquisitions, progress on receivable management, and steps taken to improve accuracy in related-party transactions, margin reporting, purchase price allocation and related-party disclosures. Analysts said investors would closely

track the company’s ability to turn cash-flow positive and reduce working capital days, noting that downside risks could persist if these issues are not addressed. Elara Securities said its base case assumed that the company would resolve its cash flow challenges by Q4FY26. The brokerage said concerns around cash flow generation had been compounded by inconsistencies in accounting disclosures. Elara believed the market reaction had been disproportionate to the scale of the issues raised, as there was no material impact on growth prospects or fundamentals related to revenue and margins.

WPI inflation, India-US trade talks, Rupee movement likely drive market next week

New Delhi: After benchmarks ended the week on a strong note, Indian stock markets are expected to take cues next week from a mix of key domestic and global factors, including wholesale price inflation data, developments in India-US trade talks, movements in the rupee, and continued foreign investor activity.On Friday, the Sensex rose 450 points, or 0.53 per cent, to close at 85,267.66, while the Nifty gained 148 points, or 0.57 per cent, to settle at 26,046.95.Broader markets outperformed the benchmarks, with the BSE Midcap index jumping 1.14 per cent and the Smallcap index rising 0.65 per cent.Investor wealth also saw a sharp rise during the session. The total market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies climbed to over Rs 470 lakh crore, up from Rs 466.6 lakh crore in the previous session, adding more than Rs 3 lakh crore in a single day.Looking ahead, inflation data is expected to be one of the key triggers for the market next week. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is scheduled to release wholesale price inflation (WPI) data for November on December 15.Developments on the India-US trade front will also remain in focus. According to multiple reports, India and the United States have agreed to continue

Indian stock markets are set for a volatile week, driven by upcoming Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation data and trade balance figures. Significant foreign investor outflows, totaling ₹17,955 crore this month and \$18.4 billion in 2025, alongside rupee depreciation

constructive and forward-looking engagement after two days of talks between an Indian delegation and a US team led by Deputy US Trade Representative Rick Switzer.The discussions included exchanges on key trade issues and ongoing negotiations aimed at finalising a mutually beneficial bilateral trade agreement, which could have long-term implications for trade-sensitive sectors.The movement of the rupee is another important factor to watch. Persistent foreign investor outflows, uncertainty over the India-US trade deal, and strong dollar demand from importers have kept the rupee under pressure. Indian stock markets are set for a volatile week, driven by upcoming Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation data and trade balance figures. Significant foreign investor outflows, totaling ₹17,955 crore this month and \$18.4 billion in 2025, alongside rupee depreciation, are weighing on sentiment. Global



cues, especially US inflation and economic data, will also be closely watched. Last week ended with the BSE benchmark declining by 0.51%. Analysts expect range-bound movement with potential for an upward surge if India-US trade discussions yield positive breakthroughs. The Indian stock market is poised for a period of heightened volatility this week, as investors keenly assess a confluence of domestic and global factors. Key domestic economic data releases, including Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation and the trade balance, are expected to shape market direction. This comes after the market closed the previous week

in negative territory, with the BSE benchmark index shedding 0.51 percent, a decline of 444.71 points. Domestic Data Focus Analysts highlight that the upcoming release of India’s Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation and trade balance figures will be central to market sentiment. Ajit Mishra, Senior Vice President of Research at Religare Broking Ltd, noted that an active domestic data calendar makes this week crucial. Developments related to India-United States trade discussions are also anticipated to remain a significant focus for investors, potentially influencing short-term market trends.

Passengers experience jolt
IndiGo flight suffers tail strike while landing at Ranchi airport

Mumbai: An IndiGo flight suffered a tail strike while landing at the Ranchi airport, officials said on Saturday.The incident happened around 7.30 pm on Friday when the Bhubaneswar-Ranchi flight was landing with around 70 passengers on board, they said.The plane was grounded following the incident, as it was found to be technically ineligible for takeoff, he said.IndiGo on Friday announced the appointment of an external aviation expert to review and assess the recent operational crisis.

A statement from the aviation regulator said: “...The following FOIs under various categories, on contract basis, in DGCA are hereby relieved from DGCA with immediate effect to join their respective parent organisations.”Sources confirmed that these four officials, hired on contract from the aviation sector by the DGCA, had been removed in connection with the IndiGo mayhem.Flight operations in-



spectors are senior officials who are part of the DGCA’s regulatory and safety oversight regime, and are often deployed to monitor airline operations.They ensure aviation safety by inspecting, auditing and certifying

that airlines and personnel — such as pilots, dispatchers and cabin crew — do meet the regulatory standards. They are expected to oversee training, flight standards, and accident prevention measures.

CII urges higher capex, NIP 2.0 and tax incentives in Budget push to growth lobby Confederation of Indian

New Delhi: a sweeping set of reforms for the Union Budget 2026–27, calling for higher public spending, fresh infrastructure pipelines and targeted tax incentives to sustain investment momentum across public, private and foreign capital.In its recommendations, CII suggested increasing central capital expenditure by 12 per cent and capex support to states by 10 per cent in FY27. It also proposed launching a Rs 150 lakh crore National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) 2.0 for the period 2026–32.The industry body recommended offering incremental tax credits or compliance relaxations to firms achieving significant new investment, production or tax contribution milestones, along with the creation of an NRI Investment Promotion Fund.CII further called for reinstating accelerated depreciation benefits to incentivise fresh capital expenditure and technology upgrades, particularly for MSMEs and manufacturing sectors, provided the measure is structured to encourage modernisation without triggering Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) obligations.According to CII, reinforcing fiscal stability through an economic-cycle-based public debt framework, in place of inflexible annual deficit rules, would also enhance resilience by allowing counter-cyclical flexibility during global shocks and avoiding repeated breaches of yearly targets.

Such a framework would strengthen credibility by aligning fiscal policy with medium-term debt sustainability, it said.”The forthcoming Union Budget 2026-27 has to serve



the dual role of stabiliser and growth enabler, and promoting investments will be one of the most critical components in this regard,” CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee said. Towards this objective, CII has proposed a comprehensive investment strategy anchored in fiscal prudence, capital efficiency, and investor confidence.The recommendations emphasise strengthening public capital expenditure as the backbone of infrastructure-led growth, while simultaneously unlocking private and foreign investment through targeted incentives, institutional reforms, and enhanced global engagement.

India’s CPI inflation estimated at 0.71 pc for Nov, food inflation stays in negative zone

Mumbai: India’s year-on-year inflation rate, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), was estimated at 0.71 per cent for November this year which was marginally higher than the 0.25 per cent in October, according to figures released by the Ministry of Statistics on Friday.Food inflation stayed in the negative zone during November at (-) 3.91 per cent as prices of food goods fell compared to the same month of the previous year. Food inflation has now stayed negative for the sixth month in a row, easing the burden on household budgets. However, the increase in headline inflation during November 2025 is mainly attributed to an increase in the inflation of vegetables, eggs, meat and fish, spices, and fuels compared to



October, according to an official statement.The retail inflation had eased further in October, after having plummeted to an over 8-year low of

1.54 per cent in September, as prices of food items and goods across sectors fell during the month.

The declining trend in food prices continued in October as food inflation fell deeper in the negative zone at (-) 5.02 per cent from (-) 2.28 per cent in September.However, the overall outlook for inflation remains benign.The RBI’s monetary policy committee (MPC) last week slashed its forecast for India’s inflation rate for the financial year 2025-26 to 2 per cent from 2.6 per cent predicted in October due to the sharp decline in food prices and the GST rate cuts playing out.RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra announced a reduction in the repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.25 per cent from 5.5 per cent earlier, as inflation had come down and the monetary policy could focus on boosting growth.

Gold, silver prices jump sharply this week

New Delhi: Gold and silver prices witnessed a sharp surge in the domestic market this week, tracking strong gains in global bullion markets. Gold prices rose by around Rs 4,000 per 10 grams, while silver prices jumped by nearly Rs 17,000 per kilogram.According to data from the India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA), the price of 24-karat gold increased by Rs 4,188 to Rs 1,32,710 per 10 grams, compared to Rs 1,28,592 a week ago.The price of 22-karat gold climbed to Rs 1,21,562 per 10 grams from Rs 1,17,777, while 18-karat gold rose to Rs 99,533 per 10 grams from Rs 96,444. Silver prices outperformed gold, registering a sharper weekly rise. The price of silver surged by Rs 16,970 to Rs 1,95,180 per kilogram, up from Rs 1,78,210 per kilogram a week earlier.Earlier on Friday, Silver touched the Rs 2 lakh mark to hit an all-time high of Rs 2,013,88 per kilogram on the Multi-Commodity Exchange (MCX) during the intraday trade.

Dharmendra, Bachchan’s Sholay Final Cut Box Office Run Continues Strong

Muumbai: Amitabh Bachchan and Dharmendra’s cult classic, Sholay, completed 50 years this August. To mark the significant milestone, director-producer Ramesh Sippy in collaboration with the Film Heritage Foundation (FHF), announced a theatrical re-release on December 12.

Titled Sholay: The Final Cut, the restored version features previously deleted scenes along with Sippy’s original dream ending, in which Thakur kills Gabbar. The film also serves as a moving tribute to Dharmandera, who died on November 24. The film is re-released at a time when Ranveer Singh’s Dhurandhar continues to dominate the box office. Despite the tough competition, Sholay: The Final Cut is holding its ground and is heading towards the Rs 1.5 crore mark within three days of its release. The announcement came with a bold claim that the 1975 classic would return to cinemas across 1,500 screens in India. Made on November 15, the promise fell short on release day, as Sholay: The Final Cut secured only 373 shows nationwide, recording a low overall occupancy of 13.14%.

According to Sacnilk, the film earned approximately Rs 30 lakh on its release day, falling well short of expectations for what was projected as the “biggest-ever re-release of a restored film.”On Saturday, the film earned Rs 50 lakh, followed by Rs 60 lakh on Sun-



day, taking its net total to Rs1.40 crore. At this pace, the film is expected to reach the Rs 1.50 crore mark soon.Why the 1975 Cult Classic Failed to Meet Expectations on Its Re-release. As per the industry insiders the box-office dominance of Ranveer Singh’s Dhurandhar significantly limited both the screen count and audience turnout for Sholay. A source told Bollywood Hungama, “On November 15, the team behind Sholay: The Final Cut—restoration partner Film Heritage Foundation and producers Sippy Films—announced the December 12 release. Interestingly, FHF’s social media post claimed the film would release on 1,500 screens. However, this figure was conspicuously absent from the posts of Sippy Films and Pen.” Makers have restored the film using its original 70mm materials, delivering a sharp 4K version with Dolby 5.1 sound. The restored cut has a runtime of 209.05 minutes, making it longer than the original 1975 theatrical release.

Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham Turns 24: See Kajol’s Celebration!

Muumbai: Kajol marked the 24th anniversary of Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham with a heartfelt and playful post on social media. Sharing two memorable pictures from the film, the actor celebrated the journey of Anjali, a character that remains one of the most beloved roles of her career.

One picture showed a goofy moment featuring Anjali, capturing her loud, carefree personality that audiences instantly connected with. The second image was a warm group hug from a key scene in the film, featuring the entire main cast together, Shah Rukh Khan, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Amitabh Bachchan, Jaya Bachchan, Hrithik Roshan and Kajol. The picture perfectly reflected the emotional core of the film, which revolved around love, family and togetherness. Along with the images, Kajol wrote, “To all the Anjali’s out there, keep being loud and proud! Rahul is out there somewhere but he might be late because of traffic.” The caption instantly struck a chord with fans, reminding them of Anjali and



Rahul’s iconic love story. Released in 2001 and directed by Karan Johar, Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham went on to become a cultural phenomenon. Its emotional storytelling, memorable dialogues, grand music and powerful performances helped it achieve cult status over the years. Even after 24 years, the film continues to be celebrated across generations. Kajol’s character Anjali, with her bold personality and emotional depth, remains one of the most relatable female characters in Hindi cinema. Fans flooded the comments

section with love, Anjali’s GIF, sharing their favourite scenes and dialogues from the film. On the work front, Kajol is currently enjoying a successful run as a talk show host. She co-hosts the show Too Much with Kajol and Twinkle alongside Twinkle Khanna. The show has been receiving positive response for its candid conversations, humour and honest takes on life, relationships and the film industry. As K3G completes 24 years, Kajol’s post is a reminder of why the film continues to live on in pop culture.

Ali Fazal Completes Final Schedule of Aamir Khan Production, Lahore 1947

Mumbai: After a busy few months packed with back-to-back shoots, Ali Fazal has officially wrapped up his final portions for the much-anticipated film Lahore 1947. The actor, who recently completed the Mumbai and Benaras schedules for Mirzapur: The Movie, has been seamlessly balancing multiple major projects and continues to prove his commitment to diverse and powerful storytelling.

Produced by Aamir Khan Productions and directed by the acclaimed filmmaker Rajkumar Santoshi, Lahore 1947 brings together an extraordinary ensemble cast including Sunny Deol, Preity Zinta, and Shabana Azmi. The period drama is one of



the most awaited cinematic events of the year, exploring a story set against the turbulent backdrop of India’s partition. Expressing his thoughts on completing the shoot, Ali Fazal said, “It’s been quite an emotional journey wrapping up Lahore 1947. The film is unlike anything I’ve done before – it’s deeply rooted in our history, yet carries emo-

tions that are timeless and universal. Working under Rajkumar Santoshi sir’s direction has been a masterclass in itself, and sharing screen space with powerhouses like Sunny sir, Preity ma’am, and Shabana ji has been an absolute honor. Each day on set felt like a lesson – not just in cinema, but in humility and dedication to the craft.”

The Comedy Show Continues: Kis Kisko Pyaar Karoon 2 Collects ₹2.85 Cr

Mumbai: Kapil Sharma’s comedy entertainer Kis Kisko Pyaar Karoon 2 somehow managed to hold its ground at the box office amid tough competition from Ranveer Singh-starrer Dhurandhar. Although the sequel of the 2015 film was expected to attract a large number of crowds, its opening week-end performance remained limited.

Directed by Anukalp Goswami, the film also stars Manjot Singh, Tridha Choudhury, Ayesha Khan, Parul Gulati, Hira Warina, and Asrani in key roles. As per Sacnilk reports, Kis Kisko Pyaar Karoon 2 collected Rs 1.85 crore on its opening day. Saturday saw a marginal growth of Rs. 2.5 crore net, while on its third day, Kis Kisko Pyaar Karoon 2 earned an estimated Rs. 2.85 crore. After Sunday’s earnings, the total collection of



the film stands at an estimated Rs 7.20 crore net at the end of the first weekend.

After the film wrapped up its first weekend, the film’s gross collection hit an estimated Rs 8.6 crore, according to Sacnilk reports. Kis Kisko Pyaar Karoon 2 further collected Rs 50 lakh in the international box office, making the film’s total worldwide box office collection hit an estimated Rs 9.1 crore. The film’s first Sunday witnessed a significant growth in occupan-

cy as the film registered an overall 40.27% Hindi occupancy. The morning shows opened slowly with a 9.45% occupancy rate, while it quickly went high during the afternoon shows, recording 41.07% occupancy. The evening shows, on the other hand, peaked at 59.70%, while night shows saw a slight dip, recording 50.87%. The film’s first Sunday witnessed a significant growth in occupancy as the film registered an overall 40.27% Hindi

occupancy. The morning shows opened slowly with a 9.45% occupancy rate, while it quickly went high during the afternoon shows, recording 41.07% occupancy. The evening shows, on the other hand, peaked at 59.70%, while night shows saw a slight dip, recording 50.87%.

It seems like Kapil Sharma’s comedy entertainer somehow managed to hold its place at the box office while facing extreme competition from Aditya Dhar’s Dhurandhar. The spy action thriller stands as a major hit, as it collected an impressive Rs 207.25 crore net at the end of the first weekend and followed it up with a massive earning of Rs 144.5 crore in its second weekend alone. Dhurandhar’s box office dominance affected Kis Kisko Pyaar Karoon 2’s overall performance.

Kareena Kapoor Khan and Sons Taimur, Jeh Meet Lionel Messi

Mumbai: On Sunday, Bollywood actress Kareena Kapoor Khan and her sons Jeh and Taimur Ali Khan met Argentine football legend Lionel Messi, who is currently in Mumbai for his GOAT India Tour 2025. Several photos and videos from the meet-and-greet have gone viral on social media. Taimur and Jeh looked awestruck and had a fan moment as they posed with Messi. Jeh’s cute reaction, in particular, has left fans gushing.

Several videos from the meet and greet show Kareena, Jeh and Taimur happily posing for pictures with Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Rodrigo De Paul. Taimur was all smiles, while Kareena’s younger son Jeh seemed intrigued and kept looking at Messi. After the photo session wrapped up, Bebo and Taimur stepped aside to make way for others. Jeh, however, walked up to Messi and stood by his side. Amused, Kareena turned around and gently pulled him away. Jeh’s adorable reaction left fans in splits. Before heading to meet Lionel Messi, Kareena also shared a picture with her sons on Instagram, capturing their excitement. The picture showed her leading her sons out of the room, as they headed to meet Messi. She looked stunning in a khaki dress,



while Taimur and Jeh donned football jerseys.

Kareena Kapoor Khan has often spoken about her son Taimur’s fascination with sports stars. In a conversation with Soha Ali Khan on her podcast ‘All About Her’, Kareena said that Taimur has no interest in Bollywood, and is instead starstruck by Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Lionel Messi. “He has never really met any other actors. The only thing

he keeps asking is, ‘Are you friendly with Rohit Sharma? Are you friendly with Virat Kohli? Can you message him that if I can get that bat of his? Is there a contact that you have to Lionel Messi?’ I’m like ‘No. I don’t have his contact.’ He never asks me about any actor from Bollywood. Ranbir Kapoor to Ranveer Singh, he has no clue. He’s like, ‘Can I ask Virat Kohli a question?’ I’m like no you cant. I don’t know him,” said Kareena.

Sanjay Dutt’s Viral Moment with Elderly Fan

Mumbai: Sanjay Dutt captivated the audience with his negative role in the blockbuster movie Dhurandhar, co-starring Ranveer Singh, R Madhavan and Akshay Khanna, among others. The actor has been garnering much praise for his commanding on-screen appearance. Amid this, he was recently spotted with an elderly fan, and their conversation won hearts online.

In a video posted on Instagram, Sanjay warm hug and welcoming demeanor. Af-some candid captures, the actor can be with him. The Munnabhai M.B.B.S. star fan informed the 66-year-old actor that to this with a witty smile, the actor said, kala hai yaar (I’m old? Please see these hair. When the fan mentioned that he has it with colors, Dutt once again hugged



“Seeing #SanjayDutt with his elderly fan, makes our heart swell with pride and say, ‘This is what LEGENDS are made up of!’” Soon, social media users flooded the comment section praising the actor’s humble nature and handsome looks.

Thaman Sparks Debate on Tollywood Unity Despite Akhanda 2 Success



Hyderabad: At a time when the makers of Balakrishna’s Akhanda 2 expected a lot of support from the industry when the film was suddenly postponed, they reportedly got very little backing, according to the film’s composer Thaman S. At the Akhanda 2 press conference held in Hyderabad on Sunday, the music director’s comments hogged the limelight more than anything else. He expressed concern

over detractors for spreading negativity about Akhanda 2’s financial issues. Akhanda 2 was supposed to release on December 5 but arrived a week later. Thaman questioned the timing of the court case (filed by Eros International), which could have been filed earlier too and why it was only done at the time of release. “This indicates how the world (Tollywood) lacks unity, and we are not here as a strong unit. Unity is

Janoszek showstops at Bigg Boss bash



Mumbai: Natalia Janoszek may have had a short journey on Bigg Boss 19, but she was undoubtedly a refreshing addition to the show. Beyond her stint as a contestant, her fashion choices truly stood out, making her one of the most stylish faces of the season.

Post Bigg Boss 19, Natalia has been making regular appearances at various events, and her impeccable style has continued to turn heads. The Housefull 5 actress was recently spotted at Farhana Bhatt’s star-studded bash, where her simple yet captivating look stole the spotlight, once again proving that effortless elegance is her signature style. Natalia was all smiles as she posed for the paparazzi at the event. She looked stunning in a body-hugging white dress with a plunging neckline, while the asymmetrical hemline added an edgy, fashion-forward touch. She accessorised her look with a golden clutch and matching heels, and her sleek, straight hair paired with golden hoops perfectly completed the ensemble. The comments section of the video was filled with red heart emojis for Natalia.

If you think Natalia can only ace simple dresses, you’re mistaken. The Mastiii 4 actress was spotted at the success bash of Bigg Boss 19 in a golden, shimmery, sizzling short halter-neck dress. Her gorgeous tresses added an extra oomph factor to the look. She accessorised her outfit with hoop earrings and opted for matte-finish makeup, which perfectly complemented her glam appearance. Natalia wore a stunning, embellished regal gown with minimal accessories; her standout hair-style elevated the look.

Jazz Tribute Marks Murakami’s Major NYC Award

Agency: Celebrated Japanese author Haruki Murakami was feted in Manhattan last week with two major honors and a music-led tribute that reflected both his literary legacy and his lifelong love of jazz.

The 76-year-old writer, who lives in Tokyo and is frequently mentioned as a Nobel Prize contender, was recognised for his decades-long contribution to global literature as a novelist, translator, critic and essayist. On Tuesday, the Center for Fiction conferred on him its Lifetime of Excellence in Fiction Award during a gala at Cipriani 25 Broadway. Past recipients of the honour include Nobel laureates Toni Morrison and Kazuo Ishiguro. Two days later, the Japan Society hosted a special programme at The Town Hall titled Murakami Mixtape and presented him with its annual award recognising “luminous individuals who have brought the U.S. and Japan closer together.” Murakami is widely known for novels such as Kafka on the Shore and The Wind-Up Bird



Chronicle, which explore themes of memory, isolation and identity. Over the years, readers have also come to associate him with pursuits beyond literature, including long-distance running, baseball, beer and jazz — interests that were woven into both New York events.

Healthy Living and Disease Prevention

This article is designed to give tips to readers about how they can improve or augment actions in their life on how to live a healthy lifestyle; it is not meant to be all-inclusive but will include major components that are considered to be parts of a lifestyle that lead to good health. In addition to the tips about what people should do for living healthy, the article will mention some of the tips about avoiding actions to unhealthy living. Here's how to live a healthy life. All humans have to eat food for the growth and body, but we have different nutrition requirements as infants, children (kids), teenagers, young adults, adults, infants may require feeding every 4 hours until they gradually age and begin to take in more solid food develop into the more normal pattern of eating three times per day as young kids. However, kids, teenagers, and young adults often snack between meals. Snacking is often groups because adults and seniors often do the same. Eat three healthy fast, lunch, and dinner); it is important to remember that dinner does not meal. The bulk of food consumption should consist of healthy foods, such as whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk products. Incorporate lean meats, eggs, and nuts (with emphasis on beans and nuts) into a healthy diet. Choose in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars; because the first listed items on the labels comprise the highest concentrations. Control portion sizes; eat the smallest portion that can satisfy hunger and then Healthy snacks are OK in moderation and should consist of items like fruit, or nuts to satisfy hunger and not cause excessive weight gain. Avoid sodas and hanced drinks because of the excessive calories in the sodas and sugar drinks; diet not be a good choice as they make some people hungrier and increase food consumption. Avoid eating a large meal before sleeping to decrease gastroesophageal reflux and gain. If a person is angry or depressed, eating will not solve these situations and may underlying problems worse. Avoid rewarding children with sugary snacks; such a pattern become a lifelong habit for people. Avoid heavy meals in the summer months, especially during hot days. A vegetarian lifestyle has been promoted for a healthy lifestyle and loss; vegetarians should check with their physicians to be sure they are getting enough vitamins, and iron in their diet. Cooking foods (above 165 F) destroys most harmful bacteria and choose to eat uncooked foods like fruits or vegetables, they should be thoroughly washed (drink) tap water right before eating. Avoid eating raw or undercooked meats of any type. Follow above tips and monitor their glucose levels as directed; try to keep the daily blood glucose with unusual work schedules (night shifts, college students, military) should try to adhere to snacking. People who prepare food should avoid using grease or frying foods in grease. People sugary foods and eat mainly vegetables, fruits, and nuts and markedly reduce his/her intake of meat and dairy products. Seek medical advice early if you cannot control your weight or food intake, or if you have diabetes and cannot control your blood glucose levels.



6 popular herbal supplements linked to potential liver risks

Although herbs and plants have been used for medicinal purposes for thousands of years, they have recently become very popular thanks in part to posts on the social media platform TikTok. Trusted Source where users tout the benefits of taking herbal supplements like ashwagandha, turmeric, and green tea. While herbal supplements may be considered "natural," they are not inherently safe and don't require review or approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Trusted Source before going to market. Additionally, people can experience side effects with herbal supplements and certain herbs can interfere with medications they are currently taking. For this study, researchers analyzed data from more than 9,500 U.S. adults with an average age of 47.5 who took part in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). Trusted Source years 2017 to 2020. Medical data on these participants included prescription drug and herbal supplement use. Scientists focused on study participants use of six herbal supplements considered from past research to be potentially hepatotoxic. Trusted Source: "Potentially hepatotoxic botanical products are the products that contain plant-based ingredients which have been implicated as potential causes of liver damage," Alisa Likhitsup, MD, MPH, clinical assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine in the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at the University of Michigan and lead author of this study explained to Medical News Today. "How these products cause liver damage is not yet known but it is likely due to metabolism that occurs in the liver after the products were consumed," she said. "As a practicing hepatologist, I have seen patients who had



liver injury from taking dietary supplements and some were fatal which required emergency liver transplant. Data from Drug Induced Liver Injury Network reported the rates of liver injury due to botanical products has been on the rise from 7% in 2004-2005 to 20% in 2013-2014. Therefore, I had (an) interest to analyze the prevalence and see how many Americans were consuming these products," Likhitsup continued. At the study's conclusion, Likhitsup and her team found that about 58% of all participants reported using an herbal or dietary supplement at least once within the 30-day period. About 5% of participants said they had taken at least one of the six potentially hepatotoxic botanicals in the past 30 days. When applied to the whole U.S. population, this percentage translates to about 15.6 million adults. This potentially hepatotoxic botanical use, researchers say, is similar to the estimated number of people prescribed potentially hepatotoxic drugs such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and a drug used to lower bad cholesterol levels called simvastatin. Trusted Source. "We hope our results will increase awareness among patients and providers about these potentially liver toxic ingredients being consumed regularly among Americans and the dietary supplement products available in the market are not strictly regulated," Likhitsup said. "We still do not have the data about the risks of liver injury when consuming one of these products, so it will be difficult for physicians to provide this information that we do not know. And because the available dietary supplement products are not strictly regulated, each product contains multiple ingredients with more than 50% mislabeled. So, it is difficult to do research on this topic."

Experts say these two things are the secret to living a longer life

A demographic study carried out at the beginning of this century showed that one out of 196 people who were born between 1880 and 1890 reached the age of 100 years old. Later on, the American researcher Dan Buettner embarked on a project aimed at identifying other areas with high longevity rates. He found four additional regions. These were also named "blue zones": Okinawa (Japan), Icaria (Greece), Loma Linda (California) and Nicoya Peninsula (Costa Rica). In all these territories there is a high proportion of long-lived people, and each area is characterised by specific features which relate to that condition. In the region of Barbaglia, located in the Sardinian mountain area, there is the world's largest concentration of centenarians. Okinawa Island is inhabited by the oldest women on Earth. Icaria – an island which is located in the Aegean Sea – has the long-lived population with the lowest senile dementia levels. Loma Linda is home to a community of Seventh-day Adventists whose life expectancy is 10 years over the average lifespan in the United States. And in Nicoya we can find the second-largest community of centenarians in the world. What is the secret behind this great longevity; the mystery of the blue zones, where so many centenarians live? A team composed of several specialists (doctors, anthropologists, demographers, nutritionists, epidemiologists) – and led by Dan Buettner himself – travelled many times to the different blue zones. They identified the following nine general longevity factors, which are



related to diet and lifestyle: intense and regular physical activity in the performance of daily duties. The concept of a sedentary lifestyle is unknown to the people living in these regions having an "ikigai" – a Japanese word (Okinawa) which is used to define our own "reasons for being" or, more precisely, the reasons why we wake up every morning. Reduction of stress, a factor which is closely linked to almost all ageing-related diseases. Stress reduction means interrupting the normal pace of our daily lives in order to allow time for other activities which are part of normal social habits. For exam-

ple, taking a nap in Mediterranean societies, praying in the case of Adventists, the tea ceremony of women in Okinawa, and so on. "Hara hachi bu" – a Confucian teaching that means we should not continue to eat until we are full, but only until 80% of our eating capacity. Prioritising a diet that is rich in plant-based products. Meat, fish and dairy products may be consumed, but in lower amounts. A moderate consumption of alcoholic beverages, which confirms the belief that moderate drinkers live longer lives than nondrinkers. Engaging in social groups that promote healthy habits. Engaging in religious communities with common religious practices. Building and maintaining solid relationships between family members: parents, siblings, grandparents and others. To sum up, the above nine longevity factors could be synthesised in just two. Firstly, maintaining a healthy lifestyle – which implies regular intensity exercise, including routines to "break" from daily stress, and including mainly plant-based products in our diets, eating without filling up and not drinking excessively. Secondly, integrating in groups that promote and support those "good practices": family, religious communities, social groups, and so on – all of which must have their own "ikigai", that is, their own "reason to live". There is a personal "ikigai", but there is also a collective "ikigai" that sets the goals for each community as well as the challenges to overcome in order to achieve them. Living this way means living better and longer.

The key to our humanity isn't genetic

The fantasy of trying to perfect humanity through genetics was recently reignited by the announcement of the Chinese scientist claiming to have made the first "CRISPR babies," which were named for the technique used to edit the DNA of the embryos. While major ethical and regulatory concerns are present, fears that CRISPR will lead us into the dystopian world depicted in the movie "Gattaca" are unfounded. In fact, if the movie were remade today it would likely be a story about the government mandating probiotics and healthy eating. Eugenics is the belief that humanity can be perfected through genetic manipulation. Past eugenic policies placed restrictions on marriage and immigration, justified slavery and forced sterilizations, and ultimately culminated in the Holocaust. I am a physician-scientist specializing in allergies who became interested in eugenics not in relation to skin color, but skin rashes. Most prominent researchers who study a skin rash called eczema were convinced that the vast majority of the disease is determined by fixed genetic sequences. Many still are. However, just like the studies of intelligence and criminal behavior that came before it, research into the genetics of eczema has fallen well short of what the 15th-century techniques had predicted. To be fair, the public's fascination with this subject is understandable. Commercial breaks are filled with pseudoscientific claims that your DNA can reveal, for example, that you are 12.4 percent Italian, 3.1 percent Neanderthal, and 1/512th Native American. Spoiler alert: It can't. Prominent magazines, podcasts and newspapers have pushed the debunked claim that intelligence is genetically encoded. In reality, genetic studies that were supposed to explain at least 80 percent of being a genius have explained only 5 percent. This means your genes, at best, have less impact on your IQ score than a good night's sleep. However, modern misunderstanding of how complex traits are passed down isn't just burdening society with hucksters and racists.

Aging human body experiences 'really dramatic changes' at 2 ages



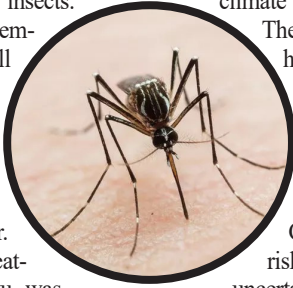
Everyone knows that as we age, our bodies go through a lot of changes. While changes will occur every year, past research shows that, at the protein level, the most notable changes take place around ages 34, 60, and 78. Trusted Source. Although some of these aging body changes you can see — such as graying hair and skin wrinkles — many of these alterations are not visible as they happen inside the body. Trusted Source to organs, tissues, and even on a cellular level. A new study recently published in the journal Nature Aging. Trusted Source adds to what we know about how aging affects the inside of the body. Scientists from the Stanford University School of Medicine have discovered that humans undergo two major changes in their molecules and microorganisms around ages 44 and 60. Researchers say these changes can potentially have a major impact on a person's health, including cardiovascular health. For this study, researchers analyzed data from 108 people living in California between the ages of 25 and 75. Study participants were tracked for an average of 1.7 years with a maximum of about 7 years. Throughout the study, participants donated blood and other biological samples every few months, which allowed scientists to track changes in their bodies' molecules and microbiomes. The research team tracked age-related changes in more than 135,000 different molecules and microbes for almost 250 million distinct data points. "We are tracking people in incredible detail — measuring as many molecules as possible (tens of thousands) and their microbes to get a detailed picture of their health," Michael P. Snyder, PhD, professor of genetics at Stanford University School of Medicine and senior author of this study explained to Medical News Today. "In the process, we can also see how they age." As Snyder and his team looked at the data more closely, they noticed that about 81% of the molecules and microbes they identified change more at certain ages than at other times of a person's life span. The two ages with the largest molecule and microbe changes, scientists found, occur when a person is in their mid-40s and early 60s. "We expected the changes in the 60s because this is when disease risk increases for nearly all diseases and people's immune system decreases (and) we found additional changes," Snyder said. "The changes in the 40s were unexpected although in hindsight it is a time when people hit their 'mid-life crisis' and often injured themselves." "We think people are undergoing biological changes throughout their lives but (there are) two periods where lots of changes occur. The reason is not clear, but it might be because their lifestyle is not ideal — exercise and nutrition — or their cells are undergoing senescence in their 60s." — Michael P. Snyder, PhD. Additionally, the scientists found that the most noteworthy age-related molecule and microbe changes were linked to potential health concerns. For example, with people in their 40s, Snyder and his team discovered significant changes in the number of molecules related to alcohol, caffeine, and lipid metabolism, as well as cardiovascular disease and skin and muscle. At the age of 60, the biggest molecule changes were related to cardiovascular disease, immune regulation, kidney function, carbohydrate and caffeine metabolism, and skin and muscle. Snyder said it is important for researchers to continue to examine what happens to the body during biological aging because we can then take action to reduce many of the problems associated with aging. "The goal is to have people live long healthy lives. You (can) track these changes and take action with this information. For example, get on statins as you hit your 40s or just before, (and) make sure you exercise through life. In your 60s, drink plenty of water for keeping healthy kidneys, eat immune boosters, and antioxidants," he said. "Be aware of your health changes so that you can take action and live a long and healthy life," Snyder added.

Anti-inflammatory diet may help reduce dementia risk

Earlier studies have linked cardiometabolic conditions, which include type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke, to an increased risk of dementia. Some experts believe that inflammation may be the mechanism that binds these conditions together. A recent study published in JAMA Network Open. Trusted Source asks whether anti-inflammatory diets might reduce dementia risk in older adults with cardiometabolic diseases. In recent years, scientists have found links between many chronic conditions and persistent, or chronic inflammation. These include type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, autoimmune conditions. Trusted Source, depression. Trusted Source, and more. Because of this, many consider all instances of inflammation to be bad, but that is not fully justified. It is the body's first line of defense following injury or infection. Inflammation protects against invaders, plays a role in wound healing, and is vital for our survival. However, if inflammation is not properly regulated or persists beyond its necessary function, it can cause harm. This is usually referred to as chronic inflammation. Trusted Source, which can eventually cause damage to the body's cells, tissues, and organs, contributing to chronic diseases. Like many processes in the body, inflammation needs to be finely balanced. This fine balancing act can become more challenging in certain disease states and also as we grow older. Cardiometabolic conditions are associated with an increased risk. Trusted Source of developing dementia, and some experts believe that inflammation may underpin this relationship. Correspondingly, the current study found that cardiometabolic diseases were associated with an 81% increased risk of developing dementia. Because diet can influence inflammation — for better or worse — the authors of the new study decided to investigate links between pro-inflammatory and anti-inflammatory diets and dementia risk in people with cardiometabolic disease. Research has shown that the Western diet, which typically includes red meat, refined grains, full-fat dairy, eggs, and processed foods, is linked to raised levels of inflammatory markers. Trusted Source in the blood. On the other hand, diets that are rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and fish are linked to lower levels of inflammatory markers. Trusted Source. In their recent study, the authors assessed participants using the Dietary Inflammatory Index (DII). This tool assigns dietary components scores: For instance, fiber scores -0.663, whereas saturated fat scores 0.373. Medical News Today contacted one of the study's authors, Abigail Dove, MSc. She told us that previous research has shown that "anti-inflammatory diets are associated with a lower risk of dementia." However, she explained that the recent study is unique, because "it considers the relationship between diet and dementia in the context of a major dementia risk factor: cardiometabolic diseases." The researchers analyzed data from 84,342 older adults from the ongoing UK Biobank study. These individuals were aged 60 and older and did not have dementia at the start of the study. Scientists followed them for up to 15 years. As part of the UK Biobank research, participants provided information about their diet. A subset of 8,917 participants also had magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) brain scans. At the start of the study, 14,079 participants had at least one cardiometabolic disease, and by the end of the study, a total of 1,559 developed dementia. According to the analysis, individuals with cardiometabolic disease who followed an anti-inflammatory diet had a 31% reduced risk of developing dementia compared with individuals with similar conditions who followed a pro-inflammatory diet.

Mosquito-borne killer disease threatens blackbirds

A mosquito-borne disease freshly arrived in Britain has spread large distances, with scientists racing to understand the risks to wild birds. Infected insects can spread the deadly Usutu virus to blackbirds, raising fears for the famous songsters. New data shows Usutu has spread across much of southern England in five years, and has been linked to declines in some blackbird populations. Scientists are monitoring its spread amid warnings that mosquitoes and the diseases they carry may expand their range under climate change. “We’ve seen that the virus has spread further than we thought it might do, and it’s persisted,” Dr Arran Folly of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) told the BBC. Scientists at the APHA in Weybridge, Surrey, have been tracking mosquito-borne diseases in wild birds for decades, amid warnings that climate change is turning Europe into a potential breeding ground for the insects. Longer summers, hotter temperatures and heavy rainfall are creating conditions for the nuisance insects to move into areas that were previously inhospitable to them. Until 2020, all results came back clear. Then, after the summer heat-wave of that year, Usutu was detected in several blackbirds in Greater London. “Blackbirds specifically are quite susceptible to the virus and since 2020 we’ve found a decline in blackbirds of approximately 40% in Greater London,”



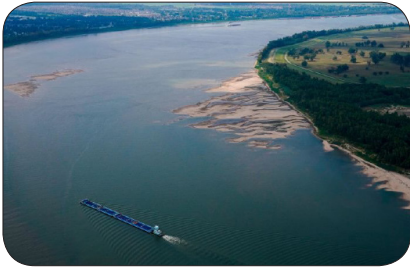
said Dr Folly. “It gives an indication that in the future we might get other viruses that are transmitted by mosquitoes emerging in the UK.” Diseases such as Usutu are a growing threat to wild birds, amid a host of other pressures, including habitat loss, climate change and pesticide use. The latest data shows that Usutu has spread further than the scientists expected. It has now been detected in wild birds across much of southern England, at least as far west as Dorset and as far north as Cambridgeshire. How big a risk Usutu poses to wild birds is uncertain. The virus has been linked to mass die-offs of blackbirds elsewhere in Europe, though that doesn’t seem to be the case in Britain. And the blackbird remains one of the commonest garden birds with numbers holding steady in many

parts of the country, especially in rural areas, and in the north. To untangle the puzzle – and gather more data on blackbird numbers – the scientists have joined forces with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). They are calling for volunteers to count blackbirds in their gardens over the summer months to find out more about the comings and goings of the birds. Around now blackbirds are breeding and raising their young, frequently seen hopping along the ground and singing from the branches of trees on summer evenings. Lucy Love, a garden birdwatch ambassador for the BTO, knows the blackbirds in her gardens by sight and has grown fond of them. “They’re beautiful birds – intelligent, friendly and they have the most beautiful song with a lovely melodic tone to it,” she explained. “And we cannot lose them – they’re a vital part of our ecosystem.”

Exceptionally low river levels raise fears over water supplies

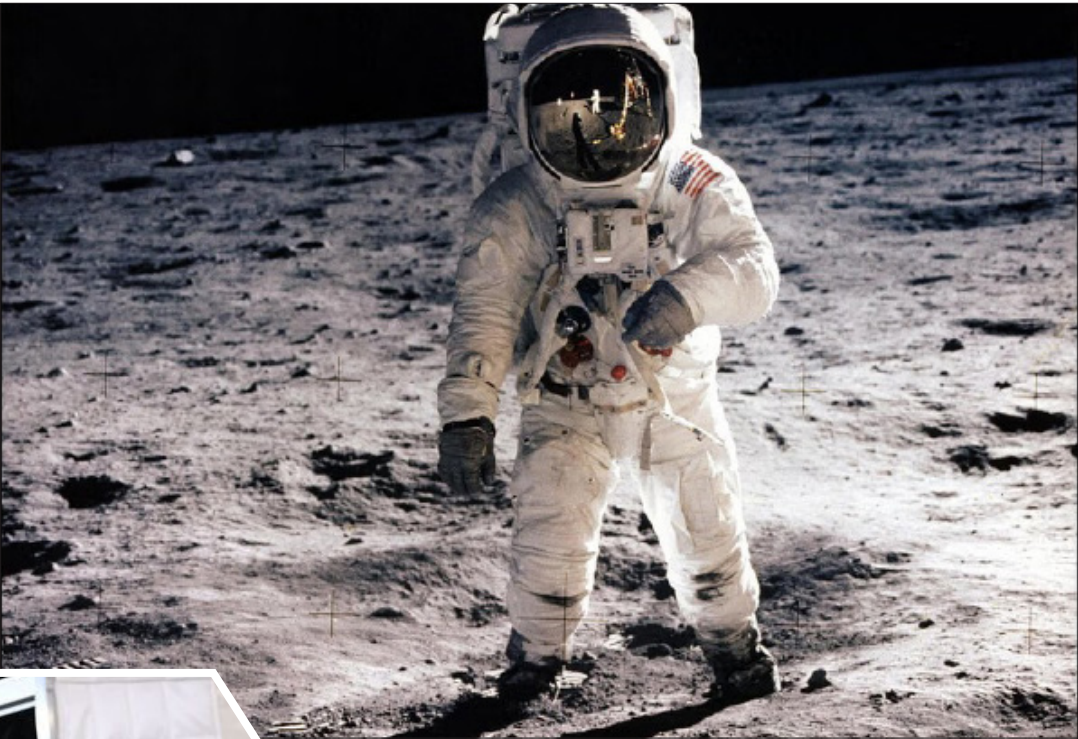
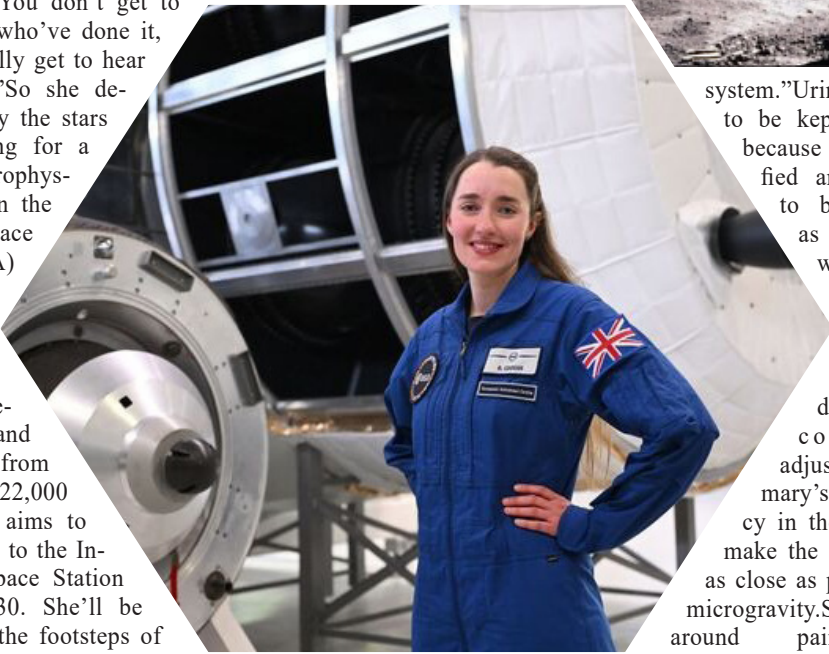
Many of the UK’s rivers have hit exceptionally low levels and that could worsen in the next three months, according to the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH), raising questions over supplies to households, farmers and businesses. The warning comes after the driest spring in England since 1961, with northern regions experiencing the driest start to the year in nearly a century. Almost all of the UK is expected to have below normal or low river levels in May, apart from the south-west of England and southern Wales. The Environment Agency has said that the UK is at medium risk of drought and warned households of the risk of water restrictions. The next 2-3 weeks will be “crucial” in determining whether the country goes into drought, says Mark Owen, head of fisheries for the Angling Trust and a member of the National Drought Group. That is the committee, led by the government, that declares if and when a drought is officially under way. The country is not now in drought, but the impacts of the exceptionally dry weather are already being felt. Some farmers are being forced to water their crops instead of relying on rainfall, which is something that normally happens later in the year. “We are having a drought now from an agricultural point of view,” arable farmer Nick Deane told BBC News from his farm in Norfolk. He had to start irrigating his fields in March. “We have to ration our water and decide which areas we are going to put that water on in order to keep the crops growing,” he said. He warned that an extremely long drought would mean farmers struggle to produce food and more produce would need to be imported. The dry and sunny weather this year has led to a larger area of the UK burned by wildfires this year compared with any other entire year. The last drought was in June-August 2022, which was the joint hottest summer (with 2018) and fifth driest since

the 1890s. Five companies introduced hosepipe bans, affecting 19 million people, and waterways had restricted navigation. That drought was preceded by six months of very dry weather. However, the wet summer in 2024 and moderately-wet winter means water supplies are in a better place now and water companies have larger reserves to rely on. But dry weather earlier in the year has risks. It does “potentially pose a greater risk to water resources later on in the year, particularly if the dry weather continues,” says Stephen Turner, hydrologist at the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. Last week, Richard Thompson, chair of the National Drought Group, warned that water companies may need to bring in water restrictions to protect supplies if the dry weather continues. At the moment the key questions are when will it next rain and when it does, how much will there be. There are some signs that some rain is on the horizon, with unsettled weather from the west at the end of next week. Drinking water comes from different places depending on the geography and geology of regions. Roughly speaking, the south of England takes a long time to get into drought but a long time to leave. That’s because a lot of rainfall is stored in rocks underground and takes a long time to reach rivers and water supplies. By contrast, the north of England quickly enters drought and quickly gets out because reservoirs are more heavily used for water supplies. Water Companies introduce hosepipe bans when water supplies reach a certain low in their areas. If drought conditions become severe, the government can restrict irrigation of farms, reduce boats’ movement on waterways, and limit water available to non-essential businesses like car washes. In an extreme scenario, it could ration the amount of water available to homes and businesses but that has not happened since 1976.



Will this woman be the first Briton to walk on the Moon?

Rosemary Coogan is surrounded by a team of people pushing, pulling, squishing and squeezing her into a spacesuit. It takes about 45 minutes to get all her gear on before a helmet is carefully lowered over her head. The British astronaut is about to undergo her toughest challenge yet – assessing whether she is ready for a spacewalk. The test will take place in one of the largest pools in the world: Nasa’s Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. The pool – which is 12m deep (40ft) – contains a life-sized replica of the International Space Station (ISS), and a “spacewalk” here is as close as it gets to mimicking weightlessness on Earth. “It’s a big day,” Rosemary says before the dive, which is going to last more than six hours. “It’s very physically intense – and it’s very psychologically intense.” But Rosemary doesn’t seem too fazed. She smiles and waves as the platform she’s standing on is slowly lowered into the water. Being an astronaut was Dr Rosemary Coogan’s dream from a young age, she says. But it was a dream that seemed out of reach. “At the careers day at school, you don’t tend to meet astronauts,” Rosemary says. “You don’t get to meet people who’ve done it, you don’t really get to hear their stories.” So she decided to study the stars instead, opting for a career in astrophysics. But when the European Space Agency (ESA) announced it was looking for new recruits to go to space, Rosemary applied and was chosen from more than 22,000 people. ESA aims to get Rosemary to the International Space Station (ISS) by 2030. She’ll be following in the footsteps of Britons Helen Sharman, who visited the Soviet’s Mir Space Station in 1991, and Tim Peake who launched to the ISS in 2015. Rosemary has spent the last six months training at the Johnson Space Center. As well as exploring the outside of the submerged ISS, she can head inside the orbiting lab in another life-sized mock-up located in a huge hangar. She takes us on a tour of the lab’s interconnected modules. It feels very cramped, especially considering astronauts usually spend many months on board. But Rosemary reminds us about the spectacular views. “It is an isolated environment, but I think this helps to give that kind of connection to being outside – to alleviate that sense of claustrophobia.” Rosemary’s training here covers every aspect of going to space – including learning how to use the onboard toilet. “The lower part is where you put your solid waste,” she says, pointing to a loo in a small cubicle that looks like something you might find at a very old campsite. “And this funnel here is actually attached to an air suction system, and that is where you put your liquid waste.” Female astronauts have the option of suppressing their periods using drugs, Rosemary says, but can also opt not to. “There’s essentially a filter that you put on top of the cone in which you urinate and it’s to stop any particles, any blood, from going into the urine



system.” Urine needs to be kept separate because it’s purified and treated to be re-used as drinking water, she explains. Back in the pool, divers are constantly adjusting Rosemary’s buoyancy in the water to make the experience as close as possible to microgravity. She moves around painstakingly, making sure she’s always attached to the submerged structure using two hooks. Every hand-hold is carefully chosen along the bars on the outside of each module. They’re in exactly the same positions as the ones on the real thing, vital muscle memory if she gets to carry out a spacewalk 200 miles (322km) above the Earth. It’s slow and difficult work, requiring plenty of upper body strength and physical effort in the hot, bulky spacesuit. “You do a lot of mental preparation – you really think through every single movement,” Rosemary explains. “You have to be really efficient with your energy. You don’t want to do something and realise it wasn’t quite right and have to do it again.” Rosemary is working alongside another astronaut to complete a list of space station repairs and maintenance for the test. Her every move is monitored by a team in a control room overlooking the pool. They’re in constant communication with her as she works through her tasks. Former space station commander Aki Hoshida, from the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, is on hand for advice. He has completed four spacewalks and says it’s a steep learning curve for new astronauts. “When we first start out, there’s so much information thrown

at you, so many skills that you have to learn and show and demonstrate,” he says. “It is baby steps, but they are moving forward – and I can see their excitement every time they come here and jump in the pool.” Rosemary takes us to see a Saturn V – the rocket that took the Apollo astronauts to the Moon in 1969. More than 50 years on, Nasa is planning an imminent return to the lunar surface with its Artemis programme. European astronauts will join later missions. With an expected 35-year space career ahead, Rosemary may one day get the chance to become the first Briton to walk on the Moon. “It’s incredibly exciting that we, as humanity, are going back to the Moon, and of course, any way that I could be a part of that, I would be absolutely delighted. I think it’s absolutely thrilling,” she says. After six gruelling hours underwater, Rosemary is nearing the end of her spacewalk test – but then she’s thrown a curve ball. In the control room, we hear her call out for a comms check with her astronaut partner who’s working on another part of the space station. But she’s met with silence. On a video screen, we can see he’s motionless. Rosemary doesn’t know it, but he’s been asked to pretend to lose consciousness. Rosemary’s job is to reach him, check his condition – and tow him back to the airlock. After so long underwater, we can see how exhausted she is – but working slowly and steadily, she gets him safely to the airlock. “Rosemary has the endurance of a champion. She crushed it today,” says Jenna Hanson, one of Nasa’s spacewalk instructors who’s been assessing Rosemary. “We’re really happy with where she’s at – she’s doing awesome.” The spacewalk is finally over. Rosemary’s platform is hoisted out of the pool and the support team help her out of her suit. As her helmet is removed, we can see she’s clearly very tired, but still smiling. “It was a challenging one, it really was, and a challenging rescue,” she tells us, “But yeah, it was a really enjoyable day.” Rosemary’s hard work is bringing her ever closer to her dream of getting to space. “It’s amazing,” Rosemary says, “If I could do that for the real space station – where you can look out and see the stars and see the Earth at the same time – that would just be the cherry on top.”

Coogan has spent the last six months training at the Johnson Space Center, exploring the ISS and the orbiting lab in a life-sized mock-up in a large hangar.

Climate experts criticise handling of Tata changes

The UK’s climate change advisors have criticised the handling of a switch to greener steelmaking at the country’s largest plant in Port Talbot, which resulted in huge job losses. Government ministers should have been better at planning ahead and making sure other green jobs were available locally, the experts said. The independent Climate Change Committee (CCC) has set out its latest advice on how Wales reaches net zero – with a push for more electric vehicles, heat pumps and tree planting. The Welsh and UK governments said they had been working together to develop “a strong vision” for the region’s future and deliver “our clean energy superpower mission”. More than 2,000 jobs were lost at Tata’s Port Talbot steelworks following the closure of its blast furnaces in 2024. The move brought an end to traditional steelmaking at the site, as the company grappled with losses of over £1m a day. It was given a £500m grant by the UK government and is now investing £1.25bn to build a new electric arc furnace by 2027. This will recycle scrap metal into new steel products, but requires far fewer workers on site. The changes will have a dramatic impact on direct emissions of planet-warming gases from Wales. The blast furnaces were constantly fed with coal, and their closure will have more than halved Wales’ industrial emissions since 2022, according to the CCC. But environmentalists have warned the situation at Port Talbot could damage public support for climate action if it is seen to mean job losses and the demise of heavy industry. In its report, the CCC said there were “important lessons to learn”, and that governments in both Westminster and Cardiff Bay should have been better prepared. “The challenges facing the UK steel sector have been clear for many years and, given the significance of this site to the local economy, a more proactive and decisive transition plan should have been developed,” they argued. The UK government should have taken steps to make industrial electricity prices more competitive, and convened “early and collaborative” negotiations between plant owners, workers and the community, the report said. The Welsh government could have ensured “the right training and re-skilling programmes were in place well before closure”, it added, and developed a local industrial strategy to support alternative employment in areas like heating services and floating offshore wind. The committee said Port Talbot’s experience should now be used “to guide future efforts to decarbonise other strategically and locally-significant emissions-intensive industries,” citing Pembroke’s oil refineries as an example. Former steelworker Shaun Spencer, who now works for a firm training electrical engineers, said he agreed with the committee’s comments “100%”. He warned the feeling of “resentment and bitterness” was “very strong” among his former colleagues. He added the approach had been detrimental to “everybody’s views of net zero” and to support for the way the UK and Welsh governments deal with things, “especially in this area”. Emma Pinchbeck, the CCC’s chief executive, told BBC news what had happened at Port Talbot was “foreseeable and preventable”, and had “not been the best case study” for what a green transition should look like. Like the UK, Wales has set a legally binding net zero target, which means that by 2050 it should no longer be adding to the total amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The CCC provides independent advice on how much can be emitted over five-year periods, known as “carbon budgets”, and how each UK nation might achieve this. Each carbon budget is a stepping stone to net zero, with the latest advice covering the period between 2031-35. The report recommends a 73% reduction in average annual emissions over this period compared to how much Wales pumped into the atmosphere in 1990. Emissions have decreased by 37% so far and the country met its first carbon budget between 2016-2020 mainly through changes to electricity generation – such as the closure of the last remaining coal-fired power station at Aberthaw in Vale of Glamorgan. Future cuts will rely more on all of us making choices about how we live. The CCC has made 16 “priority” recommendations for immediate action. These include supporting people to better insulate their homes and install low-carbon heating systems, drive electric vehicles or opt for public transport. By 2033 – in just eight years’ time – a third of cars and vans on Welsh roads should be electric, the committee said, and nearly a quarter of existing homes need a heat pump or similar technology. The committee also said the Welsh government will need to support farmers and rural communities to “diversify their income” away from livestock farming and towards woodland creation and peatland restoration. In 2022, agriculture was the third-highest emitting sector in Wales, accounting for 16% of Wales’ emissions. Cattle and sheep numbers should fall by 19% by 2033 due to changes in agricultural policy but also a shift in diets with less meat and dairy consumed UK-wide, the report has predicted. The proportion of woodland cover across Wales will rise from 15% to 17% in 2033 and 26% by 2050, according to the committee’s projections. Farming union NFU Cymru said the Welsh government needed to “reflect and consider” whether that advice fit “with the circumstances we have in Wales”. “Many thousands of people rely on agriculture and livestock production,” said the union’s president Aled Jones. The Welsh government thanked the CCC for the report which it said it would now “review and use to set Carbon Budget 4 in regulation before the end of the year”. A spokesman said it had been working with the UK government, the local authority and key stakeholders as part of the Tata Steel UK transition board to support affected individuals and businesses and develop a “strong vision for the future of the region”. It hoped do this by “making the most of” opportunities from new infrastructure and investment in areas such as renewable energy, he added.

SPORTS

IPL Auction 2026: Which countries have the most players in the pool

Mumbai: The latest edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) auction will take place on December 16, 2025, in Abu Dhabi. A total of 1,355 players had registered for the mini auction ahead of the IPL 2026 season, but the list has since been trimmed to 359 by the organisers. Of the shortlisted players, 244 are from India, following the addition of nine names to the original list released by the governing body. Australia and England lead the overseas representation, with 21 and 22 players respectively. Australia and England lead the overseas representation, with 21 and 22 players respectively. Ireland pacer Josh Little is the lone representative from his country, while Malaysia's Virandeep Singh has also been included in the final shortlist.



Ireland pacer Josh Little is the lone representative from his country, while Malaysia's Virandeep Singh has also been included in the final shortlist. Which countries have the most players in the IPL 2026 auction pool? A country-wise breakdown of Indian and overseas representation.

ICC, JioStar clarify stance on media rights deal

New Delhi: Reliance-run JioStar and the International Cricket Council (ICC) have clarified that the existing media deal between the two stakeholders will remain 'fully in force' and any reports on a withdrawal are false. JioStar is the joint venture created after the merger of the media business of Reliance and the India business of global media giant Walt Disney. The latter, before the merger, had won the ICC The existing agreement between the ICC and JioStar remains fully in force, and JioStar continues as the ICC's official.

3rd T20I: A three-match 'audition' starts for Gill find his game back

New Delhi: The countdown to save his place in the playing XI begins for a beleaguered Shubman Gill, who is likely to get three matches against South Africa to prove his worth before the Indian team management switches to a 'Plan B' ahead of the T20 World Cup, starting in six weeks. As India gear up to play the third T20I against the Proteas on Sunday in sub-10-degree temperatures in the lap of the ice-clad Dhauladhar range, things are suddenly heating up in the Indian dressing room, with the prolonged poor form of skipper Suryakumar Yadav coming under the scanner. The South African pace attack featuring Anrich Nortje, Marco Jansen, Lungi Ngidi, Othniel Baartman and Lutho Sipamla — has shown how to bowl on Indian tracks, and the HPCA Stadium strip, offering extra bounce and some movement off the surface, will certainly keep them interested. Among all T20 sides, South Africa, in terms of personnel, appears to have the requisite balance to win the trophy in the Indian subcontinent this time. Quinton de Kock's return, along with the likes of Aiden Markram, Dewald Brevis, Donovan Ferreira, David Miller and all-rounder Jansen,



gives their batting an intimidating look. With only eight games, starting from the third T20I, left before the start of the T20 World Cup title defence, India's under-fire head coach Gautam Gambhir won't be able to afford two out-of-form top-order batters in the starting line-up. Being the skipper of the side, Surya will certainly have immunity going into the T20 World Cup.

Roger Federer will be the main attraction 2026 Australian Open

Melbourne: Roger Federer will return to the scene of some of his greatest triumphs in January when he headlines a "Battle of the World No. 1s" to officially launch the 2026 Australian Open, organisers said Friday. The Swiss great will be back on Rod Laver Arena for the first time since he retired in 2022 as the Grand Slam at Melbourne Park introduces an inaugural "opening ceremony". Held on the evening before the tournament starts on January 18, it will include a tribute to Federer, who won the Norman Brookes trophy six times among his 20 major titles. He will also join four-time Australian Open winner Andre Agassi and Australians Pat Rafter and Lleyton Hewitt for a star-studded match. "It feels like a lifetime ago that I coined the phrase the 'Happy Slam' for the Australian Open, and it still makes me smile when I think about all the moments I've had there," Federer said. "I've experienced so many emotions on Rod Laver Arena -- the joy of lifting 'Norman' six times, the honour of playing in front of Rod Laver himself. "The challenge of competing against my biggest rivals, and always the overwhelming love and support of the Australian fans." "Coming back to win the AO in 2017 is one of my most treasured Grand Slam



Roger Federer will return to the scene of some of his greatest triumphs in January when he headlines a "Battle of the World No. 1s" to officially launch the 2026 Australian Open, organisers said Friday.

memories and backing it up to win in 2018 was another dream come true in Melbourne.

India's T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav vice-captain Shubman Gill

New Delhi: A persistent concern has been raised by India's 51-run thrashing by South Africa at Mullanpur on Thursday, which was their second-largest run loss in this format's history. The skipper and vice-captain of India are just unable to get runs. As they reach in Dharamshala, the two sides will exchange raucous Punjab for tranquil Himachal Pradesh after traversing the nation as India has been doing during South Africa's month-long all-format tour—quite the uncommon these days



given the maze of contemporary cricket scheduling. The charming HPCA Stadium will host the third Twenty20 International (T20I) in the five-match series on Sunday. There will be an

honors match, but there will also be a sword hanging. In the last year with neither scoring a 50 in T20Is, while Gill managed 263 runs in 14 matches, averaging 23.9 and striking at 142.93

Hazlewood out of series Cummins set to return

New Delhi: Pat Cummins is set to come back into Australia's Test XI and resume the captaincy duties in next week's third Ashes match in Adelaide, while Josh Hazlewood has been sidelined for the remainder of the series due to an Achilles injury and will now shift his focus to recovering in time for the T20 World Cup, as per ESPNcricinfo. Coach Andrew McDonald told reporters that selectors are willing to consider moving Khawaja into the middle order, as his recent back injury opened the door for the new opening partnership of Travis Head and Jake Weatherald, which has performed strongly in the first two Tests in Perth and Brisbane, respectively. McDonald provided an update on Tuesday regarding Cummins and Hazlewood, stating that the captain is fit and set to make his return. "His body's ready to go and barring anything else happening in the next week, I'd be

expecting Pat to be tossing the coin and putting the blazer on," McDonald said as quoted by ESPNcricinfo. He also confirmed that Hazlewood is out for the remainder of the series after developing an Achilles problem on the back of his earlier hamstring injury.

"Unfortunately, Josh won't be a part of the Ashes. Really, really flat for him. A couple of setbacks that we didn't see coming, and we thought he would play a huge part in the series. It's a totally separate injury. It's somewhere lower in the calf to the Achilles region. His preparation will then shift towards the World Cup, which is an incredibly important campaign for us," McDonald said. Coming to the Ashes, Australia have stamped authority in both the Test matches played so far. Led by stand-in captain Steve Smith, Australia defeated the Ben Stokes-led England by eight wickets in both Tests.

Vaibhav Suryavanshi smashes 171 in India vs UAE Under-19 Asia Cup match

Mumbai: Indian opener Vaibhav Suryavanshi scored a mammoth 171 against UAE in the opening match of the Under-19 Asia Cup match in Dubai on Friday. The left-handed opening batter got to his hundred in just 56 balls by smashing five fours and nine sixes by the time he crossed the three-figure mark. The 14-year-old was dismissed for 171 off 95 balls (9x4, 14x6) by spinner Uddish Suri, bowling him behind his legs as he looked to play the paddle sweep. Suryavanshi fell six runs short of Ambati Rayudu's record of 177 -- the highest score for India in Youth ODIs -- set in 2002. This is the second hundred for the teenager in Youth ODIs, after the 143

he had scored against England in July this year. Earlier this month, Suryavanshi scored his maiden century in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy during the group-stage match between Bihar and Maharashtra, becoming the youngest to score a ton in SMAT history. The Asia Cup will be a major preparatory tournament for the Indian unit ahead of the Under-19 ODI World Cup in 2026. Vaibhav Suryavanshi slammed a blistering 95-ball 171 in the Under-19 Asia Cup opener against UAE Under-19s on Friday. He fell just six short of Ambati Rayudu's long-standing India record in youth one-dayers - the 177 against England in Taunton back in 2002. Suryavanshi, yet to turn 15,



hit nine fours and 14 sixes during his innings, before being bowled attempting a paddle in the 33rd over of India Under-19s' innings. They eventually finished with 433

for 6 after being put in to bat. In response, UAE could only manage 199 for 7, leading to a 234-run win for India and a Player of the Match award for Suryavanshi.

Indian sports summary, December 12 Manush-Diya's third defeat ends their WTT Finals campaign

New Delhi: In the group stage of the WTT Finals 2025, Manush Shah and Diya Chitale of India's mixed doubles team suffered their third consecutive defeat.

In their last group match, the two lost 3-1 against Kuai Man and Lin Shidong of China. The Indian duo was defeated 2-3 by Hong Kong's Wong-Doo after losing their first match 0-3 against Wang-Sun of China. Second seed India swept South Africa 3-0 to cruise into the semifinal of the SDAT-World Cup Squash at the Express Avenue Mall on Friday. India will now meet Egypt, which eased past Australia 3-0, while Hong Kong takes on Japan in the other semifinal. The

host delivered a performance befitting title contenders, marked by clear strategy and exceptional confidence. Joshna Chinappa gave India the perfect start with a straight-games win over Teagan Russel. The match was played largely in the front court, and Joshna's superior touch, pace variation, and finish ensured that the world No. 203 South African never settled. The 39-year-old, ranked 79, dominated proceedings from start to finish. India's top men's player Abhay Singh made it 2-0 with a commanding win over Dewald Van Niekerk. Except for the second game where Dewald found good depth and briefly challenged Abhay, but the latter con-



trolled the tempo, playing deep and forcing errors through relentless pressure. India's rising star and sealing a straight-game win over Proteas No. 1 Hayley Ward. Their participa-

tion in the Finals was significant for India, despite their back-to-back defeats. The first Indian team to appear in the WTT Finals was Manush and Diya.

Board miffed ICC omits skipper Agha from T20 WC

New Delhi: The Pakistan Cricket Board is unhappy with the International Cricket Council after the global governing body released a promotional poster of next year's T20 World Cup ticket sales without the country's captain, Salman Ali Agha, on it. A reliable source in the PCB said the matter had been taken up with the ICC as only five captains—Suryakumar Yadav,

PCB miffed after ICC omits Pakistan skipper Agha from T20 WC ticket sales poster

Mumbai: The Pakistan Cricket Board is reportedly unhappy with the International Cricket Council after the global governing body released a promotional poster of next year's T20 World Cup ticket sales without the country's captain Salman Ali Agha on it. A reliable source in the PCB said the matter had been taken up with the ICC as the promotional poster featured only five captains — Suryakumar Yadav (India), Aiden Markram (South Africa), Mitchell Marsh (Australia), Dasun Shanaka (Sri Lanka) and Harry Brook (England). "We faced

the same issues when the Asia Cup was held a few months back and that time the broadcasters had started a promotional campaign without our captain featuring in it," the source said. He said it was only after the PCB spoke to the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) that the situation changed. He said while Pakistan was not in the top five teams in the ICC T20 rankings, it had a rich legacy and remains one of the top draws in the World Cup. He said the PCB was confident that the ICC would have the Pakistan captain on the promotional poster and campaigns.



Amalie Smith Sets 400IM European Junior Record England Winter Nationals

Mumbai: Amalie Smith set a European junior record in the 400IM on day two of the Swim England National Winter Championships at Ponds Forge, Sheffield.

The 16-year-old posted a time of 4:30.64 to go inside the benchmark time of 4:31.06 established by European Aquatics when they first began recognising junior records. It was a huge PB for Smith whose previous best stood at 4:37.79 from the 2024 edition of the year-ending short-course championships as she enjoyed a winning margin of 7.66secs over Holly Hopwood (4:38.30) with Ines Guimond-Beetham next home in 4:40.50. With that she secured the IM double after victory in the 200m with the 100IM to come.

It has been a superb year for Smith who trains at RTW Monson, a club based in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, southern England. She won the IM double at the European Junior Championships in Samorin, going 2:12.62 in the 200 and a championship record 4:37.02 in the 400.