

Himanta Biswa Sarma launches seed Capital Distribution under MMUA at Tamulpur

Tamulpur, Dec 05: At a function in Tamulpur on Thursday, Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma gave Rs 10,000 seed capital each to 35,199 women beneficiaries under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan (MMUA), empowering the Nari Shakti of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). According to him, the program has given women-led businesses significant impetus, opening up new business prospects and encouraging women in Assam to pursue entrepreneurship. Dr. Sarma cited Sati Joymati and Mulagabharu as instances of how women in Assam have historically shown remarkable leadership. While many women earlier stayed constrained to domestic tasks,

the growth of self-help groups (SHGs) prompted a huge socio-economic revolution, enabling more women to establish income-generating activities. Many women have started modest enterprises and achieved financial independence. The Chief Minister stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to assist three crore women in becoming “Lakshpati Baideus,” or entrepreneurs who make more than Rs 1 lakh a year. Forty lakh women participate in Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Assam alone, and more than eight lakh have already attained Lakshpati status through business endeavors backed by bank loans and savings. Dr. Sarma stated that the state government made the



■ On Thursday in Tamulpur, Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma provided Rs 10,000 seed capital to 35,199 women beneficiaries under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan (MMUA), aimed at empowering women in the Bodoland Territorial Region.

decision to individually assist each SHG member through MMUA in order to address the problem of restricted capital encountered by aspiring female entrepreneurs. The government will spend Rs 4,000 crore under the program to give Rs 10,000 to forty lakh women. He con-

tinued by saying that 10 lakh women have already benefited from the coverage of 45 assembly constituencies, proving the government’s dedication to keeping its word. He advised recipients to make good use of the seed money, stating that putting the first

Rs 10,000 into their SHGs will assist create a bigger corpus to launch or grow enterprises. Successful women would receive additional installments of Rs 25,000 and Rs 50,000 when the government reviews fund utilization after six months. Additionally, Dr. Sarma declared

that 4.5 lakh women will benefit from the launch of Orunodoi 3.0 in the BTC on December 12. On the same day, he would deliver letters of approval at Kokrajhar. According to a news release, the state will also launch the Babu Scheme for boys on January 1 and give ration card holders and Orunodoi households cooking gas cylinders and subsidized necessities.

Assam tribal organisations submit letter objecting ST status for 6 new tribes

Guwahati, Dec 05: Tribal organisations of Assam opposing the granting of Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to six new communities in the state on Thursday submitted “interim objections and suggestions” to the state government, affirming that they are against any move that will dilute or hamper the protection enjoyed by their groups. The Coordination Committee of Tribal Organisations of Assam (CCTOA), a conglomerate of more than 20 groups of vari-

ous existing ST communities, also sought a tripartite meeting involving the state government and the Union home minister at a later stage to take forward the discussion. A Group of Ministers (GoM) of the state government had submitted an interim report in the assembly last week with its recommendations on the demand for ST status by Ahom, Chutia, Moran, Matak, Koch-Rajbongshi and Tea Tribes (Adivasi) communities.

Gauhati University Denies Baseless Exam Form Allegations

Guwahati, Dec 05: Gauhati University on Friday refuted allegations that the examination form fill-up was opened just a day before exams, calling the claims baseless. The University clarified that the form-filling window was deliberately kept open to ensure no student was placed at a disadvantage. The University stated that the decision was student-centric, aimed at accommodating those who, due to genuine constraints, could not complete the process within the stipulated timeline. Gauhati University conducts over 250 undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across regular and arrear batches. Scheduling examinations for all programmes within a month is a complex task, the University noted, adding that the examination calendar was compressed from 45 days to 30 days to balance students’ interests with operational needs. The

University also emphasised that examinations are part of the broader teaching-learning-evaluation process and not the sole objective under NEP-2020. The new framework focuses on holistic learning, flexible course options, and academic depth through a broader range of credit-based courses. Students are encouraged to audit classes and make informed selections during registration. With the implementation of NEP-2020, the number of examinable courses has nearly doubled due to the inclusion of AEC, VAC, MDC, and SEC modules. This increase has required a more compressed but efficient examination schedule. Utpal Sarma, Registrar of Gauhati University, said, “We strongly deny the allegation and reiterate that Gauhati University functioned in the most transparent and student-friendly manner.

Fake doctor arrested in Sribhumi

Silchar, Dec 05: One Latu resident was detained by Sribhumi police in an effort to combat phony doctors, while another escaped. Ankan Bhattacharjee, who used to treat patients in a pharmacy in the Latu area close to Sribhumi town while allegedly acting as an MBBS, has been identified as the arrested individual. Police detained him from his home on Wednesday night after receiving a written complaint. Taher Ahmed, a phony physician from the town’s Kanishail neighborhood, fled the place well before the cops arrived. Since August 3 of this year, at least eighteen phony doctors, including several dentists, have been detained in Cachar.

HSPDP Reports Rising Demand for Khasi-Jaintia State

Shillong, Dec 05: HSPDP president KP Pangiang reiterated the party’s commitment to a separate Meghalaya cadre and a Khasi-Jaintia State, aligning with GNC’s demand for Garoland. CM Conrad is in talks with the Centre regarding the cadre issue, while a delegation intends to protest at Jantar Mantar. The HSPDP plans to abstain from MLA or MDC elections in Garo Hills to focus on its statehood agenda.

Miss Nagaland 2025 crown goes to Linoka K Achumi at a grand show in Kohima

Kohima, Dec 05: Linoka K Achumi was crowned Miss Nagaland 2025 at a grand finale held in Kohima on Thursday evening. The event took place as part of the ongoing Hornbill Festival, and the venue was filled with loud cheers as the new winner was announced. The programme drew a large crowd, and the evening carried a simple yet warm festive mood that reflected the spirit of the people gathered there. The beauty pageant was organised by the Beauty & Aesthetic Society of Nagaland along with the Departments of Tourism and Higher Education. The organisers said the event was meant to showcase young talents from across the state and give them a platform to express themselves. The stage was set in the backdrop of



the Hornbill Festival, which added more colour and excitement to the night. Linoka stood out throughout the competition. Along with winning the main crown, she also received two subtitle honours — Miss Multimedia and Miss Talent. These recognitions showed that she performed strongly in every round of the contest. Many in the audience praised her confidence, clarity and the way she presented herself. The first runner-up title went to Bendanliena, while Christina H Yeptho was named the second run-

ner-up. Both contestants also received warm applause from the audience for their efforts and performance. This year’s pageant put a simple yet strong spotlight on Naga culture, identity and creativity. Participants appeared in outfits that reflected traditional designs as well as modern fashion, showing how young Naga women are carrying forward their heritage while also embracing new opportunities. Many people at the event said the show felt like a celebration of unity, confidence and hope among the youth.

Massive Unrest at Tezpur University Over Alleged Appointment of Pro-Vice Chancellor

Tezpur, Dec 5: Tensions at Tezpur University escalated sharply on Thursday as students and faculty intensified their protests against the alleged appointment of Dr Joya Chakraborty as the institution’s Pro-Vice Chancellor. The campus remained shut for the sixth straight day, with demonstrators alleging that the decision was taken “arbitrarily” and without any consultation with stakeholders. Although the university has not yet issued an official notification regarding Dr Chakraborty’s elevation, protesting students at the site condemned the reported move and raised slogans against the senior professor.

According to sources, Dr Chakraborty — a professor in the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism — has previously held several administrative positions at the university. Her supposed elevation comes at a time when Vice Chancellor Shambhu Nath Singh faces mounting pressure, with students demanding his removal amid what they describe as a complete breakdown of trust and governance. The unrest intensified overnight, with students burning tyres, staging rallies and continuing their

sit-in demonstrations across the campus. Several faculty members also extended support, expressing alarm over what they termed a “collapse of transparency” in the university’s decision-making process. They urged the Central government to intervene to restore normalcy. Amid the spiralling crisis, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on December 3 that he had spoken to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan about the situation. In a post on X, Sarma said he had requested the immediate appointment of a Pro-Vice Chancellor “pending an impartial inquiry into the conduct of the present Vice Chancellor, so that academic stability is maintained.” The Chief Minister expressed confidence that the issues would be resolved soon with the Centre’s support. Despite assurances from the government, protests continued unabated on Thursday. Students insisted that appointing Dr Chakraborty without wider consultation reflects a deeper administrative failure within the university. With the campus shut down, academic schedules—including examinations and semester activities—now face significant disruption.

‘To Kill or Not to Kill’ Electrifies Arunachal Rang Mahotsav

Itanagar, Dec 05: As the week-long Arunachal Rang Mahotsav moves toward its grand finale on December 6, the prestigious international theatre festival delivered one of its most compelling moments on Thursday night with a stirring performance by Delhi-based actor Jhilmil Hazarika. Her lead role in the acclaimed production To Kill or Not to Kill held the audience in deep silence, later erupting into overwhelming applause as the play reached its dramatic conclusion. Directed by renowned theatre practitioner Ovyakuli Khodjakuli, the production stood out not only for its strong emotional core but also for its striking visual design. The intense fire-themed climax, executed with precision and restraint, left the hall reverberating with astonishment. Viewers described the final moments as “unforgettable,” praising the play for its courage in embracing bold theatrical imagery. At its heart, To Kill or Not to Kill is a philosophical exploration that



brings two towering figures of world literature — Shakespeare’s Hamlet and Euripides’ Medea — into a single narrative frame. Through their encounters, the production examines questions that continue to trouble societies across cultures: moral responsibility, cycles of violence, and the hidden tur-

moil that shapes human decisions. The play’s title becomes a direct reference to the ethical crossroads the characters confront, urging the audience to question how justice, suffering and personal trauma define the choices individuals make. Festival Director Riken Ngomle hailed the performance as one of

the most impactful of this year’s edition. Speaking after the show, he said the staging captured the festival’s spirit of artistic dialogue and experimentation. He added that with To Kill or Not to Kill marking the final international entry of the 2025 Mahotsav, the event will now shift its focus to regional talent and homegrown productions for the remaining sessions. Looking ahead, Ngomle announced that the upcoming showcase on December 6 will feature Money Money Brighter than Sunshine Sweeter Than Honey, an interactive Hindi-Nyishi theatre production created by artists from Keyi Panyor district. Directed by noted actor-trainer and theatre educator Rilli Ngomle, the play offers a sharp commentary on the growing prominence of “money culture” in daily life. It investigates how financial aspirations influence relationships, alter decision-making and reshape collective values within communities.

Mizoram to sign peace accord with Hmar militants: CM Lalduhoma

Aizawl, Dec 5: Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma on Friday announced that the state government is preparing to sign a peace accord with a faction of Hmar militants to bring stability to the region. Speaking at the general assembly of the Hmar Students’ Association (HSA) during the Sikipui Ruoi festival in Saipum, Kolasib district, near the Assam border, Lalduhoma said discussions are ongoing with the Lalthmingthanga Sanate-led faction of the Hmar People’s Convention (Democratic) (HPC-D) to help reintegrate militants into normal life. “We are hopeful that we can soon finalize an agreement to bring lasting peace to Mizoram, especially in Hmar-dominated areas,” the



Chief Minister said. The Sanate-led HPC-D faction has been seeking an autonomous district council under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution to secure administrative control for Hmar-majority villages in northeastern Mizoram, near the Manipur border. Earlier, the rival H Zosangabera faction of HPC-D signed a peace agreement

with the state government in April 2018, resulting in the formation of the Sinlung Hills Council (SHC) for Hmar-populated areas. The Sanate-led group operates mainly in Assam’s Cachar district. The upcoming agreement with the Hmar faction is seen as another step toward consolidating Mizoram’s reputation as a peaceful state in the Northeast.

In Brief

Fake doctor arrested in Sribhumi

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Arunachal Rang Mahotsav

Itanagar: As the Arunachal Rang Mahotsav nears its conclusion on December 6, a standout moment occurred with Jhilmil Hazarika’s performance in To Kill or Not to Kill, directed by Ovyakuli Khodjakuli. The production impressed audiences with its emotional depth and striking visual design, culminating in a memorable climax. The play juxtaposes Shakespeare’s Hamlet and Euripides’ Medea to explore themes of moral responsibility and cycles of violence. Festival Director Riken Ngomle praised the performance as highly impactful, noting its alignment with the festival’s focus on artistic dialogue. Looking forward, the next showcase will feature Money Money Brighter than Sunshine Sweeter Than Honey, a play by Keyi Panyor artists that critiques the influence of financial aspirations on relationships and community values.

HSPDP Reports Rising Demand for Khasi-Jaintia State

Shillong: HSPDP president KP Pangiang reiterated the party’s commitment to a separate Meghalaya cadre and a Khasi-Jaintia State, aligning with GNC’s demand for Garoland. CM Conrad is in talks with the Centre regarding the cadre issue, while a delegation intends to protest at Jantar Mantar. The HSPDP plans to abstain from MLA or MDC elections in Garo Hills to focus on its statehood agenda. The push for a Khasi-Jaintia state is contentious, with various groups advocating for the division of Meghalaya based on population majorities.

HC panel confirms illegal coal mining in Meghalaya

Shillong: A one-man committee from the Meghalaya High Court has found ongoing illegal coal mining in East Jaintia Hills. The committee’s 34th interim report criticized the district police for not detecting these operations despite previous complaints and video evidence.

State Congress expels Palakkad MLA after court rejects bail plea

Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 05: The Kerala unit of the Congress on Thursday expelled rape-accused Palakkad MLA Rahul Mamkootathil on the same day a district court in Thiruvananthapuram rejected the latter’s plea for anticipatory bail in the case.Mamkootathil (36), a first-time MLA, faces serious charges of raping a woman, forcing her to get an abortion, and issuing verbal threats among others. He has also been accused by a second woman of raping her on the pretext of marriage and causing grievous physical injuries.

The legislator is currently absconding.Kerala Pradesh Congress committee chief Sunny Joseph told reporters in Idukki, “Rahul Mamkootathil stands expelled from the

Congress. We had sought the approval of the AICC on the issue, which we received. This is a collective and unequivocal decision of the Congress leadership. It is better that he (Mamkootathil) now resign as MLA.”“We have taken a decision which can serve as a model for other parties.

When the allegations against him first surfaced in August, we removed him as state youth Congress chief, suspended from the party’s primary membership and kept him away from the parliamentary grouping. At the time, there were no formal complaints. Now that KPCC has got a complaint, we forwarded it to the police. We have assessed (the gravity of the charges) and taken a collective

decision,” he added.The decision to expel the MLA came minutes after the Thiruvananthapuram district sessions court dismissed the latter’s request for anticipatory bail in the case of raping a woman and forcing her to abort by giving her pills. Principal sessions judge S Nazeera pronounced the order in open court while a formal order is awaited.

The special investigation team of the state police, probing the case, had submitted all relevant materials pertaining to the case, including statements of doctors who treated the complainant and the forensic results of audio recordings between the accused and the survivor.The accused MLA had argued in his bail petition that he was the victim of a

political conspiracy aimed at ending his career. He claimed that he had a consensual relationship with the woman and that she consumed the abortion pills of her own volition. Political rivals of the CPI(M) and the BJP had accused the Congress leadership of shielding the rape-accused MLA and shying from taking stern action against him.

But Satheesan dismissed such allegations on Thursday. “When such serious charges arose against him, we did not try to protect him. We handed over the complaint to the police. This is exemplary action. (This case) will not affect our campaign for the local body polls. There are numerous such sexual assault cases within the CPI(M).

BJP MP pushes for ‘decolonizing’ Indian textbooks

New Delhi, Dec 05: BJP parliamentarian Sujeeth Kumar urged the Union government to eliminate the honorific “Lord” from references to former British Vicereroys and Governors General in textbooks and official documents, arguing that it perpetuates a “colonial hangover” long after India’s independence.

He highlighted its prevalence in NCERT history books and on government platforms, emphasizing that such titles served

colonial propaganda and promoted British superiority. Kumar contended that a mature democracy like India should abandon these colonial practices, which undermine equality and conflict with constitutional values.

He cited the renaming of Rajpath to Kartavya Path as a step toward embracing national ideals and removing remnants of a “slave mentality,” as articulated by Prime Minister Modi in his Independence Day address.

DK Shivakumar dismisses political motives for Delhi visit

New Delhi, Dec 05: Persistent speculation regarding a leadership rift in Karnataka has resurfaced, despite Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar’s attempts to reaffirm their partnership.

Shivakumar’s recent trip to Delhi was described as focused on attending a wedding and preparing for a Congress rally, although he refuted claims of political discussions during the trip. Renewed rumors about a power-sharing agreement came as the Congress government reached the halfway mark of its term, leading to back-to-back meetings between the two leaders to quell tensions before the legislature session.

Home Minister G Parameshwara denied any political talks during a visit from national leader K C Venugopal. Amidst this, BJP divisions are emerging over a proposed no-confidence motion against the government, seen as an opportunity for internal dissent. Siddaramaiah responded dismissively, stating the party is ready for any opposition efforts.

In Andhra, vindictive politics are in full flow
Jagan slams CM Naidu

Chennai, Dec 05: YSR Congress Party president Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy criticized the Chandrababu Naidu-led government for allegedly orchestrating a campaign against political opponents using fabricated cases and institutional manipulation. Addressing reporters in Tadepalli, he accused the Naidu administration of engaging in “vindictive politics,” targeting rivals with coercive tactics, including the misuse of police. Jagan linked

this alleged misuse to controversies over the quality of Tirupati laddus and the Parakamani issue, asserting that false narratives were being constructed against YSRCP leaders without concrete evidence.Jagan dismissed claims regarding the adulteration of ghee used in making Tirumala laddu, labeling these allegations as “manufactured false stories” aimed at discrediting former TTD chairman Y V Subba Reddy. He defended the quality testing systems

in place at TTD, emphasizing the robustness of their procedures. Concerning foreign currency at Parakamani, he criticized the current administration for distorting facts, despite advancements made during the YSRCP government that revealed irregularities.The former chief minister alleged that investigative agencies were being weaponized against YSRCP, citing alleged false charges against Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy, and denounced the ‘liquor scam’ as

a tactic to detain opposition leaders while emphasizing that the industry is actually controlled by coalition affiliates. Notable YSRCP figures were stated to be irrationally targeted, and Jagan pointed out that Naidu himself was out on bail facing serious accusations.Highlighting public dissent against plans to privatize public healthcare, Jagan noted the YSRCP’s campaign against this move had gained considerable support, reflected in over a crore signatures.

During SIR, more over 17 lakh deceased voters were discovered on Gujarati voting records

Gandhinagar, Dec 05: The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Gujarat has uncovered a significant issue with the state’s voter list, revealing that over 1.7 million deceased voters are still registered. The SIR campaign commenced on November 4, led by booth-level officers (BLOs) who distributed enumeration forms to voters. This extensive effort aims to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the electoral rolls and will continue until De-

Gujarat’s Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls revealed that over 1.7 million deceased voters are still on the list, with the exercise aimed at updating the voter registry.

cember 11.

As part of the initiative, more than 50 million voters listed in the upcoming 2025 electoral roll have received enumeration forms. Notably, across the 33 districts in Gujarat, the distribution has reached completion in most areas. The process

of digitising the returned forms is currently in progress, with notable advancement in 12 assembly constituencies. Some districts, such as Dhanera, Tharad, and Dang, have shown substantial progress, with Dang leading at a digitisation completion rate of 94.35%.Additionally, the SIR exercise has revealed that over 614,000 voters were absent from their registered addresses, and more than 3 million voters are noted to have permanently migrated.

Raghav Chadha criticizes fast commerce and calls for freelance workers’ rights

Mumbai, Dec 05: AAP MP Raghav Chadha addressed the Rajya Sabha, advocating for the implementation of regulations on quick-commerce and app-based delivery services, highlighting the critical issues faced by gig workers. He expressed concern that gig workers endure more hardship than daily wage laborers.

During his speech, Chadha emphasized the invisible struggles of these workers, noting how consumers often overlook the individuals behind delivery notifications, such as the delivery personnel of Zomato and Swiggy, as well as drivers from Ola and Uber, and service providers from

Urban Company, including plumbers and beauticians. His remarks address the need for recognition and support for those who facilitate such services through mobile applications.

In a recent discussion, Chadha highlighted the crucial yet often overlooked role of gig workers in the Indian economy, referring to them as “invisible wheels.” He argued that prominent e-commerce and delivery companies have achieved substantial financial success, reaching billion-dollar valuations and becoming unicorns, largely relying on this silent workforce. However, he emphasized that the working conditions of

gig workers are deteriorating, placing them in a more vulnerable state than that of daily wage laborers.

Chadha raised concerns regarding the “zulm (tyranny) of speed,” criticizing a troubling trend where deliveries are expected within just ten minutes, thereby intensifying the pressure and challenges faced by these workers. His remarks were directed towards the Vice President of India, indicating the urgent need to address the plight of gig workers amidst the rapid commercialization of delivery services. Chadha highlights the intense pressure faced by delivery workers due to stringent

time constraints imposed by delivery apps. He illustrates the precarious position of delivery personnel, who fear negative consequences—such as a drop in ratings, loss of incentives, being logged out of the app, or even having their IDs blocked—if they’re late, resulting in risky behaviors such as overspeeding and ignoring traffic signals to meet 10-minute delivery targets.

This urgency escalates customer frustration; a delay of just 5 to 7 minutes often leads to customers calling to express their anger, threatening complaints, and leaving poor ratings, which can severely impact the work-

ers’ monthly performance and earnings.Chadha goes further to criticize the hazardous working conditions of these gig workers, claiming they suffer more than factory employees as they are denied permanent employment, adequate working environments, and essential benefits like health and accident insurance.

He emphasizes their humanity, urging lawmakers to recognize that these individuals—who are often fathers, brothers, and sons—deserve better treatment and advocates for the abolition of the tyrannical 10-minute delivery standard. He emphasizes that gig workers are not simply cogs



in a machine, but rather individuals with lives and families, calling for legislative attention to their plight to improve their working conditions and rights.

As the state petitions SC, Madras HC asks, “Explain repeated failure over Deepam lighting”

Chennai, Dec 05: The Madras High Court on Friday reiterated its demand for the Tamil Nadu government to explain its persistent refusal to allow the lighting of the Karthigai Deepam lamp atop the ancient Deepathoon stone pillar on Thiruparankundram hill, amidst growing tensions following the state’s non-compliance with several high court orders.

This contentious issue gained further attention as the Tamil Nadu government filed a special leave petition with the Supreme Court, seeking an urgent review of the High Court’s directives that permit devotees to light the lamp.

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant instructed the state to formally list its application

after the petitioner’s counsel accused the state of theatrics intended to mislead the Madurai bench. Meanwhile, Justice GR Swaminathan of the Madurai bench began hearing a contempt petition against key local officials, including the Madurai Collector and the City Police Commissioner, after reports indicated that local authorities had impeded devotees from accessing the hill on December 4, despite the judge’s explicit orders issued prior.

Petitioners, represented by Advocate RM Arun Swaminathan, conveyed to the court that the authorities had not only blocked access but also threatened arrests, detaining over 300 individuals in a marriage hall shortly after the court had mandated that the



lamp be lit with adequate security measures. Accusations flew regarding the Deputy Commissioner’s violation of court orders and the state’s adamant refusal to comply with legal protocols.

Justice Swaminathan, while declining to expand the contempt action, directed the state to file a comprehensive report regarding the occurrences. The state

representatives—including Additional Advocate General J Ravindran and police counsel Vikas Singh—denied any willful disobedience of the court’s orders, attributing the failure to comply to adverse on-ground circumstances.

The contempt proceedings have been adjourned to December 9. Initially, the Deepathoon case stemmed from a simple request by devotees

seeking permission to conduct the lighting ceremony, but it has rapidly developed into a significant political and religious controversy in Tamil Nadu. On December 1, Justice Swaminathan recognized the lighting of the lamp as a vital aspect of Tamil cultural heritage, countering the state’s justifications regarding law and order, particularly due to the site’s proximity to a dargah.

On December 3, he invalidated the Madurai Collector’s prohibitory order under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, labeling it an attempt to undermine his authority, a stance later supported by a Division Bench that viewed the state’s appeal as preemptively obstructive to the contempt proceedings.

“India is not neutral”: PM Modi supports peace prior to the meeting with Vladimir Putin

New Delhi, Dec 05: Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized India’s commitment to peace during his bilateral summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin at New Delhi’s Hyderabad House, explicitly stating that India is “not neutral” but rather “on the side of peace” concerning the Russia-Ukraine war.

He reiterated India’s support for a peaceful resolution to the conflict, a sentiment acknowledged by Putin, who expressed gratitude for India’s attention to peace efforts.The 23rd Russia-India Summit occurs at a crucial time, with U.S. initiatives for a Ukraine peace deal and the need for global cooperation envisioned. The summit serves as a test for India’s ability to maintain balanced relations with both Moscow



and Washington amidst the ongoing conflict.

Putin’s two-day state visit marks his first trip to India in four years. His itinerary included honoring Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat, where he paid floral tributes and signed the visitors’ book. Putin also received a ceremonial welcome with a tri-services guard of honor

Vladimir Putin expressed gratitude to PM Narendra Modi for India’s focus on peace efforts concerning Ukraine.

from Indian officials, including Prime Minister Modi and President Droupadi Murmu, celebrated by the playing of both nations’ national anthems.

Under a special anti-crime campaign, Haryana Police searches 700 places and makes 165 arrests

Chandigarh, Dec 05: On Friday, Haryana Police announced a significant crackdown on crime under ‘Operation Hotspot Domination’, launching large-scale raids across 707 identified hotspots throughout the state. This concerted effort, which occurred simultaneously on Thursday, resulted in the arrest of over 160 individuals and the registration of 92 new criminal cases within just one day.

The operation primarily targeted drug trafficking networks, leading to the seizure of significant quantities of narcotics: 4.33 kg of cannabis, 218 grams of opium, more than 85 grams of heroin, along with 890 intoxicating tablets and



23.5 grams of smack. Districts such as Sirsa and Fatehabad were particularly affected, with these raids disrupting local drug distribution operations.

Moreover, the initiative tackled illegal liquor and arms trade, with police confiscating over 1,000 bottles of illicit liquor, including 839 bottles of country-made liquor. Additionally, three pistols and five live cartridges were

recovered, resulting in five new cases being filed under the Arms Act and related arrests.

The operation was bolstered by a robust intelligence network, which facilitated the apprehension of 22 notorious criminals. Collaborations with neighboring states improved as police shared 15 crucial intelligence reports to deter cross-border criminal activities. To further control

violent offenders, a Look Out Circular was issued in Fatehabad, and proposals were made to revoke the passports of individuals involved in serious offenses.

Cybercrime was another focal point, with police responding to 309 complaints through Cyber Helpline 1930, addressing an attempted fraud totaling approximately ₹88,36,208. In a prompt response, the cyber team managed to freeze ₹59,14,533, preventing the funds from falling into the hands of fraudsters. This comprehensive operation emphasized the police’s commitment to enhancing law and order through coordinated and multi-faceted approaches in combating various forms of crime.

The focus of Rahul Gandhi’s “LoP-foreign visitors meet” assertion ‘Not only inappropriate, but wrong’

New Delhi, Dec 05: In response to claims by Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi regarding the Union government’s influence on foreign dignitaries meeting with him, the Centre has stated that such meetings are at the discretion of the visiting delegation.

This assertion comes as Russian President Vladimir Putin is on a two-day state visit to India, during which he is scheduled to engage with Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit. Gandhi alleged that the government advises foreign dignitaries against meeting the LoP, which he argues disrupts longstanding diplomatic norms.

He emphasized that the Opposition provides valuable perspectives and criticized the government’s supposed insecurity in allowing such meetings. Support for Gandhi’s remarks was voiced by Con-



gress MP Priyanka Gandhi, who noted that protocol traditionally includes meetings between both ruling and opposition leaders. Samajwadi Party MP Dimple Yadav echoed this sentiment, asserting that the BJP government is altering estab-

•This summary highlights that Russian President Vladimir Putin is embarking on a 2-day state visit to India, where he will participate in the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit with Prime Minister Modi.

lished diplomatic traditions.

The BJP has countered these allegations, asserting that meeting organization is the responsibility of the visiting dignitaries. BJP leaders, including MP Sambit Patra, dismissed Gandhi’s comments as inappropriate and factually incorrect, suggesting that they reflect an overestimation of his role within India’s political context. Patra highlighted India’s growing global stature and refuted claims of governmental insecurity regarding foreign interactions, as Putin’s visit to India progresses.

HC panel confirms illegal coal mining in Meghalaya, pulls up district police

Shillong, Dec 05: A one-man committee appointed by the Meghalaya High Court has confirmed the continuation of illegal coal mining in East Jaintia Hills district and pulled the district police for failing to detect ongoing operations despite prior complaints and video evidence. In its 34th interim report, the committee said no SP or police representative attended its November 20 meeting, even though officials of the district administration, Coal India and MSTC participated. The panel reviewed compliance with earlier directions issued by the high court, the Supreme Court, and the National Green Tribunal (NGT). The committee reviewed the compliance status of previous directions issued by the High Court, the Supreme Court and the National Green Tribunal (NGT). It examined a series of complaints of illegal mining and transportation received earlier this month from East and West Jaintia Hills and West Khasi Hills. While a field inspection at Nartiang revealed no trace of coal movement, the committee emphasised that sensitive locations would require enhanced surveillance, particularly during the dry season when mining and transportation activities usually increase. In another case, a complaint from Nongstoin was dismissed as unsubstantiated after the coal in question was verified to have been legally auctioned and lifted. However, a major complaint submitted by Opposition MLA Brightstarwell Marbaniang, supported by video clips allegedly showing illegal activity at Lumbangla in East Jaintia Hills, prompted a joint inspection. The inspection confirmed the existence of large coal dumps and signs of fresh mining, including a reinforced mine opening. The panel concluded that these findings pointed to a long-running illegal operation.

UPPL Leader Rejects Mohiliary's BTC Vandalism Allegation

Nagaon, Dec 05: Families residing on government grazing reserve property in Bhakatgaon under the Rupahihat revenue circle will be the focus of the Nagaon district administration's next eviction operation, which will begin on Friday. This action is the third stage of the district's continuous endeavor to clear land that it claims has been occupied illegally for many years. About 86 families have been residing on approximately 38 bighas of grazing property in Bhakatgaon, according to District Commissioner Devasish Sharma, IAS. They were given a 15-day warning to leave by the authorities, which expires today. Bulldozers and security personnel have already been sent out for Friday's drive, and no more prolongation is anticipated. This eviction comes after a significant clearance operation that released over 5,000 bighas of forest land in the Lutumari area under the Kampur range, uprooting some 1,500 households. The administration is currently concentrating on PGR and VGR holdings that have been encroached upon in other areas of the district, such as Samaguri and Dhing. Speaking about her circumstances, a woman who has lived on the farm for twenty years started crying. Nagaon prepares for yet another stressful day as the deadline draws near, an operation that highlights the challenging balance between regaining public land and the human cost of relocation.

UPPL VP Refutes Hagrama Mohiliary's Claim on BTC Assembly Vandalism

Kokrajhar, Dec 05: The accusation made by BTC chief Hagrama Mohiliary that UPPL was involved in the November 29 vandalism at the BTC Assembly was denied by the UPPL on Wednesday.

Speaking to reporters at UPPL's central office on Wednesday night, Vice-President Abjal Hoque Sarkar claimed that Chief of BTC Hagrama Mohiliary's accusation that the UPPL and ABSU were to blame for the outburst of irate students was unfounded. He claimed that through its unit committees at all institutions and colleges, the ABSU, the biggest democratic student organization of the Bodos, has been actively protecting the community from all dire circumstances and issues. He denied Mohiliary's accusation that many EMs and MC-LAs of the BPF-led council administration



were from the ABSU platform and that the ABSU and the UPPL were only two sides of the same coin. On November 29, students from Bodoland University and other

colleges joined the tribal students' protest against the proposal to confer ST status to six communities. According to Mohiliary, there was no provocation by the ABSU or the UPPL. According to Sarkar, the endless Melas with gambling had been organized everywhere since the BPF-led BTC Government took office, but Pramod Boro had put a halt to them in the last five years. He claimed that violence had been put an end to in order to guarantee everyone's safety and that the Pramod Boro-led council administration had created a friendly environment for the inhabitants of the area to live in peace, dignity, and honor. Additionally, he urged the BPF-led BTC Government to maintain social harmony and stability rather than exacerbate the problem by placing blame elsewhere.

KCP (PWG-MC Unification) Imposes Two-Year Ban on Actor-Singer Hamom Sadananda

Imphal, Dec 05: Tensions surrounding the Sangai Festival 2025 have escalated further, with the proscribed Kangleipak Communist Party (PWG-MC Unification) issuing a two-year ban on popular Manipuri actor-singer Hamom Sadananda.

According to a statement reportedly issued by the outfit's Public Relations Officer, Chingkhainganba, the group accused Sadananda of "disregarding the suffering of thousands of internally displaced people" by taking part in the festival at a time when the state continues to grapple with a humanitarian crisis.

The outfit has also summoned several other individuals for what it described as similar misconduct. Those called for questioning include:

Sunny Shimrah, Executive of 7 Sister Foundation

Mayengbam Dhananjoy Singh, General Secretary of AMIKKHagenbam Kuleswar, Office-bearer, Film Forum Manipur

Laimayum Surjakanta Sharma, Office-bearer, Film Forum Manipur

The KCP's action comes amid mounting criticism from various civil society groups and sections of the public, who earlier condemned the decision to hold the Sangai Festival despite the ongoing displacement of thousands due to ethnic violence. Many have argued that conducting a large cultural celebration during such a period was insensitive and disconnected from ground realities.

The controversy has deepened an already frag-



ile atmosphere in Manipur, where public sentiment remains sharply divided. While some view the festival as a means of restoring normalcy, others believe it reflects a failure to acknowledge the continuing suffering of displaced families still living in relief camps.

The militant group's ban and summons have added fresh pressure to the situation, amplifying fears of further social and cultural conflict in the state.

Tripura Gets Central Aid for Tourism Infrastructure Development Projects

Agartala, Dec 05: Tripura has received substantial financial assistance from the Central Government over the years under various tourism and cultural promotion schemes, aimed at strengthening the state's heritage, festivals and destination infrastructure. Under the Central Financial Assistance for Fairs and Festivals, Tripura has been supported consistently. In 2016-17, funding was provided for the Neermahal Festival at Rajghat, Melaghar, Diwali Festival at Udaipur and the Pilak Festival in South Tripura. In 2019-20, major events such as Kharchi Mela, Neermahal Festival and Diwali Mela received assistance. Subsequent years saw funding for popular festivals including Bharat Bangla Festival, Chabimura Festival, and Ashokastami Festival. For 2025-26, major allocations have been approved for the Neermahal Festival (Rs 30 lakh), Diwali Festival (Rs 30 lakh) and Chabimura & Tirthamukh Festival (Rs 20 lakh), reflecting a sharp increase in support.

Under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, two major tourism circuits in Tripura were sanctioned. In 2015-16, an amount of Rs 82.85 crore was sanctioned for the development of the Agartala-Sipahijala-Udaipur-Dum-

boor-Gandachara-Ambassa tourism corridor. In 2018-19, another Rs 44.83 crore was approved for the development of Surma Chherra, Unakoti, Jampui Hills, Neermahal and Pilak circuits.

In the Swadesh Darshan 2.0 programme, Tripura received Rs 48.95 crore for the Tripura Heritage Village & Sangeet Experience at Agartala (Phase I & II) during 2024-25. Further boosting religious tourism, under the PRASAD scheme, Rs 34.43 crore was sanctioned in 2020-21 for the development of the Tripura Sundari Temple at Udaipur, a significant Shakti Peetha.

In addition, Tripura was sanctioned Rs 97.70 crore in 2024-25 under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) Scheme for the development of the Shakti Peethas Park at Banduar in Gomati District. Union Minister of Tourism and Culture, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat informed in a written reply in Rajya Sabha on Thursday. He stated that these allocations will significantly enhance Tripura's cultural visibility, improve tourist infrastructure and create employment opportunities in the state's heritage and eco-tourism sectors.

3 more accused chargesheeted by NIA in Gurugram clubs BKL bombing case

Gurugram, Dec 05: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has chargesheeted three more accused in connection with the 2024 bomb attacks at two Gurugram clubs by members of the proscribed Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) terrorist organisation.

Vijay, Ajit Sehrawat and Vinay have been chargesheeted under

relevant provisions of BNS, Explosive Substances Act, and UA (P) Act for their involvement in the planning and conspiracy behind the bombing at the Warehouse Club and Human Club in Sector-29, Gurugram, Haryana on 10th December 2024. The supplementary chargesheet against them was filed on Thursday before the NIA Special Court, Panchkula

(Haryana). The arrested accused were found to be closely associated with foreign-based gangster Randeep Malik as well as Rohit Godara, a close aide of Canada-based designated terrorist Satinderjit Singh @ Goldy Brar. NIA had earlier, in June this year, filed a chargesheet against Goldy Brar and four others in the instant case. NIA investigations in the

case had revealed that the three accused chargesheeted today had received explosives and terror funds from the overseas handlers of a larger terror syndicate to execute acts intended to promote BKI's extremist agenda.

The conspiracy was aimed at disrupting peace and destabilising law and order in Haryana and other northern states, as per NIA's

investigations. Investigations by the anti-terror agency have further revealed a wide network of operatives engaged in terror activities on the direction of the foreign-based terror handlers.

Efforts to track these operatives and their other conspirators, as well as the financial channels involved in the conspiracy, are under way.

LBSNAA Director Assesses Administrative Operations in Sivasagar

Sivasagar, Dec 05: Sriram Taranikanti, the director of the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), traveled to Sivasagar on Wednesday to attend a meeting at the District Commissioner's office conference hall. The chiefs of several government ministries, including Sivasagar District Commissioner Aayush Garg, attended the conference, which was presided over by the LBSNAA Director and included in-depth talks on im-

portant administrative issues. Taranikanti had a thorough conversation with the officials during the meeting and covered a number of district administration-related topics. During his speech, the Director proposed several suggestions aimed at enhancing departmental performance, increasing administrative transparency, improving public service delivery, and ensuring the effective implementation of welfare programs.

Tripura CM, TTDC meet on strategy to enhance tea output, improve quality



Agartala, Dec 05: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha has appealed to the Tripura Tea Development Corporation (TTDC) to adopt a proactive strategy for becoming self-reliant and focus on employment generation.

Saha made the appeal while chairing a meeting with TTDC officials on the strategies to enhance tea production, improve quality and ensure better opportunities for the state's tea growers.

"Our government remains committed to supporting the tea industry, which plays a vital

role in Tripura's economy," the Chief Minister said.

He further stressed that Tripura tea, known for its taste and aroma, must maintain its quality while undertaking aggressive marketing to increase revenue.

Saha also urged officials to promote the "vocal for local" initiative by ensuring higher consumption of Tripura tea within the state.

According to TTDC Chairman Samir Ranjan Ghosh, the corporation has made a notable improvement in curbing losses, reducing financial deficit from

Rs 5.4 crore in 2023-24 to Rs 2.81 crore in 2024-25.

Officials stated that Tripura's annual tea production in 2024 stood at 90 lakh kilograms. The state currently has five tea gardens under TTDC, 13 cooperative-run estates, 36 private estates, and around 2,800 small growers. "Daily wages of tea workers in the state have been raised from Rs 105 to Rs 204; the Brahmakund Tea Processing Centre has upgraded while a new small-scale processing factory has been established in the Machmara estate of North Tripura," Ghosh said.

Indian Army Creates History with First-Ever Successful Ascent of Mount Kangto (7,042 m), the Highest Peak of Arunachal Pradesh

Itanagar, Dec 05: In a landmark achievement and a proud moment for the nation, an Indian Army mountaineering team from Eastern Command has successfully summited Mount Kangto (7,042 m / 23,103 ft)—the highest and hitherto unconquered sentinel peak of Arunachal Pradesh—approaching from the challenging Southern route. This accomplishment marks the first recorded successful ascent of the formidable Mount Kangto, long regarded as an unclimbed guardian of the Kameng Himalayas.

The team was formally 'Flagged In' by Lt Gen RC Tiwari, Army Commander, Eastern Command, who commended the mountaineers for their extraordinary courage, professionalism and perseverance.

Flagged Off on 03 November 2025 from a forward base by the General Officer Commanding, Gajraj Corps, the 18-member team undertook a grueling expedition



across rugged Himalayan terrain. Braving extremely rarefied air, harsh sub-zero conditions, treacherous icy ridgelines, deep crevasses, and near-vertical ice walls, the climbers showcased the hallmark attributes of the Indian Army—unmatched grit, disci-

pline, teamwork and an indomitable spirit.

The historic ascent stands as a tribute to the majestic Eastern Himalayas and reflects the Indian Army's unwavering commitment to pushing the boundaries of human endurance and operational excellence.

Assam Assembly delegation Assesses major Concerns in South Salmara-Mankachar

Mankachar, Dec 05: On Thursday, an eight-person team from the Assam Legislative Assembly, headed by senior MLA Gobinda Chandra Basumatary, visited the South Salmara-Mankachar district headquarters in Hatsingimari to review important local concerns and evaluate continuing developmental challenges. The group had a thorough conversation with district administration rep-

resentatives about everything from border management and erosion control to rural infrastructure and connectivity. The MLAs went straight from the district meeting hall to the international border between India and Bangladesh at Kokragaon as part of their field assessment. In the extremely erosion-prone area, they examined the Brahmaputra riverbank protection projects that are presently in

progress. The committee also concentrated on researching the district's potential for rural tourism development, which officials think might open up new economic prospects for nearby villages. The crew was escorted by Mankachar MLA Aminul Islam, who characterized the review conference as an essential step towards coordinated problem-solving across constituencies. "The purpose of this

meeting was to provide specific recommendations for the district's ongoing problems," stated Islam. This powerful group was established to address the eight constituencies' top concerns. Because of the amount of representation, many call it a "mini assembly." To guarantee prompt action, we will formally present these concerns and suggestions to the Assamese government.

BUSINESS

Ola Electric crashes to all-time low; stock 25% in a month more pain likely ahead

New Delhi: Shares of Ola Electric Mobility Ltd continued their steep decline in Friday's trade, dropping 3.85 per cent to touch a record low of Rs 34.73. At last check, the stock was trading 1.44 per cent lower at Rs 35.60.

With this, the counter has fallen 25.18 per cent over the past month and is down 58.72 per cent so far in 2025. Commenting on the recent price action, Kranthi Bathini, Director of Equity Strategy at WealthMills Securities, said, "Once considered the poster boy of the electric two-wheeler segment, Ola Electric has been declining over the past few quarters despite

new product launches and various other initiatives. Investors holding the stock at current levels may continue to do so, as it is too late to consider an exit at this price point. The stock remains suitable only for high-risk investors." The Bhavish Aggarwal-led company, which once dominated India's electric 2-W market, slipped to fifth position in November, with Hero MotoCorp's EV arm Vida surpassing Ola Electric to become the fourth-largest player.

On the earnings front, the company posted a narrower consolidated net loss of Rs 418 crore for the July–September

quarter (Q2 FY26), compared with Rs 495 crore in the same quarter last year. However, revenue from operations fell 43 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 690 crore, down from Rs 1,214 crore in Q2 FY25. Technically, analysts remain largely bearish on Ola Electric, citing a strong bearish trend, oversold momentum and repeated breakdowns of key support levels. – Technical Research at Anand Rathii, added that the stock has support at Rs 30 and resistance at Rs 40. A solid breakout above Rs 40 could pave the way for a move towards Rs 43, with the short-term trading band expected between Rs 30 and Rs 43.

Edelweiss AMC says short-duration debt

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) delivered a 25-basis-point rate cut on Friday, bringing the repo rate down to 5.25 percent and signalling an early-policy easing ahead of global peers. The RBI lowered its average CPI inflation forecast for FY26 to 2.0 percent from 2.6 percent, citing exceptionally benign food prices.

At the same time, the central bank revised its FY26 GDP growth estimate upward to 7.3 percent, supported by resilient domestic demand and strong investment activity. Growth for the first two quarters of FY27 is also projected to stay near 6.7–6.8 percent.

RBI trims policy interest rate by 25 to 5.25%, loans to get cheaper

New Delhi: Shrugging off concerns over the depreciation of rupee, the RBI has cut interest rate by 25 basis points to 5.25 per cent in a bid to further bolster economic growth, which rose to a six-quarter high of 8.2 per cent in the second quarter of the current financial year. Announcing the fifth bi-monthly monetary policy for the current fiscal, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has unanimously decided to cut the short-term lending rate or repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.25 per cent with a neutral stance. The rate cut comes on the back of the consumer price index (CPI) based headline retail inflation ruling below the 2 per cent lower band mandated by the government for the last three months. India's retail inflation dropped to a historic low of 0.25 per cent in October 2025, marking the lowest level since the Consumer Price Index (CPI) series was introduced. Besides, the Indian economy has clocked better-than-expected



GDP growth of 8.2 per cent in the second quarter. However, the rupee declined to historic low and crossed 90 against a dollar earlier this week making imports costlier, raising fears of rise in inflation. Rupee has depreciated by about 5 per cent so far this year. The RBI has sharply raised growth projection to 7.3 per cent from earlier 6.8 per cent for the current financial year. The central bank has been tasked by the government to ensure that

CPI-based retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side. Based on the recommendation of the MPC, the RBI reduced the repo rate by 25 bps each in February and April, and 50 basis points in June amidst easing retail inflation. The retail inflation is trending below 4 per cent since February this year. It eased to historic low in October, aided by an easing of food prices and favourable base effect.

Uday Kotak tells youth to exit 'cruise mode' and work passionately for India's growth

Mumbai: India's success is not a given, and the youth ought to come out of their "cruise mode" to take the country to newer heights, financial services sector veteran Uday Kotak said on Monday. Speaking at Somaiya Vidyavihar University's 84th foundation day event, the billionaire banker advised the youth to strive for success. The current generation of youngsters is more secure and confident, unlike the previous one, which worked hard for the betterment of the nation, Kotak said. "The next generation is much more confident and secure. I call them 'cruise mode generation'... This generation needs to remain confident, but get out of the cruise mode," he added. The youth, he stressed, needs to have a purpose and

be more passionate about the country's growth. "Our success is not a given. We need to earn it. We need to be restless. We need to go with a mindset that there are many people out to get us," Kotak said. "Let us not assume success as a given. Let us take the world on with a sense of paranoia," he added. After 80 years of peace, the world is going through a major catharsis with changes across geopolitics and technology, he said, adding "significant challenges await us in future". He also rued the lack of original research in India, and asked for a focus on creating products which the country can own. India is focused on services, overlooking product development and mostly engages in creating products for other



countries, he said. Infosys founder N.R. Narayana Murthy recently reiterated the call for 70-hour work, arguing that no individual or country has ever come up without hard work. Infosys founder N.R. Narayana Murthy recently reiterated the call for 70-hour work,

arguing that no individual or country has ever come up without hard work. After 80 years of peace, the world is going through a major catharsis with changes across geopolitics and technology, he said, adding "significant challenges await us in future".

DII's give Rs 7 lakh crore support to stock market in 2025

New Delhi: Domestic institutional investors (DIIs), including mutual funds, insurance companies and financial institutions, bought nearly Rs 7 lakh crore worth of domestic equities so far in 2025, NSE data compiled by AceEquity showed. DIIs infused a net Rs 6,96,277 crore into stocks this calendar year. November's DII inflows of Rs 77,083 crore or \$8.7 billion in dollar terms, in fact, marked their 28th consecutive month of net buying. BofA Securities expects a steady rise in DII inflows over the next several years. This, it believes could provide valuation support, with Nifty likely to continue trading at 21.5 times earnings per share. "For CY26, we conservatively assumed DII flows would grow in line with nominal GDP at 9 per cent year-on-year. With increased governmental focus on consumers, we see several events — a) direct tax cuts (FY26), b) labour reforms (FY26–29E), and c) pay commission hikes (FY28) — potentially pushing disposable income and savings higher," it said.

DII inflows in 2025, which averaged \$5–6 billion per month, were offset partially by primary fund-raises and likely muted FII outflows. BofA Securities estimated \$46 billion of liquidity in the secondary market next year. The share of mutual funds and equities in household financial assets nearly doubled to 15 per cent in FY25 from 8 per cent in FY24, though it still remains significantly below the 30 per cent-plus levels seen in other emerging and developed markets. Strong domestic inflows and buoyant capital markets drove a structural shift in ownership, with DII holdings surpassing FII holdings in Nifty-500 companies for the first time in the March quarter and rising further in the September quarter, MOFSL noted.

Amid operational disruptions, DGCA eases FDTL norms for airlines regarding weekly rest IndiGo flight cancellations:

New Delhi: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has withdrawn the flight duty time limitations (FDTL) rule that bars airlines from substituting weekly rest with leave with immediate effect. The move comes at a time when IndiGo is faced with widespread operational disruptions, leading to massive cancellations of flights. "Whereas, in view of the ongoing operational disruptions and representations received from various airlines regarding the need to ensure continuity and stability of operations, it has been considered necessary to review the said provision; Now, therefore, the instruction contained in the referenced paragraph that no leave shall be substituted for weekly rest is hereby withdrawn with immediate effect," the DGCA letter read. The civil aviation regulator said that it has granted a temporary one-time exemption to the airline for A320 fleet operations from the FDTL provisions related to night duty and operations encroaching night duty till February 10, 2026. "This exemption shall remain valid up to 10 February 2026, and shall be subject to mandatory review every 15 days based on the



operational data and compliance reports submitted by the airlines," the letter read. In this report, the airlines are required to apprise the DGCA on actual utilisation of crew, steps taken to enhance crew availability, operability improvements achieved, as well as revised crew planning and rostering measures.

It further said: "Within 30 days, IndiGo shall submit a roadmap for full compliance

with FDTL of Civil Aviation Requirements Section 7 Series J Part III Rev 2 Dated 26/03/2024 Phase-II, including timelines to achieve 100% adherence." The DGCA furthermore said that it can withdraw this exemption at any time to ensure passenger safety. The large-scale cancellations arise from ongoing operational challenges that the airline is facing due to the implementation of

the FDTL norms, sources told Business Today. As per the new FDTL norms, the weekly rest period for pilots has gone up to 48 hours from the previous 36 hours. Not just this, night landings have also been limited to two, and the definition of night hours has been extended by an hour. IndiGo's high-utilisation model — 400 aircraft operating 2,300 daily flights, many of them late-night or early-morning — triggered the crisis.

Delays in aircraft deliveries and refits have kept other airlines at lower utilisation, giving them more flexibility in crew rostering. Meanwhile, the Airline Pilots' Association of India (ALPA India) has lodged a formal complaint with the DGCA against IndiGo, alleging the regulator has granted "selective and unsafe" dispensations to the airline under the FDTL norms. The association said that this not only violates earlier assurances but also puts passenger safety at risk. ALPA India alleges that the DGCA had "unequivocally agreed" during a meeting on November 24 that no exemptions or variations would be granted to any airline, especially those driven by commercial considerations.

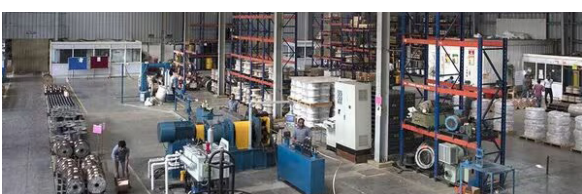
Gold may be poised for a bigger break out in 2026 as bull run extends

Mumbai: Gold's multi-year rally may still have a long runway ahead. Brokerage firm Ventura believes the precious metal could continue its upward climb in 2026, supported by persistent macroeconomic strains, heavy central bank accumulation, and expectations of aggressive US Federal Reserve rate cuts. The firm projects an ambitious price band of \$4,600–\$4,800, suggesting that gold's decade-long bull market is "far from over." Gold prices were range-bound on December 4, trading between \$4,175 and \$4,217, with spot gold last seen at \$4,213, up 0.2 per cent

despite firmer US yields. The metal gained 4.28 percent in the week ended November 28 and has now risen for four consecutive months—reinforcing sentiment that investors are once again turning to safe-haven assets. Rahul Kalantri, VP Commodities at Mehta Equities, said gold edged higher while silver eased due to profit-booking after positive U.S. jobless claims data. Market odds nearing 87 percent. Kalantri pegged gold's support at \$4,165–4,135 and resistance at \$4,260–4,295, with detailed INR levels also indicating narrow but firm trading bands.

Which IPO is worthy of your wager, Vidya Wires Experts perspectives, GMP & more

New Delhi: Three main-board IPOs including Meesho, Aequus and Vidya Wires have kicked-off for bidding at Dalal Street on Wednesday, December 03 and shall close on Friday, December 05. These IPOs are cumulatively looking to raise a total of Rs 6,643 crore from investors, who are left with problem of plenty, looking for which issue to pick or how should they prioritize them. Majority of the experts are



positive on all three IPO, but suggest that investors should prioritize their bids based on their needs and risk-appetite. According to them, Meesho is best suited for investors looking for short-term listing gains, Aequus fits

high-risk long-term investors, and Vidya Wires is the comparatively safer option for those who prefer stable, predictable businesses. Among the three, Meesho is looking to raise the biggest chunk of Rs 5,421 crore, of-

fering its shares in the range of Rs 105–111 apiece. Aequus is eyeing to mop up to Rs 921.81 crore, price band in the range of Meesho stands out as the most compelling option, followed closely by Aequus, said Abhishek Jain, Head of Research at Arihant Capital Markets. Meesho's business model continues to evolve meaningfully, and the company has shown a sharp turnaround in profitability — improving EBITDA margins.

Third instalment for FY26 due December 15 who must pay now, who can skip Advance tax deadline nears

New Delhi: The third instalment of advance tax for the financial year 2025–26 is due on December 15, and taxpayers who fail to pay on time may incur interest and penalties under the Income Tax Act, 1961. Advance tax, often described as "pay-as-you-earn" tax, is collected in instalments through the year to help the government maintain steady revenue inflows and prevent last-minute, large tax payments at the end of the year. Under the law, advance tax applies to individuals whose estimated net income tax liability exceeds ₹10,000 in a financial year, after factoring in tax deducted at source (TDS). Payments must be made across four instalments: By the upcoming deadline, taxpayers must have paid at least three-fourths of their projected tax for the year. To avoid interest under Sections 234B and 234C, taxpayers must review their estimated liability, account for TDS, and pay instalments on time. Those benefiting from exemptions or deferred payments must closely track their income timing to remain compliant. This requirement is not limited to high earners or large



businesses. Salaried individuals may also fall under advance tax provisions if they earn additional income that is not fully covered by TDS—such as rental earnings, interest income, freelance fees, or capital gains. Self-employed taxpayers, including doctors, lawyers, consultants, freelancers, and chartered accountants, also need to comply. Not all taxpayers with liabilities above Rs 10,000 must pay advance tax. The law provides specific exemptions: Income categories eligible for deferred advance tax Certain types of income cannot be predicted in advance, and therefore taxpayers are not required to pay advance tax before these earnings materialise. These include: Capital gains Lottery and similar winnings Income from a newly

commenced business or profession Dividend income (other than deemed dividends) Taxpayers can pay advance tax on these incomes in the next immediate quarter after the income is earned. Section 234C specifically protects taxpayers from penal interest when precise tax estimation is not feasible due to unpredictable or irregular income. Resident senior citizens aged 60 or above are completely exempt, provided they do not earn income from a business or profession. Salaried individuals whose entire tax obligation is discharged through TDS are not required to pay advance tax, as long as they have no other taxable income. These provisions ensure that taxpayers who do not have variable or hard-to-predict income streams are not burdened with instalment-based payments. Those who have opted for presumptive taxation must pay their entire advance tax liability in a single instalment by March 15, rather than through four quarterly payments. This approach simplifies compliance for small taxpayers using presumptive schemes under Sections 44AD, 44ADA, or 44AE.

First Review Calls Balakrishna Starrer ‘Loud, Powerful’ Mass Hit

Akhanda 2

Mumbai: The First review of Nandamuri Balakrishna’s Akhanda 2 is finally out. On Thursday evening, a social media user took to his X handle and praised Boyapati Sreenu’s directorial. He called the film a ‘powerful’ mass entertainment and went on to say that it is a ‘must-watch for cinema lovers’.

“Akhanda2 brings back the divine mass madness with even more scale, emotion, and intensity. #NandamuriBalakrishna once again ROARS as Aghora Akhanda — his presence, aura, and dialogue delivery are simply electrifying. Every scene feels like a celebration of pure mass cinema,” the user wrote. The user then praised the director and applauded him for delivering a “high-voltage action, mythological depth, spiritual drama.” “This time, he adds more emotional layers and cleaner pacing, making the film more impactful than the first part,” the user added.

The social media user then described that while the first half is used by the makers to introduce the plot and its



characters, the film picks up pace in the second half. “Starts with a steady buildup — introducing the conflict, the villain’s dominance, and the spiritual setup. It’s controlled, atmospheric, and builds tension perfectly for the second half,” he wrote and then continued by talking about the second half, “This is where the film EXPLODES. Non-stop action blocks, divine elevation scenes, intense confrontations, and thunderous BGM by #Thaman The mass + mythological fusion is at its peak here.” The review also stated that it is the climax of the movie which shocks everyone. “The climax is MASSIVE — visually grand, emotionally charged, and spiritually

powerful. Akhanda’s final battle is crafted with scale and conviction, leaving the audience with pure goosebumps.” Before wrapping up, the user mentioned that Balakrishna has flaunted his “beast mode” in the movie and is “flawless”. On the other hand, “villain and supporting cast add real tension and support the narrative strongly.” Produced on an ambitious scale by Raam Achanta and Gopichand Achanta under the 14 Reels Plus banner, the project is being presented by M Tejaswini Nandamuri. Besides Nandamuri Balakrishna, the film features Samyuktha as the female lead, with Aadhi Pinisetty playing a powerful role and Harshali Malhotra a key character.

Sokhi Praises Elvish’s Peaceful Work

Mumbai: Laughter Chef, the popular cooking comedy reality show, has already made its way in the hearts of viewers with its innovative concept and star-studded lineup after two successful seasons. Fans are quite excited as the show has returned with a new season and some new cast members. Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi returned as the judge and, recently in a cooking vlog praised one of the participants on the show.Harpal Singh Sokhi praised Elvish Yadav’s calm and hard-working nature on the show. He said, “Usmein ek bahut zabardast quality hai. He does not react. Koi insaan kuch bhi bole woh react nahi karte bahut silent rehte hai, bahut peaceful rehte hai. Aaram se sochte hai and that is the winning thing that he has got.” Earlier, as he prepared for the third season, the celebrity chef offered sincere gratitude to fans, whose unwavering love and support continue to fuel his journey. He also discussed his popularity, the admiration he receives, and the strong link he has with individuals who have been there for him every step of the way. In an interview with The Times Of India, he shared, “They are an indispensable part of an artist’s journey.

Iconic Moment in London: Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol Unveil DDLJ Bronze Statue

London: In a historic celebration of one of the most beloved films, Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol reunited in London to unveil a bronze statue commemorating the 30th anniversary of Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (DDLJ). The iconic duo drew massive crowds as they marked the milestone. The statue installed at London’s Leicester Square is home to several international cinematic memorials.

Shah Rukh Khan fans club has shared the photos in which Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol are seen posing in their signature style in-front of bronze statue. The actor looked handsome in a black suit while Kajol radiated elegance in a blue saree. Fans also reacted. The video is also going viral on social media. The actors were present there to celebrate 30 years of an iconic film. No SRK watchlist is complete without this timeless classic. Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, starring the beloved pair of Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol, continues to be one of the greatest love stories in



Indian cinema history. It is safe to say that their iconic chemistry and the film’s unforgettable dialogues make DDLJ not just a film but a feeling and celebration of cinema. Directed by Aditya Chopra, DDLJ remains one of Bollywood’s most successful and, continuing to run in select theatres even today.

On Shahrukh Khan’s birthday title teaser was shared. The teaser glimpse — unveiled on SRK’s birthday, November 2 — sent fans into a frenzy, not only for

his salt-and-pepper rugged look but also for the film’s breathtaking scope. From what’s known so far, King promises to deliver a global-level action experience, blending emotion, style, and scale in true Shah Rukh fashion. King features a stellar ensemble cast including Abhishek Bachchan, Deepika Padukone, Rani Mukerji, Jaideep Ahlawat, Anil Kapoor, Jackie Shroff, Arshad Warsi, Raghav Juyal, Saurabh Shukla, Abhay Verma, Karanvir Malhotra, and Suhana Khan. The film,

currently in production, is slated for a grand release in 2026. With its mix of star power, scale, and Siddharth Anand’s signature visual flair, King is poised to redefine the boundaries of Indian action cinema — and perhaps, take the crown as Shah Rukh Khan’s most monumental project yet. The actress was last seen hosting a chat show with Twinkle Khanna. Many celebrities including Salman Khan and Aamir Khan were seen gracing the show. She was seen in horror thriller Maa.

Athiya Shetty’s Minimalist Winter Look Relies on the Perfect Knit Top



Mumbai: Athiya Shetty’s winter fashion statements never cease to wow us. The new mom often graces our social media feeds in stunning outfits, and there’s no denying that her fashion game is worthy of style inspiration. Her latest post is no exception. Taking to Instagram, the actress shared two pictures of her new winter look in a Zara outfit. Let’s decode Athiya Shetty’s stylish look.

Athiya donned an oversized chocolate-brown knit top, paired with a satin midi skirt in a deep rose shade featuring distressed lace detailing at the hem. She completed her look with minimal black Mary Jane heels. She kept her hair open in soft waves, and for makeup, she opted for a nude, soft base.

The second slide of her post features a monochrome picture of her in the same ensemble. In the caption, she wrote, “Mumbai winters with Zara.”

A few days back, she treated her fans with a beautiful throwback from her school days. She shared a rare and unseen picture with her childhood friend Krishna Shroff, and fans couldn’t help but burst out laughing. In the picture, Athiya is seen making a crying face as Krishna playfully teases her. It looks like the photo was captured during a fun water adventure, as both can be seen wearing life jackets. She shared the photo on her Instagram story, tagged Krishna, and added laughing emojis. Krishna re-posted the snap on her own Stories, captioning it, “Standard since ‘99.” After dating for several years, Athiya Shetty tied the knot with Indian cricketer KL Rahul in January 2023 in an intimate wedding ceremony. Athiya and KL Rahul met in 2019 through a mutual friend, and their friendship soon blossomed into love. The couple welcomed their first child, a daughter named Evaarah, on March 24, 2025.

Alia Shares New Home Puja, Raha Birthday PICS



Mumbai: In November, Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor moved into their newly constructed six-storey bungalow in Mumbai’s Pali Hill, along with their daughter Raha and Ranbir’s mother, Neetu Kapoor. The month was even more special as they also celebrated Raha’s third birthday. While Alia didn’t share pictures back then, she has now gives fans a sneak-peek into the griha pravesha puja, as well as Raha’s birthday celebration.On Friday, Alia Bhatt took to her Instagram account to share a photo dump from November. She wrote, “november 2025... you were a month & a half.” The first photo from the griha pravesha shows Alia and Ranbir Kapoor entering together, with a kalash placed at the entrance. The actress looks stunning in a blush pink and golden saree, while Ranbir looks dapper in a white kurta pajama. Another photo shows Neetu Kapoor warmly hugging Alia, with a photograph of the late Rishi Kapoor visible on the wall in the background. In another picture from the griha pravesha puja, Alia is seen holding Ranbir’s arm while they perform a ritual, while another photo shows her with folded hands. Ranbir is also seen with folded hands in front of Rishi Kapoor’s photograph, and another picture captures him and daughter Raha holding a small amount of rice together as part of the ceremony. Apart from the griha pravesha photos, Alia Bhatt also treated fans with some stunning pictures from Raha’s third birthday celebration! The first photo shows Alia holding baby Raha in her arms. They both twinned in beautiful pink outfits. Meanwhile, another photo shows Alia with her friends posing together at the bash. The photo gives a glimpse of the beautiful pastel themed decor. Another picture shows the actress posing with her mother Soni Razdan, while Mahesh Bhatt clicks the photograph. Alia also shared a photo of the delicious two-tiered cake at Raha’s birthday party.

Box Office Roar: ‘Tere Ishk Mein’ Nears ₹100 Cr, Outperforms Expectations

London: Tere Ishk Mein has been holding its ground at the box office, keeping pace with the interest it generated before release. The Dhanush-Kriti Sanon starrer is gradually moving toward the Rs 100 crore net figure in India, reflecting a stable first week.

Its first week has ended with over Rs 100 crore worldwide, though Thursday brought a noticeable dip ahead of the clash. Early estimates place day 7 collections at roughly Rs 5.75 crore, taking the domestic total to around Rs 85.50



crore. The film has seen consistent turnout across metros and smaller centres

throughout the week. Its current numbers place it ahead of Kriti Sanon’s earli-

er 2024 release, Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya, which had finished with about Rs 80.88 crore. The film is also closing in on the earnings of Crew, which collected Rs 89.92 crore and is positioned to surpass it if the trend continues through the week. The film’s run now faces a challenge with the arrival of Ranveer Singh’s Dhurandhar, which opens today. With wider screen allocation and more shows going to the new release, Tere Ishk Mein may experience some pushback in terms of collections.

Netflix Wins Bidding War for Warner Bros, Studio & HBO Max

Agency: Netflix has put in the highest bid among suitors for Warner Bros Discovery, a source told Reuters on Thursday, upping the ante in a deal that could reshape the media industry.

Bloomberg News reported late on Thursday that Netflix has entered exclusive talks with Warner Bros Discovery to acquire its studio and streaming service and is offering a \$5 billion breakup fee if regulators don’t approve the deal, adding that the companies could announce the deal in a few days. The streaming giant’s proposed acquisition of Warner Bros Discovery’s studios and streaming unit is expected to reduce streaming costs for consumers by bundling Netflix and HBO Max. CNBC said earlier that Netflix had presented a proposal consisting of 85% cash for the assets it seeks to



acquire.

The news of a potential deal has prompted a consortium of leading film industry figures to urge the U.S. Congress to intervene if Netflix’s bid succeeds, warning of looming economic and institutional crisis in Hollywood, Variety reported. Netflix and Warner Bros Discovery did not immediately respond when contacted by Reuters for comment on any of the reports. Warner Bros Discovery is seeking another round of bids from suitors by the end of Thursday, according

to the Wall Street Journal, after Paramount Skydance reportedly accused Warner Bros Discovery of running an unfair sale process that favors Netflix over other bidders. Warner Bros Discovery reportedly received sweetened offers from potential bidders — Paramount, Comcast and Netflix — earlier this week after it asked them to improve on initial bids submitted in late November. Paramount accused WBD of an unfair bidding process, citing reports that management favors Netflix.

Yami Gautam and Aditya Dhar Celebrate ‘Dhurandhar Day’ With Ojas and Mukesh

Mumbai: Yami Gautam shared a couple of photos to celebrate the release of Ranveer Singh’s starrer Dhurandhar. She penned a heartfelt note for the movie’s director and her husband, Aditya Dhar, and for her brother, Ojas Gautam, who worked on the film as an assistant director and editor for the trailer.

On Instagram, Yami Gautam dropped two unseen photos to mark Dhurandhar’s release. The opening frame featured them embracing and smiling warmly for the camera. In the following picture, she was seen capturing a selfie with her brother, Ojas Gautam, and father, Mukesh Gautam, seemingly on the sets of the movie, as we can spot the rugged mountains in the background. The actress accompanied the pictures with a meaningful caption on the release day of the film



Dhurandhar. Revealing the real Dhurandhars of her life, she wrote, “And it’s DHURANDHAR DAY today!!!! Some of the hardest working & gem of people that I know & proud to call them my family!!! You have given all your heart, devotion, dedication, intent, passion, sweat, blood, tears (which you never show) to this film, Aditya!!!!”

She continued, “Too many emotions running today, many hearts beating together !!! You guys are Dhurandhars in your own might.

DHURANDHAR Is not a parting gift of 2025 but is here to welcome 2026 for all of us across globe. Ab yeh aapki film hai, audience. Jai Hind #DHURANDHARinCinemasToday.” Yami concluded her note writing, “Congratulations & all the best,” and tagged the entire team of the film. Written and directed by Aditya Dhar, Dhurandhar opened in the theatres on December 5. The high-stakes espionage thriller is inspired by real covert operations of Indian intelligence, set against the

Mission Accomplished: ‘The Final Reckoning’ is Coming to Your Screen

Agency: Tom Cruise has become a global icon thanks to his thrilling action films and the Mission Impossible series has been entertaining audiences for almost three decades. This year, his journey as Ethan Hunt came to an end with Mission Impossible: The Final Reckoning, which performed well at the box office and left audiences impressed. Now, nearly six months later, the movie is available to stream, giving fans a chance

to watch it from the comfort of their homes.

The series has always set the standard high for real, daring stunts, which Cruise personally performs that most actors never attempt. The Final Reckoning pushes this even further, as this time the actor and director Christopher McQuarrie reached extreme heights and delivered moments that left audiences on the edge of their seats. Mission Impossible: The Final



Reckoning is now available to stream in India on Prime Video. Viewers need an active subscription to watch the movie at any time. Other than English, the film can also be enjoyed in Hindi, Tamil and

Telugu. Before this, viewers had the option to watch the film by renting it on Prime or BMS. Now, it is available for all subscribers, without any extra cost. Announcing on Instagram, the streaming giant

wrote, “Loyalties break, clock runs out and the thrill begins.” In the latest installment, agent Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise) and his Impossible Missions Force (IMF) team embark on their most dangerous and consequential mission yet: tracking down a terrifying new weapon before it falls into the wrong hands.

The weapon is, in fact, an omnipotent Artificial Intelligence known as The Entity. This rogue A.I. is capable of

destabilizing global security by manipulating digital systems, effectively ending all truth and trust.

According to Box Office Mojo, Mission Impossible: The Final Reckoning performed well at the box office, as it earned nearly \$599 Million worldwide. Among the numbers, \$197.4 Million was collected from domestic release, while the remaining \$401.3 Million, came from the international market. As per

the official synopsis, “After retrieving the source code for the Entity, Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise) receives a message from President Erika Sloane that the AI has seized control of global nuclear systems as Hunt continues to pursue its former proxy Gabriel (Esai Morales).” Other than Cruise, Bassett and Morales, the cast includes Hayley Atwell, Ving Rhames, Simon Pegg, Henry Czerny and Pom Klementieff in key roles.

North Korea bans this popular dish, deems it treasonous



In a shocking clampdown on Western cultural influences, North Korea’s leader, Kim Jong Un, has apparently prohibited the consumption and sale of Budae-Jjigae, a spicy noodle soup that is traditionally prepared with Hot Dogs or Spam. The dish, which originated in pro-Western South Korea but gained popularity in the North over the past few years, has been declared treasonous, and violators will face severe punishment. As per a report that originally appeared in The Sun, local vendors have been threatened to stop selling the dish immediately. One of the vendors was even quoted as saying, “Sales of Budae-Jjigae in the market have stopped. The police and market management have said anyone caught selling it will be shut down.” Serving or selling the dish is said to come under a punishment of deportation to labour camps where severe conditions will form a re-education process. Kim Jong Un’s decree fits into a pattern of ridding the regime of what it regards as the imposition of Western influence. Hot dogs and other types of Western delicacies are identified with Western culture, and so their consumption has been increasingly checked. Other popular South Korean fare such as Spicy Rice Cakes have also had a ban previously for similar motives. Despite this strict stance on Western foods, the consumption of canines remains permissible in North Korea, showing the regime’s selective approach to food policies.The restrictions are not only on food but extend to a wider range. North Koreans wishing to divorce might face one to six months of labour camp imprisonment since separation is deemed “anti-socialist.” Authorities also issued warnings in December that Christmas celebrations might result in death, thereby clearly showing how the regime dominates people’s lives, including personal and cultural life.Budae-jjigae, or Army Base Stew, was born when leftover ingredients such as Spam and Hot Dogs, brought to Korea by American servicemen, were mixed with more traditional Korean elements like Kimchi and Ramen. For South Koreans, it represents a culinary expression of their country’s melange of cultures and comfort food; in North Korea, it is strictly forbidden. According to international reports, these bans are in line with North Korea’s history of standing against perceived ideological impurities. For now, Budae-Jjigae and its western parts have joined a growing list of cultural elements unacceptable in the reclusive nation.

Tiffin recipes made with leftover Palak Paneer

In most Indian households, preparing saags is a common tradition during winters, as leafy greens give your body the much-needed dose of nutrition required to sustain the cold weather. One such saag-based delicacy is Palak Paneer, which is extensively prepared during this time of the year. However, there are times when you don’t feel like eating this dish in the same old way, and then we have got your back with some interesting ways to tweak this desi dish and make some creative tiffin recipes. So, follow us through these tiffin recipe ideas and enjoy!Palak Paneer ParathaThis is one of the simplest ways to tweak your regular Palak Paneer by turning it into some delicious and healthy parathas. Simply mash the leftover Palak Paneer and mix it into whole wheat flour along with spices like cumin, garam masala, and red chili powder. Knead it into a dough and roll it out into flatbreads. Cook the parathas on a griddle with ghee or oil until golden brown. These parathas make for a filling and healthy tiffin option. Palak Paneer SandwichLeftover Palak Paneer can easily be turned into a hearty sandwich filling. Take two slices of whole wheat multigrain bread and spread a generous amount of mashed Palak Paneer in between. You can add some cucumber slices or tomatoes for added crunch and freshness. Grill the sandwich for a crispy texture. This makes for a nutritious, easy-to-carry tiffin snack.Palak Paneer PulaoTransform your leftover Palak Paneer into a flavorful pulao. Sauté onion, ginger, and garlic in a pan and sauté the Palak Paneer with fresh coriander leaves, and you have a quick and satisfying lunchbox meal. Palak Paneer QuesadillaGive a Mexican twist to your palak paneer by using it as a filling for quesadillas. Spread some mashed Palak Paneer on a tortilla, sprinkle cheese on top, and fold it in half. Toast it on a hot pan until both sides are crispy and golden. Cut into wedges and serve with a side of salsa or sour cream. This fusion recipe will definitely spice up your tiffin box. Palak Paneer RollsFor a portable and easy-to-eat option, use your leftover Palak Paneer to make wraps or rolls. Take a soft tortilla or roti and spread a thin layer of palak paneer on it. Add some shredded cabbage, carrots, or onions for crunch. Roll it up tightly and slice into bite-sized pieces. These rolls are perfect for a quick tiffin lunch or snack.Palak Paneer FrittersTurn your leftover Palak Paneer into crispy fritters that are perfect for a tiffin box treat. Mash the palak paneer and mix it with besan, spices like cumin, ajwain, and chili powder, and a bit of salt. Form small fritters and fry them until golden brown and crispy. Serve with a tangy chutney for extra flavor. These fritters are not only delicious but also a great way to use up leftovers.Palak Paneer CasseroleA hearty casserole is a great way to repurpose Palak Paneer. Mix leftover Palak Paneer with cooked pasta or rice. Add a handful of grated cheese and bake the mixture in a casserole dish for about 20 minutes until bubbly and golden on top.



Student hospitalised after eating jawbreaker candy

Jawbreaker candies are infamous for their rock-hard texture, often causing injuries to those who try to bite into them. A 19-year-old Canadian college student, Javeria Wasim, recently experienced the harsh reality of why the candy lives up to its name.Wasim ended up in the hospital with a fractured jaw after attempting to bite into one of the oversized confections. Since then, she hasn’t been able to take anything solid and is on a liquid diet. According to reports, the mishap started when Wasim and a friend came across the trendy sweet while out shopping. Known for its tough exterior and sizey appearance some as big as a snooker cue the pair thought it looked cool and bought the largest one they could find. We got a giant one, the biggest size they had,” Wasim recalled to People magazine. The duo even asked the store owner whether it was safe to bite into the candy but could not resist their curiosity.When Wasim decided to test her luck, things quickly went wrong. “I bit into it and only made a hole, and my jaw started to hurt,” she explained. Her friend noticed immediately that one of her teeth was loose, and her front tooth appeared damaged. Minutes later, the duo called



an ambulance upon realising the injury was more severe than it seemed.At the hospital, X-rays and a CT scan revealed fractures in Wasim’s jaw. She was taken

for emergency surgery to reposition her jaw the next day. The surgeons put a bar along the top and bottom gums and wired her jaw shut for six weeks to help her

heal. “I was crying a lot; everything was blurry,” she remembered the traumatic experience.The ordeal has left Wasim traumatised. “I used to have [jawbreakers] as a little kid, but I’d never seen anyone bite into the big ones,” she admitted. Due to the challenges of a liquid diet and post-surgery recovery, she has sworn off candy entirely. “I may never eat another one in my life,” she confessed. Wasim now advises people to be more cautious with jawbreakers. “Just lick them, even if it takes weeks to get to the center,” she advised, hoping her experience will serve as a warning and prevent similar injuries. Jawbreaker candies are hard, multi-layered confections often made by repeatedly dipping sugar syrup onto a rotating core. Renowned for their durability and large size, some jawbreakers can reach dimensions comparable to a snooker ball. Their extreme hardness makes them difficult to bite, posing significant risks to teeth and jaws. Biting into these candies may cause chipped teeth, dislodged fillings, or even serious jaw damage, as they are supposed to be dissolved slowly. As the name “jawbreaker” implies, this is one candy that needs to be savored cautiously by licking, not by trying to chew.

4 Ways to remove Coconut Shell in just a few minutes

Extracting coconut flesh from its tough exterior layer may seem like a tough task. This is because a coconut has a thick, fibrous exterior and can be quite challenging to break open. Extracting coconut shells is a labor-intensive process. It involves breaking the tough husk, removing fibrous coir, and cracking the hard shell. The process requires sharp tools, strength, and precision to avoid damaging the shell or injuring oneself. Traditional methods make it even more challenging, demanding patience and significant physical effort. Well, if you too struggle with the same, then here are some simple methods to open a coconut shell without putting in much effort. Here are four methods you can use to quickly and easily remove the coconut shell.Crack open the coconutTo begin with, use a sharp object like a clean nail or screwdriver to poke through the three brown, circular spots of the coconut. Drain the water into a bowl for later use or to drink. Hold the coconut in one hand and use the hammer or mallet to tap around the center of the coconut. You should focus on creating a crack around its middle, rather than tapping too hard at the top or bottom.With a few strong taps, you should see the coconut shell begin to crack. Once it splits open, gently pull the two halves apart. You can then easily remove the coconut meat from the shell by prying it out with a butter knife or a spoon. If the flesh is stubborn, you can place the halves in the freezer for about 10-15 minutes before attempting to separate the meat from the shell.Use an oven: If you are dealing with a particularly tough coconut shell, the heat of the oven can help loosen the shell and make it easier to remove the coconut meat. This method works particularly well for mature coconuts with a harder shell. Preheat the oven to 180°C, then poke holes in the eyes of the coconut and drain out the coconut water. Place the coconut on a baking sheet. Put the coconut in the preheated oven and bake it



for about 10-15 minutes. The heat will cause the shell to expand and crack, making it easier to break open.Once the coconut has cooled slightly, use a hammer or mallet to gently tap the cracks until the shell splits open. The coconut meat should easily come away from the shell.Boiling the coconut shellBoiling the coconut is another effective method that softens the shell and flesh, making it easier to remove. This is ideal if you prefer a cleaner separation of the coconut meat from the shell. To use this method, poke holes in the coconut eyes and drain out the coconut water.Place the coconut in a large pot of water and bring it to a boil. Let it boil for about 10-15 minutes. This step softens the shell and helps separate the meat from the inside. After boiling, remove the coconut from the water and allow it to cool enough to handle. The heat will have

loosened the flesh, making it easier to remove.If you are not in a hurry and want an easier time separating the coconut meat from the shell, try freezing the coconut. After cracking the coconut open using one of the above methods, place the halves in the freezer for a few hours. The cold temperature will cause the coconut meat to contract slightly, which will make it much easier to remove from the shell when you attempt to pry it out.Coconut shells are versatile and eco-friendly. They can be used as natural planters for small plants or herbs, decorative bowls, or candle holders. Crushed coconut shells make excellent organic mulch for gardens. They are also crafted into jewelry, keychains, and other handicrafts. Additionally, coconut shells can serve as sustainable fuel or be transformed into activated charcoal for purification purposes.

How coffee and chocolate can boost your mood and immunity



Winter is the season of cozy blankets, crackling fires, and indulgent treats. Yet, it also comes with its challenges — shorter days, colder weather, and an increased risk of catching colds or feeling low. Fortunately, two beloved staples, coffee and chocolate, are here to save the day. Far from being mere indulgences, these two superfoods can uplift your mood and strengthen your immunity during the winter months. Here’s how they do it.The Strength Of Coffee During Winter: To many individuals, coffee is the trusted reviver. The morning ritual is more than an accustomed routine; it is a practical approach for people to begin their day. However coffee has its own advantage which is more than just getting you up and out of bed.Winter days can sometimes leave a person feeling sad, even when the sun is out but strong which in turn is referred to as seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Having a cup of fresh brewed coffee can help relieve such feelings since it has caffeine which often enhances dopa-

mine releases in the body, strengthening the central nervous system. One can easily warm themselves up on a cold winter’s day by having a cup of coffee which not only hot beverages do but also helps alleviate experiences of tiredness and gloominess.Improvement in Immunity: Caffeine drinks like coffee are known to be a source of antioxidants such as polyphenols which provide anti-inflammatory benefits as well as enhance immunity. When winter approaches, it triggers the season of colds and flu and in cases like those, antioxidants can be very essential as they prevent one’s body from contracting a cold, or the flu or any other viruses. According to findings of some studies, it was also found that regular coffee drinkers have a better chance of reducing their risk of developing chronic diseases. Energy and Focus: During winter we have short days and relatively long nights. The temperature outside drops, and it’s easy to cut down precious coffee time. We can however rely on caffeine from coffee and it helps us remain productive. Be it work,

or preparing for family reunions, coffee never leaves your side.Helps to Maintain Your Wavelength with Health Claims: While coffee is superb for energizing us in the morning, it is chocolate that best pairs with us to end the day. Its smooth, sweet, and thick mouthfeel makes it a staple in winter. But if you’re ever in doubt about the richness of chocolate, let it be known that there’s great value in chocolate given its multiple health benefits. Antidepressant: There is a strong rationale, supported by scientific evidence, for why certain compounds like theobromine and phenylethylamine in dark chocolate can make you feel ecstatic. These compounds influence serotonin levels in the brain, a neurotransmitter associated with calmness and stress relief. Serotonin helps achieve the tranquility people seek after stress is alleviated. Thus, enjoying a piece of dark chocolate makes perfect sense—it not only helps combat stress but also brings a comforting warmth, especially on a cold night. Protection Against Infections: Once again, dark chocolate manages to

regain a lot of its lost reputation, as it’s also packed with Flavonoids, which are well known to increase the efficiency of the immune system. These mechanisms promote sufficient blood circulation, suppress swelling, and even assist the body in fighting off germs. So if you’re looking to stray away from the potential threats that a lower temperature brings, treating yourself to dark chocolate is a must.Improved Blood Flow: Quarantine and self-isolation during the winter months have kept a lot of people from being active, which as a result has led to a lot of underlying heart problems. According to extensive research, integrating dark chocolate into one’s diet means that there would be a decrease in blood pressure levels as well as having enhanced cholesterol. This makes it an excellent addition to your winter wellness routine.How to incorporate coffee and chocolate into your winter dietThe versatility of coffee and chocolate makes them easy to include in your daily routine. Here are some creative and healthy ways to enjoy them this winter:Morning Boost: Start your day with a cup of black coffee or a latte made with oat or almond milk. Add a sprinkle of cinnamon or toasted rosemary for a seasonal twist that boosts antioxidant levels and also awakens your tastebuds.Afternoon Treat: Combine coffee and chocolate by making a mocha. Mix your favorite milk base coffee with a full spoon of 58%-65% dark chocolate for having natural sweet without adding extra load of sugar. It’s a perfect pick-me-up for chilly afternoons. Healthy Desserts: Incorporate dark chocolate into your desserts. From chocolate-dipped fruits to a warm cup of melted chocolate have it completely vegan in 58% of Dark chocolate which is not overly sweet and has a fruity flavor profile that implements your choice of fresh fruit, or either you can have its nostalgia sweet and milky by using 42% Milk chocolate.

What I learned from walking Britain’s entire coast

Camping out on the wild cliffs in Caithness in north-west Scotland, British photographer Quintin Lake wasn’t short on company. This remote, blustery corner of the UK is home to thousands of nesting puffins, and Lake spent a “magical” evening and morning with the colourful creatures as they waddled, paraded, fed and groomed before leaving for the winter. This was just one of many memorable moments on his five-year solo mission to walk the entire coastline of the British mainland. He had to take precautions though: “I camped a little distance away from the puffins on a very steep cliff,” Lake says. “I tied the tent closed with my shoelaces in case I decided to sleepwalk for the first time that night.”Setting off from the steps of St Paul’s Cathedral in London in April 2015, Lake travelled clockwise around the island, breaking the epic journey up into legs ranging from two days to two months. In total, he walked for 454 days, covering more than 6,835 miles, camping along the way. Having spent much of his career as a photographer in far-flung locations, his British coastal expedition was a deliberate decision to seek out artistic inspiration closer to home. By the time he’d completed the journey, closing the loop in September 2020, he not only had thousands of photographs and a remarkable visual archive, but a deeper understanding of the island’s history, geography, industry, architecture, nature and identity. As he shares in his new book, The Perimeter, the experience reshaped how he sees Britain – and also led to revelations about himself.Here, Lake speaks to the BBC about the wildest and most beautiful places he experienced, the emotional discoveries he made along the way, and why the coast tells Britain’s story better than anywhere else. To get under the skin of our island and to understand this place that I call “home”. I’d previously walked the River Severn from the source to the sea and I found it the most interest-



ing thing I’d ever photographed – I wanted more of that. Scotland was very physically challenging. I got a torn tendon and I had shin splints, and I was managing being cold and wet in the winter. There were many days where I just had to keep walking – that was the only way to keep my body temperature up. I walked in snowstorms and woke up many times with the tent covered in ice, whereas on the south coast of England, I’d be looking on Tripadvisor and deciding where to get the best ice cream. That said, the light was sometimes the most spectacular in winter in Scotland, so, photographically, I got the most rewards there. The Knoydart Peninsula on Scotland’s west coast. The region around Knoydart’s called the Rough Bounds. It’s mountainous, with no paths; a lot of broken ground and cliffs all over the place. It’s very tough to walk. Because I found every day so inspiring and I was looking for images, I didn’t feel that lonely. But practical things could be very difficult, like sourcing food, sourcing water and keeping warm. Picasso said that, “Without great solitude, no serious work is possible”. I love walking with friends and family, but if I’m by myself, I’m looking and observing all the time. The slowness and rhythm allow you to absorb the landscape more profoundly. I didn’t realise how wild Britain was, especially in Scotland. I didn’t realise Scotland is pretty much half of the entire coastline. I didn’t



Teeside, because it’s the end of an era. I didn’t meet anyone in that area who hadn’t had a family member working in the steel industry there. At Cromarty in Scotland, it was dramatic to see the jack-up oil rigs towering hundreds of metres above the village. That’s a moment in our time: the end of the carbon era. I’m sure in 50 years they won’t be there. On the cliffs in Caithness, up in north-west Scotland. I camped a little distance away from the puffins on a very steep cliff. I photographed puffins in the evening and the following morning, which was a magical experience. I like a city to feel alive and vibrant, not just a historical remnant, so my favourite cities on the coast would be Glasgow and Liverpool. Both had layers of history but they’re really energising and felt new and of the “now”.My favourite architectural structures in Britain are the bridges. I think the Forth Bridge, just above Edinburgh, and Kylesku Bridge, right in the Scottish Highlands, a modern bridge surrounded by lochs and mountains, are the most beautiful.In terms of buildings, my favourite is the transport museum in Glasgow by the architect Zaha Hadid, and A House For Essex by Grayson Perry, a really exuberant building on the border of Essex. Perhaps my top day walk in Britain is the Seven Sisters from Seaford to Eastbourne, or as a shorter loop from Eastbourne, with the iconic white cliffs. It’s not necessarily easy – it’s rolling but fairly flat and well-marked. You can do that as a day trip from London. The Aberdeenshire coast up in north-east Scotland, places like Crovie and Gardenstown, where you have former fishing houses tucked in below the cliffs and hidden by the landscape. That would surprise people. It’s an area, at Pennan specifically, that was featured in the film Local Hero. I’d also suggest the peninsulas, like the Llŷn Peninsula in Wales for its isolation, history, Castle Cricieth and the Whistling Sands beach.A lot of visitors might go to London or Brighton. But these other places give a sense of romance, isolation, stillness and history. If you go to a hotspot, you don’t get that, but that’s what makes this island unique.



The Overseas Highway: The US’ ‘floating’ highway

Seagulls cried overhead as I glided across miles of glistening waters somewhere between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. The sky melted into the teal sea, which turned turquoise as it shallowed into channels between the coral and limestone islands. It was a tableau of blue, extending as far as I could see. As I adjusted my sunglasses, I glimpsed a blur of movement from the corner of my eye. A bottlenose dolphin! It had friends, and soon the pod performed an aquatic ballet, leaping in graceful arcs before plunging back into the waves. Fishing boats bobbed lazily around me, and I had an urge to cast a line, but it would have been hard to do while driving at 50mph along a highway.Travelling from Miami to the island of Key West, Florida, hasn’t always been the carefree drive it is today. In the early part of the 20th Century, the only way to make the journey to the southernmost point in the continental US was a day-long boat ride, and that was dependent on weather and tides. But thanks to a stunning engineering marvel known as the Overseas Highway that stretches 113 miles from the mainland’s southern tip across 44 tropical islands on 42 bridges, I was seemingly floating across a necklace of mangrove forests and cays as I drove to a place where North America and the Caribbean meet. The Overseas Highway actually started as the Oversea Railroad, and it was the brainchild of visionary developer Henry Morrison Flagler (known as “The Father of Modern Florida”). In 1870, Flagler co-founded the Standard Oil Company alongside business magnate John D Rockefeller, and it became one of the world’s largest and most powerful corporations at the beginning of the 20th Century. After visiting Florida and recognising “The Sunshine State’s” tourism potential, Flagler poured much of his wealth into the region, building luxury resorts that transformed one of the US’ poorest states into a winter paradise for Gilded-Age travellers from the Northeast US. Yet, there was no way for guests to get to Flagler’s opulent-but-remote resorts. So in 1885, Flagler connected a series of disjointed railroads along Florida’s Atlantic Coast from Jacksonville, at Florida’s northern end, to Miami, near the state’s southern tip. Miami



should have been the end of the line, but when the US began construction on the Panama Canal in 1904, Flagler saw tremendous potential for Key West – the US’ closest piece of land to the Canal and the deepest port in the Southeast US. The bustling hub was already flourishing thanks to the cigar, sponging and fishing industries (Key West was Florida’s largest city until 1900), but the island’s remote location made it difficult and expensive to move goods north.When the railroad was finally completed in 1912, it was called “the eighth wonder of the world”. On the train’s inaugural run, a wood-burning locomotive arrived at Key West from Miami carrying the then-82-year-old Flagler, who stepped out of his private luxury carriage car (which is on view at the Flagler Museum in Palm Beach) and allegedly whispered to a friend, “Now I can die happy. My dream is fulfilled.” “The fact that Flagler funded [more than \$30m of this] out of his own pocket back in the day was pretty remarkable,” said Florida historian Brad Bertelli. “Jeff Bezos or Bill Gates might be able to do it today. Elon Musk with his SpaceX might be the best modern comparison.” The railroad operated until 1935, when

the deadliest hurricane in a century swept away miles of tracks. Instead of being rebuilt, Flagler’s masterwork was reincarnated to accommodate Americans’ newfound love of automobiles. In 1938, the US government set out to construct one of the longest overwater roads in the world by relying on Flagler’s seemingly indestructible bridges, which could withstand 200mph winds. Crews paved over the rails to accommodate cars, and the newly opened Overseas Highway forever transformed the far-flung Florida Keys into the thriving tourist destination they are today.More than a century after the railroad’s completion, 20 of the original bridges still carry travellers from Miami to Key West. You can make the drive in under four hours, but detouring along the way is part of the fun. A series of fascinating, under-the-radar stops helps travellers better appreciate how this engineering marvel came to be, and its lasting impact on the Florida Keys. Sixty-nine miles south of Miami, Key Largo is the northernmost of the Florida Keys and great first stop. Gators, snakes and other water-bound critters may have terrified Flagler’s construction crews, but these days, travellers come to Key Largo (the self-proclaimed “dive capital of the world”) to marvel at its abundant marine life. The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary adjoining John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park attracts snorkelers and divers eager to immerse themselves in North America’s only living coral barrier reef. The seagrass beds here provide a critical habitat for fish, manatees and sea turtles, but the main attraction is swimming into the outstretched arms of Christ of the Deep, a submerged 9ft-tall bronze statue of Jesus that has been watching

over visitors since 1965.Once you’ve dried off, head to Islamorada, a community halfway between Miami and Key West that was once the site of an Oversea Railroad station. Here, at the Keys History & Discovery Center, a 35-minute documentary highlights the railroad’s construction and its many obstacles. The museum also presents artefacts from the train’s golden era, including dining car dishes, as well as an original menu showing that a sirloin steak cost \$1.60. In 1909, civil engineer William J Krome was charged with the daunting task of crossing a 6.8-mile expanse of open water. Construction crews worked round the clock, driving more than 700 supporting pilings into the middle of the ocean, sometimes nearly 30ft below sea level, to build the route’s longest bridge. They were assisted by divers who helped create underwater concrete pedestals to support the weight of the rail track. Remnants of the old construction camp can be accessed by taking a trolley across the old bridge from the city of Marathon to Pigeon Key. A 2.2-mile section (the only part that is accessible) reopened in January 2022 following a \$44m, five-year renovation. Closed to non-trolley traffic, the once-decaying bridge is now a safe playground for those who want to cycle or rollerblade 65ft above the crystal-clear water or observe marine life, like sea turtles and nurse sharks.Those driving the full length of the Overseas Highway today know the journey is complete when they see US Mile Marker 1 in Key West. The black and white buoy marks the southernmost point in the contiguous US, meaning travellers are now closer to Cuba (90 miles south) than Miami (132 miles north).

Calf of Man: A tiny, wild isle adrift in the Irish Sea

Down at the harbour, it was time to go sailing. Port Saint Mary, near the Isle of Man’s south-west tip, was half-empty; the only discernible morning activity on the jetty the seagulls perched on empty lobster pots with eyes fixed on the boats at anchor. Only one of these was showing any sign of movement, and with its engine ticking over and the stink of diesel in the air, the two-man crew onboard set their little motorboat on course across the open sea. Their destination? One of Britain’s most isolated islands, hemmed in by precipitous cliffs and tempestuous waters.Found less than half a mile off the south-west coast of the Meayll Peninsula of the Isle of Man, the Calf of Man is that rarest of destinations in the British Isles: a thrilling place, but one that’s often impossible to get to, no matter the season or how hard you try.Chiefly, it is a place lorded over by migratory birdlife, including the sooty black and white Manx shearwater, one of the longest-lived UK bird species. This historic island of two ruined lighthouses is also almost uninhabited, except for the two wildlife wardens and two intermittent volunteers who steward the bird observatory from March to November. Outside those months, the island lies empty.But the racing tidal currents of the Irish Sea and the swirling Calf Sound, which separates it from the British Crown Dependency, frequently make it a treacherous crossing. At times, in gales and rollercoaster tides, the island can be cut off for weeks, and just below the surface, the seabed is littered with shipwrecks. Among them are a 160-tonne brig from Liverpool, a cargo vessel from Glasgow and a French schooner – which means getting to the Calf of Man has all the hallmarks of a pilgrimage. At the boat’s helm that morning was Steve Clague, a Manx sailor who has seen more than his fair share of bad weather. Like his father before him, who’d made the same boat trips to the Calf of Man for 40 years, he believes the island sets people dreaming because it often can be so hard to get to.“Last July we didn’t set sail once,” Clague told me, one of the 10 passengers on that day’s 4.5-hour sightseeing round trip. Around us, the sea gleamed silver-blue in the morning sun, and scanning left and right, there was no sign of the dramatic cliff-hemmed seascape that would soon take over. “The Calf is a unique, beautiful place. Unspoilt and always transforming. The trick isn’t to come once but to see it in all its different moods. It’s a little time capsule.” Also on board was Shaun Murphy of Manx National Heritage, which acts as custodian to the Isle of Man’s treasure trove of museums and field sites as well as the Celtic crosses that have become symbols of the island. Murphy has been coming to the Calf of Man since his first visit as a schoolchild in 1970, and over the last few years, has visited every month. What motivates his return? “It’s a rare good news story,” he replied, watching gannets dive gracefully into the deep. “The guillemot communities are thriving and starting to spread out into the south coast of the island. The Manx shearwater, once preyed upon by invasive rats, has bounced back to around 1,500 pairs. A record number of seal pups were born last year. Efforts are being made to encourage puffins to nest. It’s a lot to take in.” Commitment and hard work underpin much of this, and as part of the puffin project, 100 resin decoys have been installed along the clifftops to encourage the species’ long-term return. As we talked, our boat crossed the sound amid a frenzy of birdlife. Above us, fulmars caught the breeze, but I was equally focussed on the auks, razorbills and kittiwakes nesting on the intricately banded cliffs that thrust skywards. Soon after, two seals glided by, and, slowly, we chugged into the island’s rudimentary quay, South Harbour.More than 1,000 years before we landed on the 616-acre island, Christian monks and hermits are said to have lived here, building an early Christian keeill, or Manx chapel. Fugitives are believed to have taken refuge on the island during Elizabethan times, and in the centuries since, tenant sheep farmers, lighthouse keepers and a series of owners have attempted to tame the island’s wild side.



SPORTS

Potapova switches allegiance to Austria from Russia

Mumbai: Anastasia Potapova has become the latest Russian-born tennis player to switch international allegiance after the world number 51 said her application for Austrian citizenship was approved. Potapova, 24, has been playing on the WTA Tour as a neutral athlete after Russian and Belarusian players were banned from competing under their own flags following Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022.Daria Kasatkina (Australia), Varvara Gracheva (France), Elina Avanesyan (Armenia), Maria Timofeeva (Uzbekistan) and Natela Dzalamidze (Georgia) have all switched allegiance since the Russian invasion.“I am delighted to let you all know that my application for citizenship has been accepted by the Austrian government,” Potapova posted on social media on Thursday. “As part of this I am proud to announce that starting from 2026 I will be representing my new homeland Austria in my professional tennis career from this point onwards.” Potapova had been issued a formal warning by the WTA in 2023 for wearing a T-shirt of a Russian football team, Spartak Moscow, before her match against Jessica Pegula at Indian Wells.

Her actions had been viewed as a public show of support for Russia and drew criticism from Iga Swiatek but she later said she had supported Spartak since she was 13 and saw no provocation in it. Potapova has been playing on the WTA Tour as a neutral athlete after Russian and Belarusian players were banned from competing under their own



flags following Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Mark Wood casts doubt over return in Adelaide Test after painkilling

Mumbai: England fast bowler Mark Wood has expressed uncertainty over his involvement in the third Ashes Test in Adelaide, adding to the concerns around England’s pace options for the remainder of the series.Wood, 35, returned during the first Test in Perth after a long spell out following knee surgery, but his ongoing struggle with injury and recovery has placed his availability in doubt. Speaking during the second Test at the Gabba, Wood outlined the state of his rehabilitation and the likelihood of missing the Adelaide Test, which begins on December 17. He said, “I think there’s a chance there, but more realistically, it’s probably more Melbourne and then [Sydney] after that. I need to get out of this [brace] first to get moving around.” Wood’s fitness has been central to England’s planning. After surgery on his left knee earlier this year and a 15-month absence from Test cricket, he bowled 11 wicket-less overs in Perth before being ruled out of the Brisbane Test due to ongoing discomfort. He has since worn a knee brace and taken painkilling injections, highlighting the physical burden of bowling



consistently above 90mph/145kph. Reflecting on the challenge of sustaining his speeds at 35, Wood said, “Throughout my career, I’ve tried to show resilience and keep coming back and keep trying to push it where I can bowl faster and faster, but I’m getting older now.” He added, “I don’t know if my body’s not coping with it as well [as it used to] but I’ll keep trying. That’s something I pride myself on, to keep running in

for the team and be a good team man. I’m hoping I can get this right and can charge in again.” Wood remains realistic about his recovery and the timeline for a return. “I’m trying to just get through day-to-day at the minute. Later in the series is what I’m aiming for, but I can’t do that much at the minute. I’ve had a couple of injections, resting up, and slowly but surely, running [will] start soon, then back into bowling.”

R Ashwin Demands Proper Role Clarity For This India Star

New Delhi: After the second India-South Africa ODI, legendary spinner R Ashwin has demanded “proper role clarity” for all-rounder Washington Sundar. The player was sent in to bat at number 5 in the first ODI against the Proteas in Ranchi but was slipped one spot in the second match in Raipur. He scored 13 and 1 respectively in the games. On the bowling front, Sundar got a total

of seven overs across the two matches and failed to pick any wicket. “Once you have decided to play Washington Sundar, you’ve to treat him as a bowler who can bat. You’ve to bowl out his overs. Only if he keeps bowling, he’ll have the mindset of a bowler who can bat. Otherwise if he just bats and bowls a few overs, he’ll keep searching who he is. So don’t leave him in the searching space. Instead,

R Ashwin further said that India could try playing fast-bowling all-rounder Nitish Reddy to fill in the place of Hardik Pandya in the XI.

the team should arrive at giving him the proper role clarity,” said Ashwin. The three-match ODI series between India and South Africa is perfectly poised at 1-1. The hosts won the first game by 17 runs.

Indian sports summary Gaganjeet Bhullar wins third IGPL championship

Bengaluru: Gaganjeet Bhullar, who began the week in a modest manner, closed it in a masterly fashion to become the first player to win three times on IGPL Tour. Bhullar, who opened the week with a round of 1-under 71, that included a hole-in-one, added solid rounds of 67-67 on the last two days to total a winning 11-under at the splendid Glade One Resort and golf club. The 21-year-old Raghav Chugh gave it all but with three pairs in last three holes, he fell one short and ended a creditable sole second.

Chugh shot 4-under 68 and totalled 10-under for the week.Three internationals, Filipino Justin Quiban, Mexican Santiago de la Fuentes and Indian-American Manav Shah, all hoping to become the first international to win on the IGPL were thwarted at the finish, and ended Tied-third at 8-under. The contest could not have been tighter as three players, Bhullar, Chugh and Fuentes were tied at 10-under with two holes left. But in the end Bhullar with 5-under won the day, capped by an 18th hole birdie, that

followed the crucial eagle-birdie combination on the 14th and the 15th. With a perfect win record after four games, Chennai Super Warriors became the first team to confirm a playoff spot in the Indian Pickleball League. Bengaluru Blasters, fresh off its maiden win, ran into unbeaten Chennai Super Warriors in the second tie of the day. Phuc Huynh gave Bengaluru the ideal launch, outlasting Aman Patel 15–13 in men’s singles. Chennai steadied through Mitchell Hargreaves and Harsh Mehta, who



edged Huynh and Arjun Singh 15–12 after a gritty, point-for-point kitchen-line battle.

SMAT batting slump costs Mumbai against Kerala

Mumbai: Mumbai’s star-studded batting line-up imploded spectacularly as the defending champion squandered a winning position and slipped to a 15-run defeat against Kerala in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy at the Ekana Cricket Stadium B ground in Lucknow on Thursday. Needing 49 runs to win in the last five overs with six wickets in hand, Mumbai was bundled out for 163, with pacer K.M. Asif wreaking havoc with a five-wicket haul. While Kerala’s bowlers held their nerve till the end and the fielders backed them up with some sharp catches in the outfield, Mumbai panicked uncharacteristically. The outcome had seemed unlikely during Ajinkya Rahane and Sarfaraz Khan’s 80-run alliance for the second wicket, which steadied Mumbai after Sharafuddeen knocked over Ayush Mhatre’s off-stump in the first over. Rahane relied on timing and placement, while Sarfaraz played the ball late and eschewed the cross-batted heaves on his way to a 37-ball half-century. However, they fell in quick succession, with Rahane getting a top edge sweeping Vignesh Puthur and Rohan Kunnummal’s stunning dive at deep extra-cover cutting short Sarfaraz’s stay.The floodgates opened when Vignesh had Shivam Dube stumped, thanks to Sanju Samson’s lightning-quick glove work, and



Mumbai never recovered.With 31 runs to get off 18 balls, Asif turned the match on its head with a three-wicket over. Sairaj Patil was castled swinging for the hills, and, a couple of deliveries later, a cautious Suryakumar Yadav, who had unfurled his trademark scoop to the fine-leg boundary only once, flicked one high in the air at deep square-leg, where substitute fielder Ahammed Imran nabbed a well-judged catch. Mumbai captain Shardul Thakur played across the line off the next ball and got a leading edge to mid-off, putting Kerala on the brink of a heist. M.D. Nidheesh and Asif ensured that 28 runs off 12 balls was too steep an equation for the tail as Kerala notched its third successive win over the much-fancied Mumbai side in the domestic T20 competition.

Baroda’s Syed must change venue because to Hardik Pandya’s presence Mushtaq Ali Trophy Game

New Delhi: Fan frenzy over star India all-rounder Hardik Pandya forced the organisers to shift the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy match between his team Baroda and Gujarat to a more secure Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium from a nondescript Gymkhana ground on Thursday. The game, which Baroda won by eight wickets, was moved due to an unexpected crowd interest and security concerns in Hardik’s presence. It was the second competitive game for the India all-rounder since return from a two-month long injury break. He will be seen in India colours in the upcoming five-match T20 series against South Africa



beginning in Cuttack on December 9. Officials confirmed that the decision was taken after unusually large gatherings of fans were re-

corded near team hotel, practice nets, and ticket counters, far exceeding the normal turnout for a domestic fixture.

“Fan turnout, enquiries, and crowd movement exceeded our projections by a huge margin. To ensure safety and smooth match operations, we decided to shift the match to Rajiv Gandhi Stadium,” a senior organising official said. After smashing an unbeaten 77 against Punjab, Hardik made 10 and took a wicket against Gujarat. Fan frenzy over star India all-rounder Hardik Pandya forced the organisers to shift the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy match between his team Baroda and Gujarat to a more secure Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium from a nondescript Gymkhana ground on Thursday.

Germany’s ‘Toni Kroos’ Wishlist Europe’s Elite

Mumbai: At the tender age of 16, Hertha Berlin’s defensive midfield sensation, Kennet Eichhorn, is not only tearing up the record books in Germany but has also ignited a transfer war among Europe’s biggest clubs. Dubbed the ‘next Toni Kroos,’ the teenager’s recent historic goal in the DFB-Pokal has only intensified the pursuit, making clubs across Europe recalibrate their focus on the teenage sensation currently playing in the Bundesliga 2. Kennet Eichhorn, born in 2009, is primarily deployed as a defensive midfielder for Hertha BSC in the second-tier German league. Standing at 6’1” (1.86m), he has rapidly progressed through Hertha’s youth ranks and established himself in the senior team, becoming the fulcrum on the pitch, responsible for the transition from attack to defence, and vice versa. The comparisons to Real Madrid and Germany legend Toni Kroos stem from his style of play, which exhibits elegance, composure on the ball, tactical intelligence, and a remarkable ability to radiate calm in the midfield, which also rubs off on his teammates. He is regarded as an intelligent player with a strong awareness of the game, focusing on organising play from deep. He made history by becoming the youngest-ever debutant in the 2. Bundesliga at 16 years and 14 days old.

He scored his first senior goal for Hertha BSC in the DFB-Pokal (German Cup), during a dominant 6-1 victory over Kaiserslautern. In the process, he became the youngest goalscorer in the post-war history of the DFB-Pokal, breaking former Borussia Dortmund midfielder Jude Bellingham’s record. He also became Hertha’s youngest-ever goalscorer. Exceptional Talent & Mentality: Teammates and coaches describe him as an “incredible, exceptional talent” and commend his mental focus and dedication. He was praised for working hard to improve his physique when questions were raised about his resilience a few years ago.

Riyan Parag: Can play both white-ball format

New Delhi: All-rounder Riyan Parag, who last played for India over a year ago, believes he isn’t part of the national setup currently because of a shoulder injury and that he can play both white-ball formats for the Men in Blue. Riyan last played a T20I in October last year, at home against Bangladesh, while his solitary ODI appearance came against Sri Lanka in August 2024. Though there was a possibility of the 24-year-old being picked for the upcoming five-match T20I series against South Africa, beginning December 9, Riyan was eventually not considered.“I felt I was pretty decent [for India]. This is my belief, or overconfidence; you can say whatever you want. But I know that because my shoulder was injured, I am currently not playing for India. Otherwise, I think I can play both white-ball formats [for India]. Whenever I am fully fit, you will see me in India colours again,” Riyan told select media after lead-

ing Assam to a 58-run win over Vidarbha in the ongoing Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy at the Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow.the captain has had a forgettable time with the bat, scoring just 39 runs in five innings at an average of 7.80, and hasn’t bowled yet in the competition. However, Riyan isn’t too concerned about his recent slump. “Indian Premier League (IPL), there have been three to four years where I have had to struggle a lot. I am also returning from an injury, so I have to be mindful about that,” Riyan said. Moreover, he doesn’t think a prolific season in the domestic T20 competition is an accurate yardstick of form or preparation ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL). “This [Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy] is all for muscle memory. If I score runs, then it is very good. If I don’t score, it is not like I won’t score in the IPL. Because it has happened that after scoring here, I have not scored there,” he added.

Australia vs England Ashes 2nd Test Live Cricket Match Score Root, Archer

Mumbai: Australia vs England Ashes 2nd Test Match Live Cricket Score Updates: Joe Root finally scored his first Test century in Australia, and his 40th overall and he then switched to T20 mode along with Jofra Archer for the last wicket and pushed England past the 300-run mark. Root and Archer’s 10th-wicket stand went past 50 in just 29 balls. Meanwhile, Mitchell Starc has taken six wickets. Earlier, England skipper Ben Stokes won the toss and opted to bat first against Steven Smith’s Australia in the second of the five match Test series at Gabba in Brisbane on Thursday The hosts have already won the first Test and took a 1-0 lead.Adapting to the day/night conditions at Gabba will not be child’s play and with Australia almost invincible in pink ball Tests, the mountain is a pretty steep one which England have to climb. The Aussies have won all the pink ball matches except one which was a shock defeat to West Indies last year. Except that, Australia have played 14 D/N Tests and have won 13 of them. England, meanwhile, haven’t won an Ashes test at the Gabba since 1986 and haven’t won a test on Australian soil since the 2010-11 series. What might work in England’s favour is that Australia will likely be without their regular skipper Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood. Both of them were absent from the first game too and England should have taken advantage of that but they didn’t. They are, however, unlikely



to make the same mistake again. Well, Root and Archer have made sure that England’s decision to bat on pays off as much as possible. The partnership ends on an incredible 61 off 44 balls. Root on 135 off 202 balls, he gets handshakes from a couple of Aussies and a standing ovation from the crowd, Archer on 32 off 26. Australia (AUS) vs England (ENG), 2nd Ashes Test Live Cricket Match Score: Joe Root finally scored his first Test century in Australia but Mitchell Starc has led the way in keeping England in check with a six-wicket haul.