

Focused policies helping Mizoram build a distinct farm identity: CM Lalduhoma

Aizawl, Jan 15: Lalduhoma, the chief minister of Mizoram, stated on Thursday that the state is gradually establishing a unique agricultural character through targeted policy changes and crop diversification.

The Chief Minister made this statement at the opening of a training program for rubber growers under the Mizoram Chief Minister's Rubber Mission at Vanapa Hall in Aizawl that covered scientific rubber cultivation, harvesting techniques, post-harvest handling, and pest management.

Despite obtaining Union Territory status more than 50 years ago and the persistent efforts of its citizens, Lalduhoma pointed out that the state had long lacked a crop that could represent its agricultural might. However, after the current government implemented specific policies to assist farmers and encourage high-value crops, the situation changed.

Despite the people's efforts, Mizoram did not have a crop that could clearly define its character, even though the state was granted Union

Territory status more than fifty years ago. However, Mizoram was quickly named India's Ginger Capital once the people's government took office and put targeted policies into place. Passion fruit is one of the state's most promising crops and has a lot of promise, according to CM. The Chief Minister went on to say that rubber is one of the most promising crops through which Mizoram can forge a distinct identity. The Chief Minister's Rubber Mission was established with the goal of turning Mizoram into a significant rubber-producing region.

He claimed that in order to ensure a well-thought-out and methodical approach, the mission was developed following extensive consultations with the Rubber Board of India and by examining the Tripura Rubber Mission.

The Chief Minister stated that the Mission's progress has exceeded initial expectations, primarily because of the enthusiastic response from farmers who are prepared to start rubber cultivation, which he



regarded as really promising. The Chief Minister encouraged farmers to work hard while assuring them of ongoing government support. He emphasized that rubber cultivation calls for the right technical expertise and self-discipline. Additionally, he urged participants to pay close attention to the training and reassured them that the government will help them con-

sistently.

There are over 50,000 hectares of land in Mizoram that can be used to grow rubber. Rubber is a hardy crop that promotes afforestation, helps conserve water, has a high market value, and the wood may be utilized for furniture and other uses after its useful life. The Mizoram government has made rubber cultivation a top pri-

ority in light of these benefits. On October 18, 2024, the Chief Minister's Rubber Mission was introduced. The Land Resources, Soil & Water Conservation Department started implementing this mission in early 2025 and has already planted 4,50,000 rubber saplings on 1,000 hectares in the districts of Mamit and Kolasib.

The Department intends to plant

11,58,750 rubber saplings on 2,575 hectares in many regions in 2026. The goal of the five-year mission is to cultivate 11,500 hectares of rubber.

Building approach roads to plantations, supplying rubber roller equipment and tapping tools, and facilitating selling arrangements are all examples of the infrastructure help provided by the mission. Approach roads totaling 46.50 kilometers are planned for rubber plants in eleven sites this year. About 550 rubber growers will receive training from professionals from the Rubber Board of India and Servo Lubricants (IOCL) on scientific cultivation methods, tapping procedures, rubber sheet processing, post-harvest handling, and pest control. According to the announcement, rubber growers in the districts of Lunglei, Hnahthial, Lawngtlai, and Siaha will also participate in similar programs called "Farmers Training on Scientific Rubber Cultivation, Harvesting Techniques, Post-Harvest Handling and Pest Management" as soon as possible.

Roman script demand for Kokborok returns to centre stage in Tripura

Agartala, Jan 15: The long-running debate over the script to be used for Kokborok, also known as Kau Bru, has once again come into sharp focus in Tripura, following a renewed push by Tipra leaders and elected tribal representatives. This time, the demand has been made formally and with a clear warning that continued delay could have lasting effects on future generations. A memorandum submitted to Chief Minister Manik Saha calls for the immediate recognition of the Roman script as the official script for Kokborok. The memorandum has been signed by elected members of the Tripura Legislative Assembly and the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council, including ministers and MLAs. The initiative has been

taken under the leadership of Pradyot Bikram Manikya DebBarma, who is also the Chairman of the Administrative Reform Committee of the TTAADC. The signatories argue that the absence of a clear and final decision on the script has slowed the growth of Kokborok as a language of education, administration, and daily use. They say that repeated changes and continued uncertainty have created confusion among students, teachers, and officials, particularly in tribal areas where Kokborok is widely spoken. According to the memorandum, the Roman script has long enjoyed broad acceptance among Kokborok speakers. The document states that the continued preference for other scripts has limited the lan-

guage's reach and has made learning more difficult for children whose exposure to Roman letters begins early through English education. The representatives argue that adopting the Roman script would make learning easier and help Kokborok adapt better to modern educational and administrative needs. The memorandum recalls that Kokborok was recognised as a state language in 1979 through an amendment to the Tripura Official Language Act, 1964. It also points out that the demand for the Roman script is not new. According to the document, calls for the Roman script date back to 1967. Over the decades, several language commissions have studied the issue and recorded public opinion.

Zubeen Garg Death

Guwahati, Jan 15: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on January 15 declined to comment on the proceedings in Singapore's coroner's court related to the death of singer Zubeen Garg, stating that political leaders should maintain distance from matters under judicial consideration. Responding to media queries, Sarma said the Singapore Police had already submitted their report after completing the investigation, which was examined by the coroner's court there. He emphasised that the investigation being

conducted in Singapore and the probe underway in Assam are separate processes, each governed by its own legal framework. Sarma cautioned that any political statement could be interpreted in multiple ways by the public and reiterated that politicians should avoid intervening in matters before the court. The Chief Minister's remarks come amid heightened public attention and debate following developments in the Singapore coroner's court and the parallel investigation being carried out by Assam Police into the singer's death.

Interactive session marks 57th STS general conference



Imphal, Jan 15: The Manipur State Commission for Women (MSCW) in collaboration with Sirti Thiinjaitam Sourkhe/ Monsang Naga Students' Union (STS) and Ethar Erur (EE) conducted an interaction session on the topic "Empowerment Through Education and Legal Literacy" during the historic occasion of the 57th STS General Conference held at Liwa Khullen (Meelen) village, Chandel district. The interaction session was intended for Monsang student community to have better knowledge and awareness in the field of education and legal literacy. The importance of quality education, higher studies, cracking competitive examinations, women issues, understanding legal rights, were some of

the areas the session delib-erated. The panelist for the interaction session were Th. Tiningpham Monsang, Chairperson Manipur State Commission for Women (MSCW), Th. Tommy Monsang, Income Tax Officer, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, Dr. Sh. Wilson Monsang, Food Safety Officer, Chandel, Dr. Kiriiri Onand Monsang, Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Dhana-manjuri University, and Kh. Jacky, Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel District Judge Court Chandel. The session was hosted by Dr. W. Somie Monsang, Assistant Professor, Department of History, G.P. Women's College, Dhana-manjuri University. A large number of students and parents attended the insightful session.

'I'll Be Happy If They Work for Me': Himanta Revives Claim of BJP 'Agents' Inside Congress After Sarkar Exit

Guwahati, Jan 15: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma reignited his long-standing claim of having "agents" within the Congress, saying he would be "happy" if people worked for him from inside the Opposition party. Sarma's remarks came amid a fresh political storm following the resignation of newly inducted Congress member Rejaul Karim Sarkar, who quit the party on January 14 after accusing senior Congress leaders—Leader of the Opposition Debabrata Saikia and Nagaon MP Pradyut Bordoloi—of acting as "BJP agents". "I will be happy if people work for me. It is not a lie that people do work on my behalf in Congress," Sarma said mockingly while responding to questions from the media.

The Chief Minister also took aim at Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi, accusing him of failing to act decisively after Sarkar's controversial Dhubri-Sivasagar remarks, which drew widespread criticism. Referring to the episode, Sarma said Gogoi, as the Jorhat MP and state Congress chief, should have ensured Sarkar's removal from the party before the situation escalated. "After the Dhubri re-

mark, Gaurav Gogoi should have pushed him out of the Congress. He couldn't do so, and that's why Karim will now project himself like a hero. That is why we wanted Gogoi to eliminate him from the party. He could not gather the courage," Sarma said. Sarma's claim of having sources within the Congress is not new. On several occasions in the past, he has asserted that he receives first-hand information about internal Congress discussions and strategy. In July 2025, the Chief Minister had claimed knowledge of a closed-door Congress meeting in Guwahati, alleging that senior leader Rahul Gandhi had remarked that Sarma would eventually be sent to jail. "Take it in writing, Himanta Biswa Sarma will definitely be sent to jail"—these were the exact words spoken by the Leader of the Opposition," Sarma had claimed at the time. The latest comments have added fuel to the controversy surrounding Sarkar's resignation, deepening tensions between the ruling BJP and an already embattled Assam Congress. Seeking to close ranks, the Congress on Wednesday said it was unhappy with Sarkar's Dhubri-Sivasagar remarks and

maintained that his exit would have no impact on the party's prospects in the upcoming Assam Assembly elections. Addressing the media, Election Manifesto Committee chairman and Nagaon MP Pradyut Bordoloi said he had conveyed his views to APCC president Gaurav Gogoi, stressing the need for restraint and responsibility in public statements. "Those who hold responsibility must speak responsibly. Whether from our party or others, no one should make divisive remarks. Sensitive issues must be handled with care. That is what I conveyed. If he quit because of his remarks, it is unfortunate," Bordoloi said. Asked about Sarkar naming him in his resignation letter to Gogoi, Bordoloi said he could not rule out political motives behind the move. "I don't know whether he is playing politics with this decision. I am not sure," he said. Rejecting claims that Sarkar's exit would hurt the Congress electorally, Bordoloi said, "This will not affect the party in the Assembly polls." Responding to Sarkar's assertion that "Congress is not bigger than the community", Bordoloi said the party had never made such a claim and added that

Sarkar appeared unfamiliar with Assam's political history and the Congress's role, citing the legacy of Assam's first Chief Minister, Bharat Ratna Gopinath Bordoloi. Meanwhile, the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) said Sarkar's resignation was expected given the criticism he faced from senior Congress leaders. AIUDF general secretary Rafiqul Islam described the move as justified. "If someone cannot raise minority issues or work towards addressing them, how can a minority student leader survive in such a party?" Islam said, referring to Sarkar's past role as chief of the All Assam Minority Students' Union. Islam alleged that the episode had exposed what he termed a "communal mindset" among certain Congress leaders. "From the outside, the Congress is secular, which we acknowledge. But inside, some leaders may be close to the RSS and speak in line with its ideology," he claimed. Sarkar's resignation and the sharp political reactions it has triggered have added a fresh layer of complexity to Assam's already charged political landscape as parties position themselves ahead of the Assembly elections.

70 MW Dhubri Solar Power Plant

Dhubri: Jan 15: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma today inaugurated a 70-MW solar power project at Khudigaon, Bilasipara in Dhubri district of Assam, marking a major renewable energy milestone for the state. Built by SJVN Green Energy at a cost over Rs 350 crore, the project is expected to significantly boost Assam's solar capacity towards its 2030 targets. "Assam has set a solar energy tar-



get of 3,500 MW by 2030. Today, our solar capacity has reached 680 MW and by April we will touch 750 MW, steadily advancing towards a sustainable, clean

energy future," CM Sarma said after inaugurating the project. The project is expected to generate 141 million units of electricity annually, while reducing nearly 1.15 lakh tonnes of carbon emissions. Sarma said the new solar park would strengthen Assam's journey towards self-sufficiency in power generation and reduce dependence on external sources of electricity. (EOM)

Kuki-Zo MLAs hold back support as UT demand takes centre stage

Imphal, Jan 15: With the possible end of President's Rule in Manipur drawing closer, a clear political divide has emerged among Kuki-Zo legislators, with a majority unwilling to support any government formation in Imphal without a firm and written assurance on their demand for a separate Union Territory with legislature. Sources said the position was reiterated during a recent closed-door meeting held in Guwahati, attended by Kuki-Zo MLAs, civil society representatives and leaders linked to armed groups under the Suspension of Operations arrangement. The meeting reviewed the current political and security situation in Manipur, which has remained under President's Rule for several months. Out of the ten Kuki-Zo MLAs in the Manipur Assembly, seven are said to be firmly opposed to joining or supporting any new government unless the Centre or the state government gives a written and time-bound commitment to consider the Union Territory demand. Five MLAs attended the meeting in person, while two others conveyed their stand through representatives or separate communication, according to sources

familiar with the discussions. The meeting was convened by the Kuki National Organisation and the United People's Front, along with participation from community bodies and elders. Participants reportedly agreed that any political engagement with the Manipur government must be linked to a clear roadmap for a political settlement. Sources, however, indicated that three Kuki-Zo MLAs may choose a different path and extend support to a Meitei-led government in Imphal. These MLAs are believed to be in contact with leaders from the ruling establishment and may back government formation if offered positions. This development has caused concern among Kuki-Zo civil society groups, who have warned against moves that could be seen as going against community consensus. The Guwahati meeting also adopted a set of resolutions recalling the ethnic violence that began in May 2023, the prolonged displacement of people, and what participants described as a breakdown of trust between communities. The meeting noted that administrative and social separation has continued for over two years, making normal political functioning difficult.

ZRO Shillong conferred coas unit certificate of appreciation on Army Day

Aizawl, Jan 15: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) of Indian Army, Gen Upendra Dwivedi conferred the COAS Unit Certificate of Appreciation on the Zonal Recruiting Office (ZRO) Shillong, during the Army Investiture Ceremony held in Jaipur on January 14-15.

The honour was given in recognition of the unit's outstanding achievements in recruitment of youths of North-east region to serve the nation

The award was received by Brig Rajeev Kumar, Deputy

Director General (DDG) Recruiting, Northeastern States; and Subedar Major Milkha Singh of ZRO Shillong, a statement issued by the PRO Defence on Thursday stated.

Notably, ZRO, Shillong through meticulous planning of outreach activities ensured motivation of youth in the remotest districts, achieving 64 percent increase in registration of youth for joining the armed forces.

"The intake into the armed forces has also increased by more than 100 percent from last year. As a result, the mo-



tivation and satisfaction level of youth of Northeast states is at its peak," the statement said.

ZRO Shillong, along with

its six AROs, strategically located at Shillong, Narangi, Jorhat, Dimapur, Silchar and Aizawl, covering the seven Northeast states, have worked

Chief of Army Staff Gen Upendra Dwivedi awarded the Zonal Recruiting Office (ZRO) Shillong with the COAS Unit Certificate of Appreciation during an Army Investiture Ceremony in Jaipur on January 14-15.

as a close-knit team to achieve this milestone.

"The ever-forthcoming support from Headquarters (HQ), Eastern Command, and its formations and the civil administration, acted as force multiplier in the quest for selecting the best," it said.

NE/EAST

Drugs worth Rs 29.4 crore seized in Mizoram, one arrested

Aizawl, Jan 15: Assam Rifles troops have seized dru gs worth Rs 29.4 crore and arrested a drug peddler in Mizoram, officials said on Thurs-day.A defence spokesman said that acting on credible Intelligence inputs related to narcotics trafficking, Assam Rifles conducted an operation in the Zemabawk area of Aizawl district on Wednesday afternoon.During the operation, the paramilitary troops intercepted a suspicious vehicle. A swift and thorough search led to the recovery of 9.8 kg of highly addictive meth-amphetamine tablets valued at over Rs 29.4 crore.The drugs were well concealed inside the tyres of the vehicle and were detected with the help of a sniffer dog.Methamphetamine tablets are banned psychotropic substances in India.The seized contraband and the vehicle were handed over to the Nar-cotics Control Bureau (NCB), Aizawl Field Office, for detailed investigation and further legal action under the relevant provisions of the Nar-cotic Drugs and Psychotropic Sub-stances (NDPS) Act, 1985. The drug peddler, identified as Lalrinchhana, a resident of Dawkawn in Aizawl district, was apprehended during the operation. An official statement said that the swift and decisive action by Assam Rifles is a testament to their



steadfast commitment and vigilance in curbing drug trafficking activities. The operation reinforces ongoing collective efforts to protect the youth of Mizoram from the harmful effects of narcotics and to maintain peace and security in the region, the statement added.Meanwhile, earlier this week, in two separate operations, Mizoram Police and other law enforcement agencies seized methamphetamine tablets valued at over Rs 40 crore and arrested five drug peddlers.Of the five arrested, four are residents of southern Assam’s Sribhumi district

(formerly Karimganj). Banned in India, methamphetamine tablets, also known as Yaba or party tablets, contain a mixture of methamphetamine and caffeine and are commonly referred to as the ‘crazy drug’Mizoram shares a 510-km-long unfenced border with Myanmar and a 318-km-long unfenced border with Bangladesh. Myanmar’s Chin state is a major hub for the smuggling of drugs, exotic wildlife and other contraband through six Mizoram districts, Champhai, Si-aha, Lawngtlai, Hnahthial, Saitual and Serchhip.

‘Assam will receive major boost to rail connectivity’: CM Sarma

Aizawl, Jan 15: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday said that Assam is set to receive a significant boost in terms of railway connectivity as the state will get two new Amrit Bharat trains along with the country’s first Vande Bharat sleeper coach trains. Taking to X, CM Sarma wrote, “This weekend, Assam will receive a major boost to its rail connectivity when Bharat’s first Vande Bharat Sleeper train rolls on between Guwahati & Kolkata. 2 New Amrit Bharat trains connecting Lucknow & Rohtak will also be flagged off by Adarniya @narendramodi ji.”Notably, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off the first Vande Bharat Sleeper Express between Guwahati and Kolkata on January 17, marking a major milestone in long-distance overnight rail travel and further strengthening connectivity between the northeast region and eastern India.CM Sarma earlier said that Prime Minister Modi will visit Assam on January 17. During the visit, the Prime Minister will flag off new trains connecting Dibrugarh to Lucknow and Guwahati to Rohtak via Delhi, further integrating Assam with key regions of the country.The Chief Minister had said that during the visit, PM Modi will also witness the traditional Bodo dance ‘Bagurumba’, showcasing Assam’s rich cultural heritage on a national platform. On January 18, the Prime Minister will travel to Kaziranga to lay the foundation stone of the elevated corridor project.Chief Minister Sarma had said that the Prime Minister’s presence underlines the Centre’s commitment to Assam’s development and environmentally sensitive infrastructure. The elevated corridor through Kaziranga has long been one of the Assam government’s flagship initiatives, envisioned to resolve the long-standing conflict between conservation and connectivity.With the Union Cabinet’s recent approval of the project, the elevated corridor is expected to move swiftly into the im-



plementation phase, officials said, calling it a major step towards sustainable development in the state NFR Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO), Kapinjal Kishore Sharma, earlier had said that the new-generation Vande Bharat Sleeper Express will operate with a 16-coach rake, having a total passenger capacity of 823. “The composition includes 11 AC three-tier coaches, four AC two-tier coaches and one First Class AC coach, offering comfortable travel options across different passenger segments,” he added. According to the official, designed with a strong passenger-focused approach, the Vande Bharat Sleeper Express will feature ergonomically designed cushioned berths, advanced suspension systems for superior ride comfort, noise-reduction technology, automatic doors with vestibules and a modern Passenger Information System..

CM Rio brings up a political problem the 70th AKM meeting and calls for an end to “blame culture”

Kohima, Jan 15: Chungtia (Nagaland), January 14, 2026: Nagaland Chief Minister Dr. Neiphiu Rio on January 14 attended the 70th Ao Kaketshir Mungdang (AKM) Conference as the special guest at Chungtia Village, where he paid tribute to the pioneering legacy of the Ao community and addressed key socio-political challenges confronting the state. Chungtia (Nagaland), January 14, 2026: Nagaland Chief Minister Dr. Neiphiu Rio on Tuesday attended the 70th Ao Kaketshir Mungdang (AKM) Conference as the special guest at Chungtia Village, where he paid tribute to the pioneering legacy of the Ao community and addressed key socio-political challenges confronting the state.Speaking under the conference theme, “Strengthening Horizons,” Dr. Rio expressed gratitude to the AKM, Chungtia Village and the Ao community for hosting the landmark event. He recalled the role played by the Ao pioneers in shaping Naga society, noting that their vision extended beyond tribal boundaries and was rooted in the collective progress of all Nagas. Referring to the AKM motto, “For the Nation,” the Chief Minister described it as a farsighted commitment to selfless service. He acknowledged the Ao tribe’s historic contributions to Nagaland’s growth and reaffirmed the state government’s recognition of the community as the “Land of Pioneers.” During his address, Dr. Rio spoke candidly about several pressing challenges facing Naga society, including the unresolved Naga political issue, increasing social fragmentation, and governance concerns related to the Inner Line Permit (ILP), protection of Article 371A, and the utilisation of the state’s mineral resources. He stressed that unity, mutual respect and collective teamwork among all Naga tribes were essential to overcoming these challenges.Outlining steps



taken by the state government, the Chief Minister highlighted initiatives such as the Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN) and the consultative meeting held on September 12, 2024, which brought together key stakeholders to deliberate on the Naga political issue.Call-ing for a departure from a “blame culture,” Dr. Rio urged the resolution of differences through sincere dialogue and discussion. Addressing the youth, he said the legacy left by the forefathers should serve not merely as history to be remembered, but as a responsibility to be carried forward. He concluded by appealing to the younger generation to uphold the values and vision of the founding leaders, ensuring that their ideals continue to guide Nagaland’s path of progress. Nagaland Chief Minister, Dr. Neiphiu Rio attended the 70th Ao Kaketshir Mungdang (AKM) Conference as the Special Guest at Chungtia Village on 14th January 2026. Speaking under the theme “Strengthening Horizons,” the Chief Minister paid tribute to the pioneering spirit of the Ao community and addressed critical socio-political

challenges facing the state. Honoring the Legacy of “Land of Pioneers”, D. Rio expressed deep gratitude to the AKM, Chungtia Village, and the Ao community for hosting the milestone event. He lauded the AKM pioneers, noting that their vision was never limited to a single tribe but was intended for the advancement of all Nagas.Highlighting the AKM motto, “For the Nation,” Dr. Rio described it as a farsighted commitment to selfless service. He acknowledged the Ao tribe’s immense contributions to the state’s growth, reaffirming the government’s recognition of the community as the “Land of Pioneers.”Addressing Key Naga Challenges during the session, the Chief Minister candidly discussed the multifaceted challenges currently facing Naga society, including: The Naga Political Issue: The ongoing quest for a permanent solution; Social Fragmentation: The need to bridge divides within the community; Governance & Resources: Issues surrounding the Inner Line Permit (ILP), untapped mineral resources, and the protection of Article 371A. Rio urged for unity, mutual respect, and collective teamwork among all Naga tribes to overcome these hurdles.On the State Initiatives and the Path Forward, the Chief Minister briefed the gathering on proactive steps taken by the state government, such as the Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN) and the landmark consultative meeting held on September 12, 2024, which brought stakeholders together regarding the Naga Political issue.Emphasizing a shift away from “blame culture,” Dr. Rio called for resolving disputes through sincere dialogue and discussion. He reminded the youth that the history scripted by their forefathers is not just a legacy to be admired, but a “call to action” for the present and future.

Tripura accords top priority to tribal welfare: Manik Saha



Aizawl, Jan 15: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on January 15 said his government has placed the highest priority on the welfare and development of the state’s tribal population, with a significant share of the budgetary allocation being directed towards tribal-centric programmes and infrastructure.Addressing a programme of the Darlong community at Kumarghat in Unakoti district, the Chief Minister said the state government earmarks nearly 40 per cent of its total budget exclusively for tribal welfare. He underlined that this allocation reflects the government’s commitment to inclusive development and social equity for indigenous communities. Providing budgetary details, Saha said Tripura’s revised estimated budget for the 2024–25 fiscal stands at Rs 30,296 crore, of which Rs 17,014 crore remains after meeting fixed expenditures. Around 39 per cent of this amount, he said, has been allocated for the overall development of tribal

communities. He added that in the 2025–26 fiscal, Rs 7,149 crore, accounting for nearly 40 per cent of the total budgetary outlay, will be spent on tribal welfare initiatives. The Chief Minister noted that the state has a population of around 40 lakh, with tribal and sub-tribal communities accounting for nearly 25 lakh people. He said maintaining substantially enhanced budgetary support to the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) has been a key focus of the government, alongside the implementation of several externally funded projects in tribal-dominated regions to improve socio-economic conditions.Highlighting support from the Centre, Saha said the World Bank has provided Rs 1,400 crore for projects aimed at building infrastructure and creating livelihood opportunities for indigenous people in the state. He also pointed to the establishment of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs).

NGT issues notice to CPCB, Assam govt over elephant



Imphal, Jan 15: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has sought responses from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and other authorities regarding the death of seven elephants near Guwahati, which were struck by a Rajdhani Express train in December last year.The tribunal was hearing the matter after taking suo motu cognisance of a newspaper report on the incident. According to the report, the tragic deaths occurred on December 20, 2025, when the Sairang–New Delhi Rajdhani Express collided with a herd of elephants. The impact also led to the derailment of the train’s engine and five coaches on the Jamunamukh–Kampur section under the Lumding division of Northeast Frontier Railway.In its order dated January 5, the NGT observed, “Prima facie, the facts and circumstances emerging from the news item raise substantial questions relating to the environment.” The tribunal has made the CPCB, the Assam government represented by its Special Chief Secretary (Environment), the state’s Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, and the Assam State Pollution Control Board respondents in the case.

Bogibeel Rail-Road Bridge transforms connectivity in Upper Assam, Arunachal

Imphal, Jan 15: The Bogibeel Rail-cum-Road Bridge over the Brahmaputra has emerged as a vital link transforming connectivity and daily life in Upper Assam and neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh.Stretching 4.94 km, the bridge is among the longest river bridges in the country and connects Dibrugarh with Dhemaji, replacing decades of dependence on ferries and seasonal river crossings. The all-weather bridge supports both rail and road traffic, significantly reducing travel time and improving year-round access.Dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the bridge marked a major milestone in modern infrastructure development in the Northeast, a region long challenged by difficult terrain and monsoon disruptions. Residents north of the Brahmaputra now enjoy easier access to Dibrugarh, a key centre for healthcare, education and commerce. The improved connectivity has benefited students, patients, traders and workers, while small businesses and farmers have gained faster access to markets and essential services. The bridge has also strengthened economic activity by supporting tourism, smoother supply chains and increased commercial and industrial movement across Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Areas once considered remote have become better integrated into regional and national economic networks.



Strategically, the Bogibeel Bridge enhances mobility along the eastern frontier, contributing to national security preparedness and disaster response. Its dual-use rail and road

design ensures reliable transport even during adverse weather conditions.More than an engineering achievement, the Bogibeel Bridge stands as a symbol of the Northeast’s ongoing

transformation, fostering regional integration and offering new opportunities for growth and development across Assam and beyond.

Shija Hospitals conducts free mega medical camp



Imphal, Jan 15: Shija Hospitals & Research Institute Pvt. Ltd in collaboration with Chadong New Site Committee organised a one-day free mega medical camp at Chadong New, Kamjong District today, to improve access to quality healthcare for underserved communities. A team of specialists from Dermatology, Gynaecology, Orthopaedics, ENT, General Surgery, General Medicine, and Ophthal-

mology provided free consultations. The camp included blood pressure and blood sugar testing, serving 113 patients with examinations, consultations, and basic diagnostics. Shija Hospitals continues its outreach programs across Manipur to promote preventive healthcare, early diagnosis, and timely intervention, strengthening community connections for better health.

Guwahati Asian Film Festival 2026 to Confer Lifetime Achievement Honour on Veteran Actor Bishnu Kharghoria

Guwahati, Jan 15: The Guwahati Asian Film Festival (GAFF) 2026 will confer its Lifetime Achievement Honour on veteran actor Bishnu Kharghoria (also known as Bishnu Khargharia), in recognition of his extraordinary and enduring contribution to Indian cinema. Instituted as an annual honour, the award celebrates artists whose body of work has significantly shaped cinematic culture and inspired generations.

Announcing the honour, Festival Director Monita Borgohain said, “Bishnu Kharghoria’s contribution to Indian cinema—especially to Assamese films—is profound and timeless. His performances reflect rare integrity, emotional depth, and an unwavering commitment to the craft. We are honoured to celebrate a life dedicated to cinema.”

The second edition of GAFF, organised by Trending Now Me-



dia, with support from the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, will be held

from January 22 to January 25, 2026, at Jyoti Chitraban, Guwahati.

A towering presence in Indian and particularly Assamese cine-

ma, Bishnu Kharghoria is widely regarded as one of the most accomplished actors of his generation. Bishnu Kharghoria began his film career with Bristi in 1974

and went on to build an illustrious career spanning several decades. He delivered numerous memorable performances in landmark films such as Kollol (1978), Firingoti (1992), Xagoroloi Bohudoor (1995), Pokhi (1998), among many others that shaped Assamese and Indian cinema. His exceptional talent has been nationally and internationally recognised- he received the National Film Award (Special Mention) for Xagoroloi Bohudoor in 1995 and again for Baandhon in 2012. In addition, he won the Best Actor Award at the Singapore International Film Festival in 1996 for Xagoroloi Bohudoor, reaffirming his stature as one of India’s most respected veteran actors.

The Lifetime Achievement Honour will be presented during GAFF 2026 as a tribute to Bishnu Kharghoria’s remarkable journey and his invaluable contribution to the evolution of Indian cinema.

Accident

Jorhat, Jan 15: Three people were killed and three others injured after a car ran over them at Bamunpukhuri in Assam’s Jorhat district on Wednesday, police said today. The errant driver of the Scorpio car, Dipak Kumar Gogoi (48), who fled the spot after the accident, was later arrested and a case was registered against him at the Jorhat Sadar Police Station.

According to police, the deceased have been identified as Amit Gogoi, Abhijit Phukan and Pankaj Dutta.

The three injured persons -- identified as Pranjit Gogoi, Manash Jyoti Gogoi, and Sujit Borah -- are currently undergoing treatment at Jorhat Medical College and Hospital.

Kangpokpi DC flags off road safety awareness rally

Imphal, Jan 15: As part of the National Road Safety Month 2026, commenced from today, with the theme “Sadak Suraksha Jeevan Raksha” the Deputy Commissioner Kangpokpi Mahesh Chaudhari flagged off a Road Safety Awareness Rally from the DC Mini Secretariat Complex, Kangpokpi. Speaking on the occasion, the District Transport Officer (DTO) MD Wahidur Rahman emphasized the importance of collective responsibility in ensuring road safety and urged all to strictly adhere to traffic rules to prevent accidents and save lives. Pertinently, the transport department has scheduled series of awareness and enforcement activities across the district like programmes in schools and colleges to educate students about traffic rules, pedestrian safety, and responsible road behaviour. Special intervention includes, zero fatality



solution- Intervention in high risk zones; Safe system workshop - Training for Engineers and stakeholders; Stakeholder engagement - Organising training, eye check-ups camps and advocacy among others. The flagoff ceremony was attended by N Shokhongam Baite, MCS, ADM; Len Singist MCS, SDO, Island; MD Hefajuddin, MCS, SDO Bungte Chiru and Kangchup Geljang; DTO, SDOs, DLOs, among others.

Himanta Biswa Sarma warns traders against exploiting farmers, says paddy must be brought at Rs 2,670 per quintal

Guwahati, Jan 15: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday issued a strong warning to traders and buyers against exploiting farmers during the ongoing paddy procurement season, saying the state government will not tolerate the purchase of paddy below the fixed government rate. In an important announcement, the Chief Minister said the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council is considering a proposal to set up rice mills in each Legislative Autonomous Council area under its jurisdiction. He said this step would help farmers sell their paddy locally without depending heavily on private traders. Speaking to the media in Diphu on January 14, the Chief Minister said the Assam government has fixed the procurement

price of paddy at ₹2,670 per quintal and made it clear that this price is final and non-negotiable. He said any trader, miller or private buyer found purchasing paddy at a lower rate would face strict legal action. Dr. Sarma said the government is keeping a close watch on procurement activities across the state to ensure that farmers get the full price they are entitled to. “Farmers work hard throughout the year. They should not be forced to sell their produce at unfair prices,” he said, adding that the administration has been instructed to act firmly against violations. The Chief Minister criticised middlemen and dishonest traders, saying they often take advantage of farmers who lack direct access to markets or need immediate cash. Such practi-



es, he said, lead to distress sales and losses for cultivators. “This exploitation will not be allowed. The government stands with the farmers,” he said. Reaffirming the government’s pro-farmer approach, Dr. Sarma said protecting the interests of cultivators remains a top priority. He added that clear enforcement mechanisms are already in place and any breach of procurement rules will invite punishment under the law.

Guwahati set to emerge as high-performance sports hub

Guwahati, Jan 15: The Directorate of Sports and Youth Welfare (DSYW), Government of Assam, in partnership with Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS), has announced its plan to build a High-Performance Satellite Sports Centre in Guwahati, marking a major step towards building a structured elite sports ecosystem in the state and the wider North-East.

The centre will anchor high-performance initiatives across seven priority sports, including athletics, archery, taekwondo, table tennis, lawn tennis, chess, swimming, with focused emphasis on athlete identification, coaching development and long-term performance pathways aligned with India’s Olympic ambitions. As part of the rollout, athletics, archery, and taekwondo will be supported in collaboration with the IIS, bringing internationally benchmarked training systems and global technical expertise into Assam’s sporting framework. The programmes are designed to not only identify promising athletes but also build a strong, self-sustaining coaching ecosystem within the state. Speaking on the initiative, Assam Minister of Sports and Youth Welfare Nandita Gorlosa said, “Assam has no shortage of talent, particularly across its rural and tribal regions.

Through this partnership with the Inspire Institute of Sport, we are bringing global coaching expertise and high-performance systems into the state, while strengthening our own infrastructure and outreach. This collaboration creates clear, structured pathways for athletes and coaches to progress to national and international competition, and positions Assam as a high-performance sports hub in the North-East contributing to India’s Olympic journey.” The athletics programme will begin with a structured Assam State Coaches Orientation and Development initiative, combining on-ground and hybrid learning formats to upskill district-level coaches under internationally recognised World Athletics frameworks, supported by senior IIS experts. This will be followed by a focused talent identification programme aimed at identifying and developing young athletic talent across the state. Taekwondo and archery programmes at the Guwahati centre will further strengthen Assam’s high-performance ecosystem, with talent identification camps and advanced masterclasses bringing together athletes and coaches from across the North-East under global and Olympic-level expertise. While taekwondo is expected to po-

sition Assam as a regional combat sports hub with clear pathways into national high-performance systems, the archery programme will place strong emphasis on identifying and nurturing young talent, particularly among girls from tribal and rural communities, supporting both inclusion and long-term medal potential. Manisha Malhotra, president, Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS), said, “At the Inspire Institute of Sport, our focus is on advancing excellence through structured, high-performance systems. In collaboration with DSYW Assam, we are bringing Olympic-level coaching expertise, cutting-edge sports science, and proven development frameworks into the state. This satellite centre is designed to raise standards across athletes and coaches, create clear pathways to elite performance, and build a sustainable pipeline rooted in Assam’s talent while aligned with global best practices.” With programmes being implemented across Guwahati and other locations in Assam over the coming months, the satellite centre is expected to play a pivotal role in elevating the state’s sporting identity, strengthening regional talent pipelines, and contributing meaningfully to India’s Olympic future.

DLO meeting held ahead of 77th Republic Day

Imphal, Jan 15: The District Administration Senapati, along with District Level Officers (DLOs) convened a preparatory meeting on the upcoming 77th Republic Day celebrations at the Conference Hall of Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Senapati. The meeting was chaired by Mamoni Doley, IAS, Deputy Commissioner of Senapati and discussions were made together with the work allocations assigned to several DLOs for the success of the celebrations. In preparation of the celebration, the District Administration of Senapati will be conducting a cleanliness drive on January 21. The DC urged the DLOs to take the assigned work with full honor and give co-operation for grand success of the programme. Following, the DC also chaired another meeting regarding the observation of National Road Safety Month 2026 in the district. During the meeting, Joseph Sangkhil, District Transport Officer, Senapati apprised the member on the past activities and sought for more co-operation during sensitization of the programme.

Rio calls for unity and purpose at 70th AKM conference in Chungtia



Kohima, Jan 15: Nagaland Chief Minister Dr. Neiphiu Rio on Wednesday attended the 70th conference of the Ao Kaketshir Mungdang (AKM) as the special guest at Chungtia Village, where he paid tribute to the long and pioneering role of the Ao community and spoke openly about the challenges facing Nagaland today. Addressing the gathering under the theme “Strengthening Horizons,” the Chief Minister thanked the AKM, the people of Chungtia Village, and the Ao community for hosting the milestone event. He recalled how Ao pioneers played a key role in shaping Naga society, saying their vision was not limited to one tribe but was aimed at the overall growth and welfare of all Nagas. Referring to the AKM motto, “For the Nation,” Dr. Rio described it as a message rooted in service and sacrifice.

He said the Ao tribe’s contribution to education, leadership, and social development has left a lasting impact on Nagaland’s journey. The state government, he added, continues to recognise the Ao areas as the “Land of Pioneers” in acknowledgment of this legacy.

The Chief Minister then spoke frankly about several issues confronting Naga society. These included the unresolved Naga political issue, growing divisions within society, and governance-related concerns such as the Inner Line Permit system, protection of special constitutional provisions, and responsible use of the state’s mineral resources. He stressed that these challenges cannot be addressed by one group alone and called for unity, mutual respect, and teamwork among all Naga tribes. Highlighting steps taken by the state government, Dr. Rio mentioned initiatives like the Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland and the consultative meeting held on September 12, 2024, where various stakeholders came together to discuss the political issue and related concerns. He urged people to move away from a culture of blame and instead resolve differences through honest dialogue and discussion. Addressing the youth in particular, the Chief Minister said the legacy of the forefathers should not remain only in history books but must be carried forward through responsible action.

Manipur Govt Says IDP Resettlement a Phased Process, Not Deadline-Driven

Imphal, Jan 15: The Manipur government has officially reiterated that the rehabilitation and resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) remains its most urgent humanitarian priority. However, in a recent communication, the state clarified that the transition from relief camps to permanent residences cannot be treated as a rigid, deadline-driven exercise. In a formal letter issued by the Home Department and addressed to IDP representatives at Lamboikhong-nangkhong, Uripok, and the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (CO-



COMI), the government explained that the timeline for resettlement is contingent upon a complex set of ground realities. The state identified several critical factors that dictate the pace of the process, including: Security Stability: Ensuring that areas are safe from active conflict before families return. Site Readiness: The physical preparation

of land and the installation of essential infrastructure. Financial Flow: The consistent release and allocation of central and state funds. Environmental Obstacles: Adapting construction schedules to unpredictable climatic conditions. Feasibility: Ensuring that displaced persons have access to sustainable employment or agriculture upon arrival. The government underscored that while the desire to return citizens to their original habitations is absolute, enforcing a “one-size-fits-all” deadline would be counterproductive and potentially unsafe.

Tripura puts tribal welfare at the centre of governance: CM Manik Saha

Agartala, Jan 15: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on January 15 said that his government has placed tribal welfare and development at the very centre of its policies, with a large share of the state budget being spent on programmes meant for indigenous communities. Speaking at a programme organised by the Darlong community in Kumarghat, under Unakoti district, the Chief Minister said nearly 40 per cent of Tripura’s total budget is set aside exclusively for tribal welfare.

He said this clearly shows the government’s strong commitment to inclusive growth and equal development for all sections of society.



Saha shared details of the state’s finances, stating that the revised estimated budget for the 2024–25 financial year stands at Rs 30,296 crore. After fixed expenditures, Rs 17,014 crore remains, of which about 39 per cent has been allocated for the development of trib-

al communities. For the 2025–26 financial year, he said Rs 7,149 crore — close to 40 per cent of the total budget — has been earmarked for tribal-focused schemes. The Chief Minister noted that Tripura has a population of around 40 lakh, with nearly 25 lakh people be-

longing to tribal and sub-tribal communities. He said special attention has been given to strengthening the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council, with increased budgetary support and development projects aimed at improving living standards in tribal areas. Highlighting assistance from the Centre, Saha said the World Bank has extended Rs 1,400 crore for projects focused on infrastructure development and livelihood creation in tribal regions.

He also spoke about the importance of education and said the setting up of Eklavya Model Residential Schools is helping tribal students access quality schooling.

In Trump’s America, opposition may be lethal, as seen by the shooting of Renee Good; all bets are off

Afew years ago, towards the end of the second Obama administration, a friend and her wife flew back to New York from a holiday in Mexico, landing for a connecting flight in South Carolina. At immigration, the officer looked from one to the other, asked their relation to one another and on receiving the reply, made a noise of disgust – “ugh”. On the pretext that American citizens can’t go through the same lane as a spouse on a green card (not true), he sent them to the back of the line, causing them to miss their connection. But that’s not the point of the story.

My friend is a white Australian who is generally conflict-averse; her wife is a Japanese-American who can stop traffic with a single, hard stare, and who teaches in the South Bronx,

where many of her students have been harassed by law enforcement since the day they were born. As trouble got under way, my friend kicked off like a good’un, swearing and muttering sarcastically in the Australian style, while her wife shot her desperate, angry looks. Shut up. Shut Up. SHUT UP.

I have been thinking about this incident a lot since the death last week of Renee Good, the Minnesota woman fatally shot by an ICE agent. The use of deadly force was justified on grounds of self-defence, according to the US administration. That explanation doesn’t appear to be borne out by the videos, but the thing I also keep thinking about is the way in which, immediately prior to the shots being fired, Good and her wife, Becca, addressed the agent. “You wanna come

at us?” says Becca, in the agent’s general direction. “I say go get yourself some lunch, big boy.” When the officer approaches Good’s open car window, she smiles, addresses him as “dude” and says mockingly: “I’m not mad at you.”

It goes without saying that in a healthy democracy, mouthing off at authority shouldn’t constitute putting oneself in mortal danger; sarcasm is my stress response, too. But this assumes that civic norms apply. This is the US, where even in normal times use of deadly force by cops isn’t an infrequent occurrence – a conservative estimate by the University of Illinois puts the average number of people killed annually by US law enforcement at 600. We may not yet have all the facts surrounding what motivated

the ICE agent to use deadly force, but on the evidence of the videos alone, it seems to me apparent that both Good and her wife made a single, terrible, understandable miscalculation: they underestimated the danger they were in.

Some commentary on the right has suggested that the jocular tone adopted by the women is an indication of their political glibness; that they were somehow “playing” at protest. I don’t think this is true. It did, however, suggest a sheltered understanding of the country they’re living in, and one that isn’t unique to their side. The invasion of the US Capitol on January 6 by crowds, some dressed for a costume party, resulted in the death of Ashli Babbitt, the Maga martyr who was shot and killed by police. Participat-

ing in a violent mob invading the seat of government isn’t the same thing as driving away from law enforcement. But in both cases, apparently deeply felt political convictions were expressed with a levity – a larky tone of protest – premised on assumptions of safety.It’s a devastating misapprehension. A few years after my friend’s trouble in South Carolina, I was pulled out of the passport line at JFK airport and made to sit in a side room for questioning. My indignation was total. I swore, I carried on. As my two toddlers screamed, I felt the phrase “I’m a British citizen!” bubble up through my system like a character from a Paul Scott novel. After three hours with no toilet or phone access, I was released to go home, whereupon I relayed the story to my partner at the time as if re-

turning from war, a conquering hero.

She looked at me coldly. “You’re a fucking idiot,” she said, when I told her how rude I’d been. “What if they’d asked you where the girls’ father is? And why aren’t you travelling with their birth certificates?” I couldn’t believe that I was getting grief off this person who has never met a cab driver she couldn’t start a fight with – but then, her antecedents were murdered by Nazis. She understands a real threat when she sees it. Nothing should take away from Good’s courage or convictions. But there are lessons to be learned: a system that puts paramilitaries on US streets to round people up willy-nilly should be approached by those protesting with the understanding that there is nothing – nothing – it won’t do to shut them up.

The western order we once knew is history, regardless of whether Trump invades Greenland

Donald Trump is threatening to take over Greenland, the territory of a Nato ally, possibly by military force, as Vladimir Putin is trying to take over Ukraine. Even if he doesn’t actually do it, this is a new era: a post-western world of illiberal international disorder.The task now for liberal democracies in general, and Europe in particular, is twofold: to see this world as it is and to work out what the hell we’re going to do about it.A global public opinion poll published today is a useful starting point. It was conducted last November in 21 countries for the European Council on Foreign Relations, in partnership with our Europe in a Changing World research project at the University of Oxford (and do please read the full report, which I have written with Ivan Krastev and Mark Leonard). This is the fourth in a series of polls we’ve done every year since Putin’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, so we can see how things have evolved from very bad then to critical now.Back in 2022, we found a transatlantic west united in outrage at the full-scale invasion of Ukraine but divided from other great and middle powers, such as China, India and Turkey, who were quite happy to go on doing business as usual with Russia. The Russian economy was surviving unprecedented western sanctions because those other states now had sufficient wealth and power between them to counterbalance even a united west. So this was already a post-western world, but still with a west acting in it.Trump 2.0 has changed all that. Now we have a post-western world, but with no coherent geopolitical west acting in it. To the extent that any strategic coherence should be attributed to the erratic narcissism of Trump, his approach is closer

to that of Putin than it is to that of any US president since 1945. As his right-hand man Stephen Miller frankly explains, they believe the world is “governed by strength ... by force ... by power”.Europeans have understood this. Astonishingly, less than one in five continental Europeans (taking an average of the 10 EU countries we surveyed) and just one in four Britons now see the US as an ally. In Ukraine, the figure is down to 18%. We Europeans do still see the US as “a necessary partner”, but not as an ally. The rest of the world is also waking up to this. While in our first poll, 60% of Chinese respondents saw American and European approaches as the same or similar (ie there’s a single west), now just 43% say that, while a clear majority thinks they are different. As of now, the west is history.So what should we do about it? The worst thing we could do is to go on bleating about the lost “rules-based international system”, making selective invocations of international law (Ukraine but not Gaza) while continuing the sycophantic appeasement of Trump. At the same time, we obviously don’t want to behave like him or Putin.What we need is a new internationalism: faster, more flexible, harder-edged. Reject the use of force but embrace the use of power. Don’t fixate on existing structures and alliances but seek a wider range of partners, pragmatically, from issue to issue. Worry less about rules, more about results; less process, more progress. This is a challenge particularly to the institutional EU, the ultimate slow-moving, rules-based, process-heavy instantiation of 1990s-style liberal international order.Yet we are already beginning to do it for Ukraine, with the novel combination of a coalition of the willing and the EU itself

moving at what, for Brussels, is warp speed. As I argued last month, we should urgently prepare to sustain an independent Ukraine even without US support.What about Greenland? First, we should be guided in everything we do by the elected governments of Greenland and Denmark. That, after all, is what distinguishes liberal democrats from authoritarian imperialists.On Wednesday, Denmark and some of its European Nato allies announced the sending of further troops to Greenland. The foreign ministers of Greenland and Denmark then met in Washington with the vice-president, JD Vance, and the secretary of state, Marco Rubio, and agreed to set up a high-level working group. It’s quite clear the fundamental disagreement has not been resolved. All the signs are that Trump is going to get more extreme and unpredictable as time goes by and his domestic difficulties increase.So here are a few suggestions. To highlight the European commitment, German chancellor Friedrich Merz, French president Emmanuel Macron and British prime minister Keir Starmer should visit Greenland, along with Danish prime minister Mette Frederiksen. They should be joined by Canadian prime minister Mark Carney, since Canada is the Nato ally that is Greenland’s actual western neighbour and directly impacted by Arctic insecurity.If they can take a train to Kyiv, they can take a plane to Nuuk. Oddly enough, this visit may be as important as the substance of the security commitment, for President Trump’s second language is television. He’ll get the message from the pictures. A number of highly visible, vividly uniformed European and Canadian liaison officers should be stationed in Greenland for the foreseeable future. On Tuesday, Greenland’s

Bangladesh needs institutional repair, not tougher policing

People are increasingly weary and frustrated with the pace of improvement in law and order. This is reasonable given the little visible remission in nationwide crime, with gun shootings, knife killings, beatings with sticks and rods, street clashes, and mob attacks continuing to punctuate public life. As a result, the interim government is being branded weak, incompetent, and indifferent, accused of lacking clues about how to reverse the situation. But weak or incompetent compared to whom? And measured against which standard of “order”? To demand a restoration of law and order requires an honest analytical starting point: restore it to what period, exactly? This question is almost never asked, yet it is an important gateway to understanding the present crisis. It bears recalling that the violence of knives, guns, and organised street terror also existed throughout the 15-and-a-half-year rule of Sheikh Hasina, but for the large part it took quite a different institutional form compared to what Bangladesh is witnessing now. This distinction matters because it explains why today’s violence feels chaotic, retaliatory, and socially diffused rather than centrally controlled. During the klepto-fascist phase of Hasina’s governance, violence was not an accidental failure of law and order—it was an instrument of rule. For more than a decade, coercion replaced political competition. Opposition parties were systematically suppressed, journalists intimidated, and dissent criminalised. Enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings were not aberrations but rather signals carefully calibrated to instil fearwithout provoking decisive international rupture. At the grassroots level, ruling party activists and student wings functioned as informal enforcers, using knives, rods, and machetes not randomly, but rather selectively—to silence opponents and control tenders, campuses, and neighbourhoods. That era produced suppressed violence, not peace. Crime statistics appeared manageable because fear discouraged reporting, and streets looked calm because dissent had been crushed, not resolved. The state monopolised violence but delegated its execution to party-aligned actors, creating a system in which brutality was rewarded with pro-

tection. Justice did not fail accidentally; it was deliberately suspended for loyal perpetrators. What Bangladesh is experiencing now is the “leakage” of that violence from the state back into society. Today’s violence is decentralised and retaliatory—anger released after years of humiliation, suppression, and forced silence. This is a classic post-authoritarian pattern: when fear collapses faster than institutions can be rebuilt, the muscle memory of violence remains. Klepto-fascism reprogrammes social behaviour, teaching citizens that law is irrelevant and that survival requires aggression. When such a system ends, society does not instantly revert to civic norms; it suffers the withdrawal symptoms of a long coercive regime. This is why framing current violence simply as the result of a “law and order failure” is analytically shallow. While current law enforcement has undoubtedly left a lot to be desired, we must acknowledge that what Bangladesh is dealing with are the aftershocks of a long coercive regime, compounded by a persistent security vacuum. The interim government did not inherit a neutral administrative machine, but a hollowed-out shell. The police force, civil service, and security apparatus were shaped by years of loyalty-based internal politics, partisan capture, and unaccountability. No country can purge its entire bureaucracy in such a short time, nor can law enforcement alone fix the current security situation, as the damage is institutional and psychological, not merely criminal. Even in countries with the most elaborate legal frameworks and the largest concentrations of law enforcement personnel, violence has proven stubbornly resistant to elimination. The US offers a sobering benchmark. There is no dearth of laws against violence, nor any shortage of police forces, courts, or prisons. Yet, shootings continue in schools, churches, marketplaces, and other public spaces with grim regularity, and the number of children killed or traumatised by such violence is staggering. This persistence demonstrates a hard structural truth: violence is not eradicated simply by writing more laws or deploying more enforcers. It is rooted in deeper social conditions—alienation, despair, institutional legitimacy, and economic exclusion—that policing

alone cannot neutralise. International experience points towards a different architecture for stability. Societies that experience low levels of everyday violence—such as the Nordic countries, Canada or New Zealand—are not peaceful because their citizens are inherently more virtuous or their police more brutal. They are peaceful because their economic and institutional systems prevent despair from becoming the dominant condition of youth. When people believe tomorrow will be better than today, violence loses its appeal long before police intervention becomes necessary. Bangladesh requires a three-fold structural transformation that addresses the root of the disease rather than just the symptoms. First, the government must prioritise the restoration of institutional trust by replacing the legacy of partisan street enforcers with visible, neutral community policing. This is the essential transition from rule by force to rule of law, where the uniform once again represents state protection rather than party whim. Parallel to this, the state must treat youth employment as a national security priority. For more than 15 years, political muscle was a viable career path for a certain section of the youth; that path must now be replaced by immediate, large-scale vocational fast-tracks. By transforming idle energy into economic capital, the government can reintegrate marginalised young men into the productive fabric of the nation. Finally, the cycle of retaliatory violence can only be broken through the administration of non-selective, credible justice. Payback violence must be met with swift, transparent legal consequences for all perpetrators, regardless of their current or former political alignment. Only when citizens see the courtroom as more effective than the street will the demand for mob justice subside.Ultimately, restoring law and order does not mean restoring the past. It means dismantling a legacy of fear and replacing it with institutions that citizens trust and opportunities that young people can see. Idle, politicised young men cannot be policed into peace; they must be reintegrated into productive economic life. Law can suppress symptoms, but only dignity, opportunity, and legitimacy can cure the disease.

Legislators, not dealmakers, are what Bangladesh needs

A total of 3,407 aspirants collected nomination papers for the 13th national election and July Charter referendum, of which 2,582 candidates submitted their nominations to contend for 300 parliamentary seats. This election marks the first national event following the mass uprising that abolished the previous regime. As the country enters a season filled with promises, posters, processions, and political negotiations, ordinary citizens typically view elections as a beacon of hope. However, many experience disenchantment, realizing that little changes post-election. This disillusionment stems from a stark reality: politics in Bangladesh has shifted from a service-oriented endeavor to a commercial enterprise. As a political career has become highly profitable and full of material rewards, more and more people are drawn to it, and new parties continue to emerge. In healthy democracies, politics is about serving citizens.

Members of parliament are elected to make laws, represent people, and hold the government accountable. In Bangladesh, however,

many MPs have been historically more involved in financial and executive matters than in lawmaking. They influence which development projects are approved, who receives government contracts, and who is appointed to key local posts. Tenders, land deals, and public works often move forward not on merit, but on political connections. As a result, an MP seat has become one of the most attractive business opportunities in the country. In Bangladesh’s 54-year political history, many candidates have entered parliament with modest assets, only to leave office with vast wealth, multiple properties and business interests. Studies by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) have shown that a large number of MPs report sharp increases in wealth during their time in office, often without clear or believable sources of income. Over the years, newspapers have routinely reported how MPs act as informal authorities over procurement committees, land allocation and even local policing decisions. This mixing of political power with financial control has turned parliamen-

tary seats into high-return investments.

The problem begins even before election day. Election campaigns are extremely expensive, far beyond legal limits. Candidates borrow heavily, invest their own funds, or depend on wealthy backers. Once elected, they feel pressure to recover their investment by using access to public resources. Development projects, instead of being chosen based on need or technical value, become tools for making money. Bureaucrats, contractors and local power brokers become part of this system, creating a cycle where corruption becomes normal. As the next election approaches, if the deep link between politics and money stays firmly in place, it will have serious consequences. MPs who benefit from government contracts cannot properly question ministers. Parliamentary sessions become weak, poorly attended and unproductive. Laws are passed with little debate, while real decisions are made outside parliament. At the same time, local government institutions remain weak because MPs dominate roles that should belong to elected

local bodies and professional administrators.

If Bangladesh is serious about change, reform must begin by redefining the role of MPs, who should have no authority over development projects, tenders, recruitment or administrative postings. Their responsibility should be limited to making laws, reviewing policies, debating the budget, and holding the government accountable. Local development should be handled by strong and transparent local governments that answer to citizens.

Political financing also needs urgent reform. Without controlling election spending, corruption cannot be reduced. There must be realistic spending limits, full disclosure of campaign funds, independent audits, and strict punishment for violations. The Election Commission must enforce such laws. An election that is expensive by nature will always produce leaders who see politics as an investment.Asset declaration is another critical issue. Candidates and MPs already submit wealth statements, but those are rarely well-checked. Asset declarations should be

independently verified both before and after a term in office. Any sudden or unexplained increase in wealth should automatically trigger an investigation. The privileges linked to political office also need review. MPs receive cars, allowances, housing and pensions that are far removed from the lives of ordinary citizens. At a time when people struggle with rising prices, unemployment and poor public services, such benefits send the wrong message. Politics should not promise comfort. It should demand sacrifice and responsibility.Making politics unprofitable will not be easy. Those who benefit from the current system will strongly resist change. But the cost of inaction is far greater. Inequality will deepen, institutions will weaken further, and public trust will collapse. This election gives Bangladesh a chance to reflect and reset. If we are serious about fighting corruption and restoring trust in democratic institutions, we must remove money from politics and politicians from money. Only then can the parliament reclaim its rightful role as the guardian of people’s interests.

Infosys Q3 results: ADR up 10%; share price targets post FY26 guidance revision

Mumbai: Infosys Ltd reported a strong set of third quarter results that triggered over 10 per cent rally in its American Depository Receipts (ADRs) in overnight trade. Analysts said early signals of discretionary demand are visible in its guidance upgrade and commentary. They retained their ‘Buy’ call on the IT major. Shubham Rathore, Principal Analyst at Gartner said Infosys’s Q3 results met expectations, delivering \$5.1 billion in revenue, a stable operating margin of 18.4 per cent, and impressive large deal wins of \$4.8 billion. Key take-aways, he said, included the company’s continued focus on AI and digital transformation, robust free cash flow, and a strong pipeline of new business. “Gartner’s latest outlook shows enterprise IT and AI spending accelerating, with infrastructure and software integration at the forefront. Infosys’s strategic investments in AI platforms, talent, and client partnerships position it well to deliver sustained value and help clients achieve their transformation goals in a rapidly changing market,” Rathore said. Nuvama said Infosys



has now delivered two consecutive quarters of solid deal-wins and growth, which provide high growth visibility for coming quarters. “FY27 growth will now depend on how Q4 turns out to be – hopefully leaving the company with a better exit-rate than last two years. We maintain FY26E/27E EPS and roll forward valuation to 23x FY28 PE. Retain ‘BUY’ with a target price of

Rs 1,900 (earlier Rs 1,800),” it said. Infosys’ revenue grew 0.6 per cent in constant currency (CC) terms sequentially, beating Street’s estimate of 0.3 per cent CC QoQ. Adjusted EBIT margin at 21.2 per cent, yo 20 bps QoQ was in line with estimates. The management upgraded FY26 revenue growth guidance to 3-3.5 per cent from 2-3 per cent. TCV too was strong at \$4.8 billion,

Nuvama said. MOFSL said a potential loss of business from Daimler could present a 1.5 per cent revenue headwind over FY27-28E. The management, it said, has indicated that the contract remains in place until December 2026. It assumed a ramp-down after that. “We slightly raise our FY26/27/28 EPS estimates by 2.2 per cent/1.8 per cent/1.2 per cent. Infosys is well-placed to benefit from enterprise-wide AI spending, given its discretionary-heavy mix. At the current valuations, upside risks meaningfully outweigh downside risks. We value Infosys at 26 times FY28E EPS with a target price of Rs 2,200, implying a 37 per cent upside potential. Reiterate BUY rating,” MOFSL said. In overnight trade, Infosys ADRs jumped 10.45 per cent to \$19.35 on NYSE. Stock market are closed today on account of MCGM Election day. Infosys’ revenue grew 0.6 per cent in constant currency (CC) terms sequentially, beating Street’s estimate of 0.3 per cent CC QoQ. Adjusted EBIT margin at 21.2 per cent, yo 20 bps QoQ was in line with estimates. The management upgraded FY26

IPO on the cards for Coca Cola’s India arm Hindustan Coca-Cola



Mumbai: Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB), Coca-Cola’s largest bottling partner in India, and responsible for making and selling Coca-Cola’s beverages, has said that it is currently focussed on strengthening marketplace execution and consumer value and dismissed media reports around a potential initial public offering any time soon, “We are focused on strengthening marketplace execution with a strong commitment to our consumers. We have been passing on the benefits of the new GST-led pricing to ensure better value and more affordable choices to consumers. With a re-aligned leadership team in place, we remain focused on driving operational excellence to enhance the overall consumer experience. Any other news is speculative,” an HCCB spokesperson said in response to a note seeking clarification on reports on IPO plans to financialexpress.com. “An IPO is not something that is on the table for this summer, or anytime soon,” an industry official further added to financialexpress.com. The statement comes against the backdrop of a sharp reset underway in Coca-Cola’s bottling operations in India. The Atlanta-headquartered beverage major sells concentrate to its bottling partners, and in India operates through HCCB as well as multiple independent franchise bottlers, with volumes more or less evenly split between the

two. HCCB reported consolidated revenue of Rs 12,751.29 crore in FY25, down 9% year-on-year from Rs 14,021.55 crore in FY24, as per HBL. Consolidated net profit fell sharply by 73% to Rs 756.64 crore in FY25 from Rs 2,808.31 crore a year earlier, as per the filing. The company attributed the decline largely to the sale of manufacturing plants to existing franchise bottling partners across several territories, including Rajasthan, Bihar, the North-East and parts of West Bengal. These assets were transferred to three of its largest bottlers, Moon Beverages, Kandhari Global Beverages and SLMG Beverages, under Coca-Cola’s global refranchising strategy.

Last year. The Coca-Cola Company said it had completed the sale of a 40% stake in Hindustan Coca-Cola Holdings, the parent of HCCB, to Jubilant Bhartia Group in July, further advancing this strategy, according to a report by The Hindu BusinessLine.

YES Bank Q3 results check previews, target prices

Mumbai: YES Bank is set to announce its quarterly earnings for the quarter and nine-month ended on December 31, 2025 on Saturday, January 17. The private lender will also host a conference call with analysts’ and investors on the same day from 2.45 pm onwards to discuss the financial years. YES Bank Ltd shares settled at Rs 22.95 on Wednesday, rising 0.70 per cent for the day. The total market capitalization of the lender stood close to Rs 72,000 crore. The stock has gained nearly 7 per cent in 2026 so far, while it is up 12 per cent in the last six months. The lender is up 28 per cent in the last one year.

Brokerage firms tracking the stock believe are expecting a high single-digit growth in net interest income (NII), with largely stable net interest margins (NIMs) with some volatility, and a mixed profit trend, with net profit seen ranging from flat to strong YoY growth but uneven sequential performance. Analysts tracking the stock foresee a steady traction on recovery and upgrades from this quarter from the retail portfolio. The earnings impact is difficult to forecast, given the nature of provisioning policy. They believe that the focus is shifting towards rebuilding the business. Kotak Institutional Equities is expecting NIIs to come in at Rs 2,425.4 crore, up 9.1 per cent YoY and 5.4 per cent QoQ. Pre-provisioning operating profit is seen at Rs 1,254 crore, up 16.2 per cent YoY but down 3.3 per cent QoQ, with NIMs rising slightly to 2.9 per cent. Net profit may come in at Rs 601.5 crore. down 1.8 per cent YoY and 8.1 per cent sequentially. ICICI Securities is pencilling YES Bank’s net interest income (NIIs) to come in at Rs 2,429.7 crore, up 5.6 per cent QoQ and 9.3 per cent YoY. Pre-provisioning operating profit (PPoP) may come in at Rs 1,345.5 crore, up 3.8 per cent QoQ and 24.7 per cent YoY. Its net profit may come in at Rs 776.6 crore, up 18.7 per cent

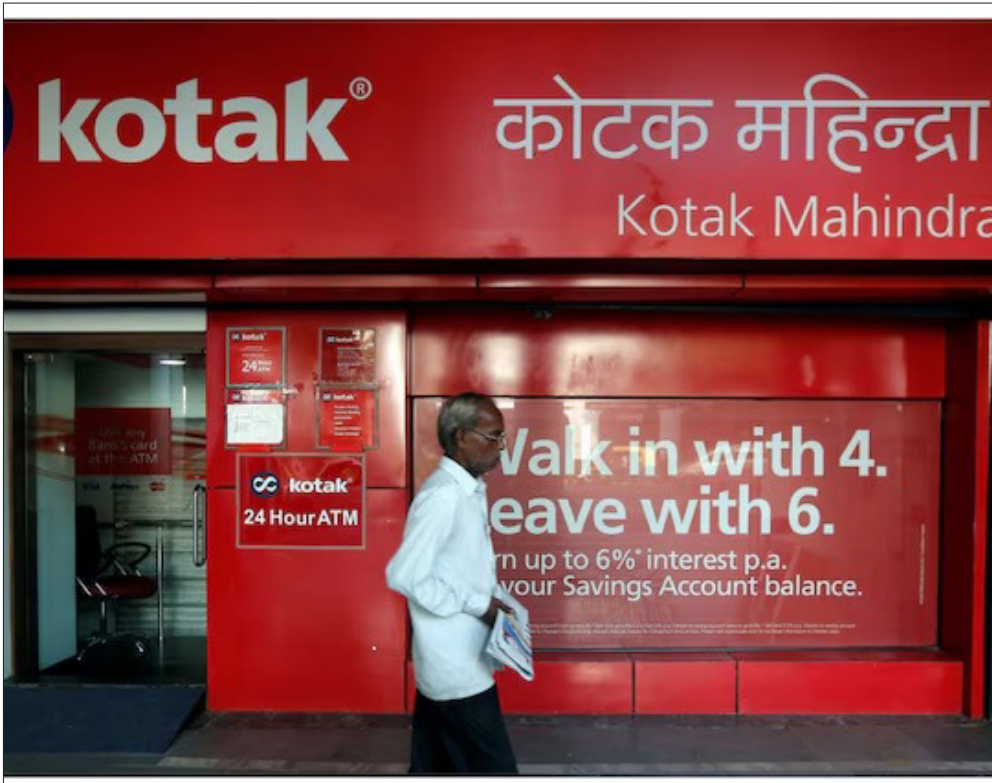
QoQ and 26.8 per cent YoY. ICICI Securities envisages a relatively soft performance from YES Bank in Q3FY26 and it does not feature in its top picks from mid and small private banks. YES Bank has cut its savings rate and ICICI Securities is estimating NIM to be broadly stable QoQ, with some support from CRR cut, but may see a marginal uptick in credit cost. On the other hand, ICICI Securities has given YES Bank a ‘hold’ rating with a target price of Rs 20 apiece. Kotak Institutional Equities and JM Financial, both have a ‘sell’ rating on YES Bank with a target price of Rs 18 and Rs 19 respectively. JM Financial is expecting YES Bank’s NIIs to rise 11.8 per cent YoY and 8.1 per cent QoQ to Rs 2,486.4 crore, while its PPoP is penciled at Rs 1,403.1 crore, up 30 per cent YoY and 8.2 per cent QoQ. Net profit may come in at Rs 775 crore, up 26.6 per cent YoY and 18.4 per cent QoQ. “We expect 9 per cent YoY NII growth espite slower loan growth. The bank is=bit more cautious in select segments of the retail portfolio. Deposit growth is slower at 5 per cent YoY. We expect NIM at 2.9 per cent but there is likely to be a lot of volatility, given the nature of income booked when security receipts mature and impact of RIDF investments, said Kotak. Recently, Pre-provisioning operating profit is seen at Rs 1,254 crore, up 16.2 per cent YoY but down 3.3 per cent QoQ, with NIMs rising slightly to 2.9 per cent. Net profit may come in at Rs 601.5 crore

Ventura Securities initiated coverage on YES Bank with a target price of Rs 32.1 apiece citing it as an early-cycle compounding opportunity, where improving return ratios, restored stakeholder confidence and operating leverage form the core pillars of the investment thesis. YES Bank is set to announce its quarterly earnings for the quarter and nine-month ended on December 31, 2025 on Saturday, January 17.

Are shares of Kotak Mahindra Bank down 80% This is the cause

New Delhi: Kotak Mahindra Bank shares down 80%? THIS is the reason

Kotak Mahindra Bank share price: The fall was purely technical, as the stock traded ex-split following the lender’s 5:1 stock split. As a result, the share price adjusted lower to reflect he increased number of shares. Kotak Mahindra Bank shares down 80%? THIS is the reason Kotak Mahindra Bank shares down 80%? THIS is the reason Kotak Mahindra Bank shares saw a sharp fall of over 80 per cent in early trade on Wednesday, hitting a day’s low of Rs 425.05 on the BSE. The steep decline, however, was not linked to any deterioration in the bank’s business or financial performance. The fall was purely technical, as the stock traded ex-split following the lender’s 5:1 stock split. As a result, the share price adjusted lower to reflect the increased number of shares. Kotak Mahindra Bank shares turned ex-split in the ratio of 1:5, meaning one existing share was subdivided into five shares. On the NSE, the stock opened at around Rs 426 per share, compared with its previous close of Rs 2,132.60. On the BSE, the shares opened at Rs 425.05 and slipped as much as 0.72 per cent to an intraday low of Rs 422. The bank’s board had approved the stock split in November last year. Under the proposal, one equity share with a face value of Rs 5 was split into five equity shares with a face value of Rs 1 each. A 1:5 stock split increases the number of shares in circulation and lowers the share price proportionately. However, the overall investment value and shareholder ownership remain unchanged, as the adjustment is only mathematical. This is not the first time Kotak Mahindra Bank has undertaken a stock split. The lender last split its shares in 2015, when it carried out a 2:1 subdivision. n its business update for the quarter ended December 31, 2025, Kotak Mahindra Bank reported steady growth in both advances and deposits. Net advances rose 16 per cent year-on-year to s 4.80 lakh crore in Q3 FY26, compared with Rs 4.13 lakh crore in the year-ago period. On a sequential basis, advances grew 3.8 per cent. Average net advances increased 16.2 per cent year-on-year to Rs 4.65 lakh crore and rose 4 per cent quar-



ter-on-quarter. Total deposits stood at Rs 5.42 lakh crore in Q3 FY26, up 14.6 per cent from Rs 4.73 lakh crore a year earlier. On a quarter-on-quarter basis, deposits grew 2.6 per cent. Kotak Mahindra Bank shares appeared to fall 80% not due to poor performance, but because of a technical adjustment from its recent 1:5 stock split, where one old share became five new, cheaper shares, making the price look drastically lower while total investment value remained the same. This split enhances liquidity and affordability for retail investors, but the initial steep drop was an optical effect from the price adjusting from over ₹2,100 to around ₹420, with the bank’s fundamentals remaining strong. Stock Split: The bank subdivided its equity shares from a face value of ₹5 into five shares of ₹1 each. Technical

Adjustment: When this split became effective (ex-split), the market price adjusted downwards proportionately (e.g., from ~₹2,100 to ~₹420). Optical Illusion: For investors, the total value of their holding didn’t change; they just held more shares at a lower price. Kotak Mahindra Bank shares appeared to fall 80% not due to poor performance, but because of a technical adjustment from its recent 1:5 stock split, where one old share became five new, cheaper shares, making the price look drastically lower while total investment value remained the same. This split enhances liquidity and affordability for retail investors, but the initial steep drop was an optical effect from the price adjusting from over ₹2,100 to around ₹420, with the bank’s fundamentals remaining strong.

Move over HAL, Mazagon Dock: Nuvama’s top 3 defence ‘Execution Stars’

Mumbai: The Indian defence industry is moving into a critical phase where the ability to deliver on existing orders will determine which stocks succeed. Nuvama Institutional Equities observes that with nearly Rs 9 lakh crore in approvals granted over the last three years, the focus is now shifting from simply getting orders to executing them on time. The firm notes that many companies now hold order backlogs worth three to five times their annual sales. In this environment, Nuvama Institutional Equities prefers companies involved in defence electronics and subsystems because these areas often see faster work cycles and better profit margins compared to large aircraft or missile integrators. Nuvama on Bharat Electronics: ‘Buy’

Nuvama Institutional Equities has set a target price of Rs 365 for Bharat Electronics, suggesting a potential upside of 16% from current levels. The brokerage firm views the company as a top pick because it benefits from the heavy focus on localising defence electronics, a segment expected to grow much faster than the overall defence budget. The analysis points to the company’s strong ability to manage its working capital and its history of reliable delivery. “We prefer BEL given its strong execution capabilities, higher localisation and disciplined working capital management,” notes Nuvama. The brokerage firm identifies DCX Systems as a high-conviction pick with a target price of Rs 550, offering a significant upside of 36%. Nuvama Institutional Equities notes that subsystem players like this are in an attractive position because they have faster execution timelines and superior profit profiles. The firm’s analysis indicates that the company is well-placed to capture the rising demand for

electronic assemblies and cable harnesses required in modern defence platforms. Solar Industries India is another top selection with a target price of Rs 12,000, which implies an upside of 15% according to Nuvama Institutional Equities. The report finds that the company stands out due to its disciplined management of money and its high level of local manufacturing. The analysis highlights that as India seeks to become self-reliant in ammunition and explosives, the company’s role becomes increasingly vital. Nuvama Institutional Equities maintains a ‘Hold’ rating on Hindustan Aeronautics with a target price of Rs 4,450, suggesting an upside of 4%. T

he firm’s analysis suggests that while the company has a massive order book, it faces longer cycles for finishing its projects, which can lead to slower growth in the short term. The brokerage firm notes that the stock already reflects much of the positive news regarding its order pipeline. The analysis suggests that these long timelines can sometimes lead to pressure on profit margins or delays in revenue recognition. Nuvama Institutional Equities gives Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders a ‘Hold’ rating with a target price of Rs 4,300, which represents an upside of 6%. The report mentions that the company is part of a massive Rs 10 trillion pipeline for state-owned defence firms, but ship construction is a multi-year process. The analysis suggests that the market has already priced in the expected orders for new submarines and destroyers. “Order visibility remains robust... however, stock dispersion is rising with focus shifting from ordering to timely delivery,” observes Nuvama regarding the DPSU pipeline.

L&T Tech Q3 results: LTTS Q3 net profit seen rising 10-11%, sales 14-16%

Mumbai: L&T Technology Services Ltd (LTTS) will declare its December quarter results on Thursday after 3:30 pm. The Amit Chadha-led company would host an earnings conference call at 7 PM IST, the audio recording of which will be available for replay, one hour after the end of the call. Analysts said the IT firm may report double-digit year-on-year (YoY) growth in profit on 14-16 per cent YoY rise in sales. Margin is seen expanding quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) basis. Analysts are mixed about whether the IT firm may retain its FY26 guidance Axis Securities expects LTTS to report 10.8 per cent YoY rise in net profit at Rs 354 crore compared with Rs 320 crore in the same quarter last year. Revenue for the quarter is seen rising 16.6 per cent YoY to Rs 3,093 crore from Rs 2,653 crore. Ebit is seen coming in at Rs 423 crore, with margin seen rising 33 basis points sequentially to 13.7 per cent. “We expect 3.8 per cent QoQ growth, driven by strength in the Sustainability vertical, despite some



moderation in the Mobility and Hi-Tech verticals. EBIT margins are expected to remain flat QoQ at 33 bps. Key monitorables include (a) ER&D spends, (b) outlook on deal wins, and (c) commentary on business verticals and wage hikes,” it said. Kotak Institutional Equities sees profit at Rs 340.60 crore and sales at Rs 3,036.30 crore. It said large deal wins likely to remain healthy, similar to past few quarters at

\$200 million. It said the company may revise its FY26 revenue growth guidance lower to 8.5-9 per cent.

HDFC Institutional Equities expects L&T Tech to uphold its double-digit growth outlook for FY26. This brokerage sees LTTS Q3 profit at Rs 355 crore, up 10.1 per cent YoY. It sees sales at Rs 3,033 crore, up 14.3 per cent YoY. Margin in seen at 14.3 per cent, up 95 basis points QoQ.

INTERNATIONAL

“Federal Invasion”: Minnesota Officials Condemn Violent ICE Raids, Arrests

London: Trump’s immigration enforcement surge continues to rock Minnesota, just a week after the ICE shooting of Renee Good, a mother of three and U.S. citizen in Minneapolis. The Minnesota Star Tribune reports that the number of federal agents now in Minneapolis and Saint Paul outstrips the 10 largest Twin Cities metro police departments combined. “We don’t want ICE in our neighborhoods. They are violent, they are creating chaos and terrorizing our immigrant neighbors, and they are not keeping anyone safe,” says vice president of the Saint Paul City Council, Hwa Jeong Kim, who comments on the city’s new lawsuit against the Trump administration, the loss of temporary protected status for thousands of Somali immigrants in the United States, plans for a general strike in Minneapolis and more. AMY GOODMAN: We begin today’s show in Minnesota, where protests continue as the Trump administration sends more federal immigration agents into the region in what local officials have likened to an “invasion.” It was aweek ago today when an ICE agent fatally shot Renee Good, a 37-year-old mother of three and an award-winning poet. AMY GOODMAN: The Minnesota Star Tribune reports the number of federal agents now in the Twin Cities dwarfs the size of local police. The size of the federal force is expected to soon reach 3,000 officers. That’s bigger than the 10 largest metro polic departments combined in the Twin Cities.

On Monday, the state of Minnesota and the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul sued the federal government. This is Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison.

ATTORNEY GENERAL KEITH ELLISON: Deployment of thousands of armed, masked DHS agents to Minnesota has done our state serious harm. This is, in essence, a federal invasion of the Twin Cities and Minnesota, and it must stop. DHS agents have sown chaos and terror across the metropolitan area and in cities across the state of Minnesota. There is also growing opposition from within the federal government to the Trump administration’s tactics in Minnesota. Six federal prosecutors in the Minneapolis U.S. Attorney’s Office have resigned over the Justice Department push to investigate the widow of Renee Good — that’s Becca Good. In Washington, D.C., five senior prosecutors in the criminal wing of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division have resigned in protest over the DOJ’s decision not to investigate the ICE agent, Jonathan Ross, who fatally shot Renee Good.We’re joined now by Hwa Jeong Kim, vice president of the Saint Paul City Council, also member of the Immigrant Defense Network.Thank you so much for being with us. First off, can you talk about the lawsuit that’s being heard in court? The significance of what Saint Paul and Minneapolis — called the Twin Cities, for our global audience — is demanding right now, the ICE force dwarfing the number of police in the Twin Cities? AMY GOODMAN: In addition to the massive influx of ICE agents, you have now President Trump said they’re revoking TPS status for Somalis — you have a large Somali community in the Twin Cities — and that they will also denaturalize Somali citizens. And they’re going to do mass deportation? What do you understand is going on here?



They would have to leave by February, he said. HWA JEONG KIM: So many of our Somali neighbors are citizens. And so, I think this is incredibly — this is an incredibly dangerous tactic, as we see them attempt to strip away TPS statuses for many communities. And many folks know, here in the Twin Cities, Somali folks are incredibly important to the fabric of our neighborhoods, and not just because of the value that they bring, but because they are humans and that deserve dignity and protection. And the vast majority of our Somali neighbors are citizens.HWA JEONG KIM: Yeah, I think what we’re seeing is that our constitutional observers and the firsthand accounts of our neighbors is working. We are providing evidence that shows just indiscriminate, unconstitutional violence coming from federal agents in the Twin Cities.AMY GOODMAN: So, what exactly, Hwa Jeong Kim, is the Saint Paul City Council calling for now? We just heard that last clip of protests, when people are saying, “Take off your masks.” I mean, the issue of everything from the Minneapolis mayor saying, “Get the f— out of Minneapolis,” to ICE, to talking about what they’re allowed to do in the city. And what is your sense of the level of cooperation, or not, of the local police department, Minneapolis and Saint Paul being sanctuary cities?HWA JEONG KIM: Yeah, I mean, we have a separation ordinance that’s been in place for many years, and the Saint Paul City Council is looking at strengthening that language, just like the Minneapolis Council passed in their city recently. We, unfortunately, had an incident on Rose Street, where residents and myself witnessed what we believe to be cooperation, where our Saint Paul police officers helped secure a scene and helped escort ICE agents out. So, there is always opportunities to strengthen our laws and use every lever that we can to continue to protect our residents.And I think the lawsuit is very, very clear: We don’t

want ICE in our neighborhoods. They are violent, they are creating chaos and terrorizing our immigrant neighbors, and they are not keeping anyone safe. And, in fact, they are bringing danger on our streets every single day. AMY GOODMAN: Earlier this week, you wrote on Facebook, quote, “To my North Enders, we are seeing a continuous presence of federal agents in our neighborhood. We have had additional community observers present throughout our neighborhood. And vulnerable folks should be very careful. Our neighborhood eyes and protection is working. It is working. We had several of our neighbors kidnapped today. Take precautions.” Can you elaborate on why you’re using the word “kidnap” and what precautions people can take?HWA JEONG KIM: They’re racially profiling neighbors and just taking them off the streets. We have accounts of folks walking down the sidewalk getting scooped up, neighbors getting pulled out of vehicles. And so, it is not about whether or not they have a warrant. That has never been the case. It’s always been about violent racial profiling in our streets. And so, right now we’re encouraging our neighbors to be really careful. I myself am carrying around two forms of ID. I’m a naturalized citizen. Neighbors are also considering not going to work, not sending their kids to school, not going grocery shopping, not going to the laundromat — the very simple things that just keep families going. Lack of child care is incredibly important right now for families. So, we’re really hoping to tap into those mutual aid networks to support families in this time. And it’s difficult, as someone that’s watching and hearing and is very tapped into rapid response, to hear the number of people that are taken every hour here in the Twin Cities, in good conscience to tell folks that it feels safe to walk out on your street today.

U.S. Pledges to Provide Ukraine with Security Guarantees

Paris: The U.S. pledged to provide Ukraine with security guarantees for the first time, which include binding commitments to come to Kyiv’s aid if Russia attacks again. The pledge came at a summit in Paris of Ukraine’s European allies attended by U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff and President Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner. French and British officials also signed a declaration to deploy troops to Ukraine after a ceasefire. Meanwhile, Ukrainian authorities say an overnight Russian attack on Kyiv Monday killed at least two people. Venezuela’s military announced that 24 security officers were killed in the U.S. military raid that led to the kidnapping of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro Saturday. U.S. officials assess that, overall, 80 people were killed in the attack. Meanwhile, Venezuelan officials are cracking down on any expression of support for Maduro’s abduction. Journalists have been detained, and armed paramilitary groups have been deployed to quell dissent. This comes as the CIA reportedly concluded in a briefing to President Trump that senior Maduro loyalists, including the country’s interim President Delcy Rodríguez, were best positioned to ensure the country’s stability. On Tuesday, Rodríguez vowed to defend Venezuela. Interim President Delcy Rodríguez: “This is what President Maduro has named ‘the remarkable challenge 2026’: a Venezuela that refuses to surrender, a Venezuela in active resistance. Venezuelans are a dignified people, a peaceful people forging their own way. It’s Venezuela that has demonstrated to the world our true character, that we’ve become stronger, that we’ve grown spiritually to confront the challenges, the attacks, the threats.” President Trump says Venezuela will give between 30 and 50 million barrels of oil — worth \$2 billion — to the U.S. In a post on social media, President Trump said, “This Oil will be sold at its Market Price, and that money will be controlled by me, as President of the United States of America, to ensure it is used to benefit the people of Venezuela and the United States!” Reuters is reporting that the oil was slated to be shipped to China but will be redirected to the U.S. China has been Venezuela’s top importer of crude oil over the past decade. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has reportedly told lawmakers in a briefing that President Trump intends to buy Greenland, instead of using a military force to seize the autonomous territory controlled by Denmark. This comes as White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said that President Trump has not ruled out the use of troops to take over Greenland, saying in a statement, “The president and his team are discussing a range of options to pursue this important foreign policy goal, and of course, utilizing the U.S. military is always an option at the commander in chief’s disposal.” Meanwhile, the foreign ministers of Denmark and Greenland have requested a meeting with Secretary Rubio in the near future, according to a statement posted

Tuesday to Greenland’s government website. Previous requests for a meeting were not successful, the statement said. In Gaza, Palestinian families said they felt optimistic amid mounting reports, including by Al Jazeera, that the Rafah crossing with Egypt could soon reopen, after more than two years of Israel’s war and blockade. Qatar has accused Israel of “political blackmail” for hindering efforts to reopen the crossing and ensure the delivery of urgent humanitarian aid for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. The reopening of the Rafah crossing was a condition of the first phase of the U.S.-brokered truce between Israel and Hamas, which Israel has repeatedly violated since it went into effect on October 10. Doctors Without Borders announced Tuesday that Israel had ordered the aid group to immediately cease all operations in Gaza, claiming they had failed to comply with new restrictions, including sharing detailed information about Palestinian and international staff, funding and operations.In news from the occupied West Bank, at least 11 Palestinians were injured after Israeli forces raided Birzeit University Tuesday, north of Ramallah, reportedly firing live rounds, sound grenades and tear gas on crowds. Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar was in Somaliland Tuesday. The visit was strongly condemned by Somalia and came just over one week after Israel became the first and only nation to recognize the breakaway Somali region of Somaliland as a sovereign state. This is the de facto leader of Somaliland. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi: “It reflects not only political recognition, but also a shared commitment to transform that recognition into a substantive, forward-looking and strategic partnership.” In Iran, over two dozen protesters have been killed during the past 10 days of protests across the country. That’s according to the Human Rights Activists News Agency, which reported at least 34 protesters have been killed and over 2,000 arrested. The protests began on December 28 over Iran’s worsening economic situation, including a collapsing currency and high inflation. Many attribute the economic crisis partly to harsh U.S. sanctions on Iran.



DOJ Releases Memo Stating That Trump Had Constitutional Power to Attack Venezuela

Paris: In the United States, the Justice Department has released a memo to the public stating that President Trump had the constitutional power to deploy a U.S. military attack on Venezuela and kidnap President Nicolás Maduro and his wife without congressional authorization. The memo, released Tuesday, is dated December 23, just days ahead of the military strike on Venezuela in which at least 80 people were killed, including civilians. The U.S. attack has been widely condemned as a violation of international law. In Iran, over 2,500 people have died in anti-government protests over the collapsing economy, according to the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency. CBS is reporting that sources inside Iran say that between 12,000 to 20,000 protesters have been killed. A 26-year-old protester, Erfan Soltani, who was detained last week, is reportedly set to be executed today. An ophthalmologist in Tehran told The Guardian that a single hospital documented more than 400 eye injuries from gunshots. Meanwhile, Iranian authorities claim to have regained control of the country after two weeks of mass protests. Funerals for security forces killed during the protests have turned into large pro-government rallies. Iranian authorities have imposed an internet blackout across the country. Meanwhile, President Trump vowed to intervene in Iran, saying “help is on the way,” and urged the protesters to “take over your institutions if you can.” This comes as The Washington Post reports that top officials at the White House are weighing military options against Iran. This is an Iranian activist in Rome who cautioned against foreign military intervention. Shiva Bouroumand: “We



don’t need any, any foreigner country to give us any support, except be our voice and don’t support our governor, because that is totally enough for us, that we just need that the politicians abroad don’t support our governor and don’t give voice to them, except, despite of that, give the voice to the population. And that’s enough for us, because our population is doing their part, and I’m super sure that they can succeed.” The interim Venezuelan government, led by Delcy Rodríguez, has released at least four U.S. citizens who were imprisoned in Venezuela. A number of other prisoners have also been released, including Venezuelan opposition figures and activists. The Venezuelan human rights group Foro Penal said, as of Tuesday, at least 56 people, detained in Venezuela reportedly for political reasons, had been released in recent days. In more related news, oil imports from Venezuela to China are expected to plummet starting in February, as the U.S. has claimed control of Venezuela’s reserves and imposed a naval blockade on Venezuela.

Over 2,500 People Killed in Anti Government Protests in Iran

Paris: In Iran, over 2,500 people have died in anti-government protests over the collapsing economy, according to the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency. CBS is reporting that sources inside Iran say that between 12,000 to 20,000 protesters have been killed. A 26-year-old protester, Erfan Soltani, who was detained last week, is reportedly set to be executed today. An ophthalmologist in Tehran told The Guardian that a single hospital documented more than 400 eye injuries from gunshots. Meanwhile, Iranian authorities claim to have regained control of the country after two weeks of mass protests. Funerals for security forces killed during the protests have turned into large pro-government rallies. Iranian authorities have imposed an internet blackout across the country. Meanwhile, President Trump vowed to intervene in Iran, saying “help is on the way,” and urged the protesters to “take over your institutions if you can.” This comes as The Washington Post reports that top officials at the White House are weighing military options against Iran. This is an Iranian activist in Rome who cautioned against foreign military intervention. Shiva Bouroumand: “We don’t need any, any foreigner country to give us any support, except be our voice and don’t support our governor, because that is totally enough for us, that we just need that the politicians abroad



don’t support our governor and don’t give voice to them, except, despite of that, give the voice to the population. And that’s enough for us, because our population is doing their part, and I’m super sure that they can succeed.” n the United States, the Justice Department has released a memo to the public stating that President Trump had the constitutional power to deploy a U.S. military attack on Venezuela and kidnap President Nicolás Maduro and his wife without congressional authorization. The memo, released Tuesday, is dated December 23, just days ahead of the military strike on Venezuela in which at least 80 people were killed, including civilians. The U.S. attack has been widely condemned as a vi-

olation of international law. Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel has said his government is not currently in talks with Washington, remaining defiant as the Trump administration attempts to pressure Cuba into making a deal with the U.S. after the military strike on Venezuela. In a series of posts on X, Díaz-Canel said, “As history demonstrates, relations between the U.S. and Cuba, in order to advance, must be based on International Law rather than on hostility, threats, and economic coercion.” His comments came after Trump announced on Sunday that Cuba would no longer be receiving Venezuelan oil, which has been a lifeline for the island that has been devastated by decades of U.S. economic

sanctions. The interim Venezuelan government, led by Delcy Rodríguez, has released at least four U.S. citizens who were imprisoned in Venezuela. A number of other prisoners have also been released, including Venezuelan opposition figures and activists. The Venezuelan human rights group Foro Penal said, as of Tuesday, at least 56 people, detained in Venezuela reportedly for political reasons, had been released in recent days. In more related news, oil imports from Venezuela to China are expected to plummet starting in February, as the U.S. has claimed control of Venezuela’s reserves and imposed a naval blockade on Venezuela.

How to have a sustainable family ski holiday: take the train and head high

I’ve always wanted to try skiing, but it’s not a cheap holiday and I have always had a lingering suspicion that some resorts are like Las Vegas in the mountains, with artificial snow, damaging infrastructure, annihilated vegetation and air-freighted fine dining – in short, profoundly unsustainable.

However, if there’s a way to have a green family ski holiday, then sign me – and my husband, Joe, two kids and my mum – up. Here’s how to do it.

Choose how you get there

Travel usually makes up the largest part of your ski trip’s environmental impact. “The greenest ski resort is the one you get to without flying,” says Dom Winter from Protect Our Winters UK, a charity whose mission is to rally the outdoor community to take meaningful climate action. You can get to the French Alps by train, so that’s where we’re heading. We hop on the Eurostar Snow train in London at 9am on Saturday, and change at Lille to the high-speed TGV that reaches many of the leading French ski areas – Val d’Isère, Tignes, Les Arcs, Courchevel, Méribel, Les Menuires, Val Thorens, La Plagne and La Rosière – by evening. If you don’t fancy a whole day on the train, there’s also the option to go to Paris for the day, then jump on the ski sleeper train after dinner and let it zoom you south to the mountains by morning. There are many benefits to the train – more space to move around, play, snooze, and no limits on weight for regular-size bags (provided you can carry them), liquids or picnic goods, provided they are consumed during the journey. And, of course, there’s the visceral sense of going somewhere. The fields, lakes and towns of France whiz by and our kids marvel at the distance on the map. As sunset approaches, we see snow-capped mountains – at first hazy, then crystal clear. We step into chilly evening air at Bourg Saint-Maurice, the terminating station. It’s staggering to know that the carbon footprint (CO₂e, or carbon dioxide equivalent) of our journey from home is only 4.7kg (10lb 6oz) per person (UK train from Hertfordshire to London St Pancras, Eurostar to Lille, French TGV to Bourg St Maurice). If we’d taken a taxi to Gatwick airport, the plane to Geneva and a coach trans-



Don’t ‘over-engage your core muscles’ and other tips for looking after your pelvic floor

Pelvic floor health has long been relegated to whispered conversations about pregnancy or aging, often reduced to vague instructions to “do your kegels”. But according to experts, daily maintenance of the pelvic floor is important. The pelvic floor consists of the muscles at the base of the pelvis and “everything above it, including ligaments” says Lisa Birmingham, a senior physiotherapist and director of All Women’s Health in Brisbane. It extends from the pubic bone in the front to the coccyx in the back. These muscles are responsible for “pulling everything in from below” and supporting the bladder, bowel, and – in females – uterus. Pelvic health is vital for all genders and ages, says Shan Morrison, a specialist physiotherapist and director of Women’s and Men’s Health Physiotherapy in Melbourne. “Ten per cent of men experience persistent pelvic pain at some stage,” she says. Here are some key strategies for maintaining a healthy pelvic floor. Before strengthening the muscle, you must find it. Birmingham says the goal is a strong, “bulky” muscle. The pelvic floor is made up of an “entrance group” of mus-

cles and a “deeper group” of muscles, she says. For women, strengthening the muscles takes a two-part movement. “Squeeze at the front as if you’re holding onto a wee and an anal squeeze at the back which feels like a lift,” Birmingham says. She adds a good visualisation is to imagine you are in a crowded lift “trying to hold in a fart”. For men, the cue is to “lift up the testicles,” Morrison says. She suggests everyone aim for 10 repetitions of 5–10 second holds. However, relaxation is equally important. Angela James, founder and principal physiotherapist at Sydney Pelvic Pain Clinic, warns excessive physical activity is not always conducive to a healthy pelvic floor, using the example of “overzealous gripping” of pelvic floor muscles sometimes seen in pilates. James advises checking in with yourself to ensure you aren’t constantly clenching and learn to relax these muscles. She says many people “chronically over-engage their core muscles” in an effort to maintain “good posture” throughout the day. “This can create excessive tension in the abdominal wall and pelvic floor, contributing to pain.” Birmingham

recommends a technique called “the knack”: bracing your pelvic floor muscles immediately before a sudden increase in abdominal pressure, such as a cough, sneeze or laugh. To build the habit, she suggests “habit stacking” – popularised by James Clear’s Atomic Habits – to attach the exercise to an existing daily routine, such as performing a hold every time you stand up after using the toilet. How we approach our daily toilet routine can have a significant impact on the strength and function of the pelvic floor. Constipation is a major stressor for the pelvic floor, says Dr Millie Mardon, a pelvic pain researcher at Western Sydney University. Birmingham explains that the resulting straining creates unnecessary pressure that can weaken the pelvic muscles over time. “The rectum is not a storage facility,” she says, warning that workers often cause constipation by resisting the urge to poo. To help alleviate pressure, Mardon suggests anyone can use a footstool during bowel movements, to better mimic the natural squatting position and reduce straining. Morrison adds that it is equally important to avoid going “just in case”.

Six of the best affordable UK country house hotels to beat the January blues

The Alfriston, East Sussex

Virginia Woolf described the South Downs as “too much for one pair of eyes, enough to float a whole population in happiness”. So where better to head at this time of year, when our happiness levels are traditionally at their lowest ebb? Striding across the rolling chalkland towards the teetering sea cliffs buoyed up by a stiff breeze is the perfect antidote to the January blues. And if there’s a cosy hotel bar with an open fire waiting for you at the end of the walk, so much the better. The Alfriston, on the edge of the Sussex village of the same name, reopened under new owners last spring. Housed in a red-brick manor house, parts of which date back to the 14th century, its new look nods to the Arts and Crafts movement with attractive block-printed wallpapers, patterned furnishings and wood panelling painted in warm colours. There’s a long front lawn laid out for games of croquet, skittles and pétanque but the jewel in the crown is the 10-metre outdoor pool, heated and open year-round. After a swim, warm up in the sauna or steam room or treat yourself to a massage or beauty treatment in the small spa area. On a Saturday evening the 1554 Braserie was lively with a mix of guests and locals and the menu had something to please all palates – from slow-roasted Norfolk cauliflower (£18 for a main) to haunch of fallow deer with chestnuts and cacao sauce (£28). My starter of scallops followed by grilled whole sea bass with samphire was excellent. After a deep sleep we woke up to views across the mist-shrouded downs and breakfast in the Orangery, where the walls are hand-painted with delicate murals of trees and flowers. I can’t help feeling that Woolf, whose Charleston farmhouse HQ was just a few miles away, would approve.

Wildhive Callow Hall, near Ashbourne, Derbyshire

The feel was more cool Cotswolds than traditional Derbyshire as my son and I pulled up at this hotel, just outside Ashbourne, with its glass-box restaurant jutting out from a grand Victorian mansion. The hotel’s interiors, with grand staircase and ornate ceilings, have been injected with eye-catching colours and a swirl of patterns by designer Isabella Worsley. The best-value rooms are here in the main building, with cute treehouse-style wooden hives tucked into the 35 acres of grounds should you feel more flush. Just down the hill is the Coach House, home to a small spa offering botanical facials, reflexology and massage, a yoga studio, gym and sauna. This is where you’ll also find the map room, stocking everything you need to plan a day out, and complimentary bikes. We headed out on the blessedly flat 13-mile Tissington Trail, which runs along the old Ashbourne to Buxton railway line. It was an easy ride but we still felt entirely justified in demolishing an enormous shared platter of seafood misto in the buzzy restaurant, with its curved bar and artificial olive trees.

The Cliff Hotel & Spa, Cardigan Bay

Blow away any lingering Christmas cobwebs at this breezy coastal retreat on a headland above the grand sweep of Cardigan Bay. From the lobby to the restaurant and 76 guest rooms, the style throughout is slick and contemporary, with soothing shades of grey, green and blue reflecting the Atlantic views framed by the huge picture windows. There’s plenty to do here: go for a walk along the Ceredigion coast path (keep your eyes peeled for bottlenose dolphins and seals); have a round of golf at the hotel’s own nine-hole course; watch the surfers battling the swells at nearby Poppit Sands; or head into Cardigan for a mooch around the castle and shops. Soak away winter chills in the hotel’s underground spa, which has a hydrotherapy pool, steam room, sauna, hot tub and gym, and offers a range of good-value treatments from facials to algae wraps and hot stone massage (from around £70 for a 50-minute treatment). An hour’s use of the spa facilities is included in the room rate for hotel guests.

The Barnsdale, near Oakham, Rutland

Rutland Water sits practically on the doorstep of this hotel in England’s smallest historic county. The quiet appeal of the location is mirrored indoors. A woodburner in reception makes you feel instantly at home, while beyond lies a relaxed sequence of spaces: a comfy seating area, the restaurant and bar with wooden floors, banquettes and modern art, and the Orangery dining room. The 45 bedrooms, arranged in two storeys around an appealing courtyard, come with boldly coloured fabric headboards and patterned paper (pick one on the first floor for a quieter night). After checking mine out, I set off to circumnavigate the 23-mile reservoir by bike, earning the excellent bistro meal that awaited my return, including the hotel’s signature tempura cauliflower popcorn. The Barnsdale offers superb value, but there’s still a pleasing spirit of generosity. If dry January isn’t your thing, there’s a complimentary 4pm drink in the bar as well as a nightcap. Massages are sensibly priced (£90 for 60 minutes) and you have unfettered access to the sauna, hot tub and outdoor pool from midday on arrival until the same time on departure, without paying extra. It’s civilised and faintly indulgent, all for just north of £100 a night.

Dunkeld House Hotel, Perthshire

The approach to this elegant, white country house hotel couldn’t be dreamier, a speed-bump-controlled crawl through sweeping, tree-studded parkland, a bronze stag guarding the doorway. Bedded above the fast-flowing

River Tay, on the edge of the historic village of Dunkeld (a mile-long meander along the riverside path) it was built at the end of the 19th century as a summer retreat for the 7th Duke of Atholl. Today, it’s a relaxed and welcoming hotel (help yourself to a dram of whisky or glass of sherry) with a roaring log fire in the wood-panelled reception, muted tartan carpets and a smattering of taxidermy, including a mighty stag’s head lording it over the grand staircase. Book a room with a tree-fringed river view: for a treat, the Duchess suite has a balcony, parquet flooring, art deco styling and gold-trimmed bathroom. The spa has a pool and indoor hot tub looking over plant-peppered gardens and offers ishga Hebridean seaweed treatments, hot stone massages, detoxifying seaweed wraps and restorative facials. The food is also fabulous, highlighting the Highlands’ larder with the likes of creamy smoked haddock cullen skink and venison loin with roasted roots.

Wood Hall Hotel & Spa, Wetherby, West Yorkshire

If you’re looking for a cossetting country house escape that feels a bit special but refreshingly unstuffy, this ivy-clad Georgian manor house near Wetherby could be the answer. The location is suitably bucolic – set within 100 acres of rolling parkland and forest – but it’s just a short drive from Leeds, Harrogate and York. Inside, the public areas are elegant but not old-fashioned, and the 44 bedrooms, kitted out in soothing shades of grey, are comfortable, many with far-reaching views across the Wharfe valley from the sash windows. Go for a walk in the grounds – there are printed maps for guests – or indulge in a treatment in the small Elemis spa (treatments from £60 for 25 minutes), which also has a pool, steam room and gym. In the smart dining room, the seasonally-adjusted menu runs the gamut from homemade gnocchi with butternut squash and black garlic (£18.50) to pan-fried wood pigeon breast with game and pearl barley ragout (£28.50). There’s also an excellent kids menu.



At the polling place, a fan touches Akshay Kumar’s feet and begs for assistance

Mumbai: As voting began in 29 Maharashtra civic councils on Thursday, including the BMC elections, actor Akshay Kumar went out to cast his ballot in Mumbai. A fan approached Akshay at the polling place asking for cash assistance and disclosed that her father was having financial difficulties. Instead of rejecting her request, the actor urged her to provide his crew her phone number. One of the first few famous people to vote in the current Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections was Akshay. As he was leaving the polling place, he chatted with the photographers there. Today is the day we get to hold the remote control. “I urge every Mumbaikar to cast a ballot,” Akshay declared. A female fan followed him to his car and came up to him, asking for money. With a white piece of paper in her hand, the female fan is shown telling Akshay, “Papa bahut bade karze mein hai, unko please bahar nikalo (My father is in a huge debt, please help him get out of it).” Akshay did not brush off the fan’s sincere request. He expressed his readiness to assist by asking her to give one of his team members her phone number. The admirer was then spotted



reaching down to touch the actor’s feet in a heartfelt show of appreciation. Akshay did not brush off the fan’s sincere request. He expressed his readiness to assist by asking her to give one of his team members her phone number. The admirer was then spotted reaching down to touch the actor’s feet in a heartfelt show of appreciation. “Beta aisa mat kar (don’t do that, child),” the actor said, stopping her. The fan’s earnest request was not dismissed by Akshay. He asked her to provide her phone number to one of his teammates, indicating that

he was willing to help. Then, in a genuine gesture of gratitude, the fan was seen reaching down to touch the actor’s feet. “Beta aisa mat kar (don’t do that, child),” the actor interrupted her. With Priyadarshan, Akshay is currently producing two additional films: the eagerly anticipated third installment in the Hera Pheri series and the horror comedy Bhoot Bangla. Additionally, he will appear in the 2026 theatrical version of Welcome to the Jungle. On the small screen, the actor will also be seen anchoring the reality series Wheel of Fortune.

Sharmila Tagore desired to wear a bikini In the 1960s



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

this at fifty.” It is very, very empowering,” she added. It gives me a wonderful feeling. As I’ve previously stated, it’s a job well done if women see it as an example or as something that empowers them and makes them feel good. Malaika has contributed to several of Bollywood’s most famous item songs, including Chaiyya Chaiyya, Munni Badnaam, and Anarkali Disco Chali. She costarred with Rashmika Mandanna in the dance performance Poison Baby from Maddock Films’ Thamma in 2025. Reactions were all over the internet, with many pointing out that Malaika in the song stole the show from Rashmika. She later made an appearance in the Chill-gum music video, when her audacious actions drew condemnation once more. Malaika, though, was unaffected by the teasing.

Nupur’s Loved-Up Post from Big Sister Kriti Sanon

Mumbai: On January 10, Nupur Sanon, Kriti’s sister, wedded lover Stebin Ben in a sumptuous ceremony in Udaipur. On Sunday, January 11, a Hindu wedding took place after their white wedding. The couple threw a glamorous reception party for business associates in Mumbai on Tuesday. Kriti Sanon, who was the ideal hostess the entire time, posted a number of previously unseen photos of the newlyweds on social media. A heartfelt statement welcoming Stebin into the Sanon family was included with the post. “Words can never be enough to explain what I’m feeling... Still hasn’t sunk in. My little one is married! From holding you in my arms for the first time when I was 5, to now holding your chaadar and seeing you all dressed up as the prettiest bride I’ve ever seen. My heart is so full seeing you so happy, in love, and beginning the next—

and the most beautiful—chapter of your life with the best life partner we could ever ask for you...,” wrote Kriti. “You’ve been a part of our family for more than 5 years now, and our bond has strengthened with each passing year,” Kriti wrote to brother-in-law Stebin Ben. I know I’ve found a lifelong buddy and brother who will always be there for me, and I love you, Stebu.” One of the most poignant experiences of my life was witnessing you two exchange vows and tie the knot! What priceless recollections.” Even though I know you’re gonna be 20 minutes away and will keep coming home, the house really feels empty without your laughter,” Kriti said in her postscript, tagging Nupur. However, I’m glad you’ll now be bringing happiness to two homes. “I love you both to the moon and back.” “I love her more than I love you, Stebin,” Nupur retorted. Never forget that.

Suhana Khan claims that her parents have the “Final Say” over important life decisions

Mumbai: The devoted daughter of Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri Khan, Suhana Khan, recently disclosed who makes the most important choices in her life. When it comes to making decisions, Suhana typically follows her instincts first, then considers her options, sometimes overanalyzing them, before her parents make the final decision. “I need to ask my parents,” Suhana remarked. They have the last word. Home is her greatest source of advice. Her parents are the first people she calls when she feels unsure. Their counsel frequently differs greatly. Her father offers multifaceted insights while speaking in wide, contemplative language. Her mother is straightforward and concise. She seeks equilibrium between the two. She concentrates on the fun-



damentals—one task, one day at a time—when stress levels rise. She calls it a distraction that she chooses to ignore in order to avoid being preoccupied with how other people might see her. “I understand when my friends can’t be there all the time, and I think they un-

derstand when I can’t be,” Suhana remarked during the interview, sharing her thoughts on friendship. I prefer friendships without this kind of strain. I enjoy that they are laid back and that we both improve each other’s life by bringing pleasure and joy rather than

tension.” In 2023, Suhana Khan made her acting debut in Zoya Akhtar’s adolescent musical The Archies. Agastya Nanda, Khushi Kapoor, Vedang Raina, Mihir Ahuja, Aditi “Dot” Saigal, and Yuvraj Menda starred in the movie, which was based on the renowned Archie Comics. The Anglo-Indian community was the focus of the story, which took place in the fictional hill station of Riverdale in 1964. Suhana is currently getting ready for her big-screen debut in King, where she will costar opposite Shah Rukh Khan, her father. With a stellar ensemble that includes Deepika Padukone, Jackie Shroff, Anil Kapoor, Arshad Warsi, Rani Mukerji, Abhishek Bachchan, and Jaideep Ahlawat, the Siddharth Anand-directed movie is slated for release in 2026.

In a romantic drama, Rasha Thadani and Abhay Verma deliver raw intensity

Mumbai: With her upcoming flick Laikey Laikaa alongside Abhay Verma, Rasha Thadani, who debuted in 2025, is sure to captivate fans. The primary cast’s first-look posters have now been released by the producers. Although the precise date has not yet been revealed, the movie is slated to open in theaters in the summer of 2026. Intense first-look posters of Rasha Thadani and Abhay Verma with blood splatters on their faces were released by the creators. The post’s description said, “Love. Pain. Trust.” As soon as the post was shared on social media, it became viral. Rasha and Abhay previously released a lighthearted film announcement video



in June 2025. Rasha declares in the video, “Get ready with me for something very special.” Rasha collaborated with Aaman

Devgan, who also made his feature film debut in Azaad. Regarding Saubh Gupta’s film Laikey Laikaa, it is characterized

as a romantic-action comedy that promises a blend of romance, adventure, and fun. In 2026, it will be released in theaters.

Fans claim Amrita Rao hasn’t aged since Vivah

Mumbai: The internet is once again enthralled by Bollywood star Amrita Rao’s timeless beauty. Fans were astounded by the Bollywood actor’s latest appearance alongside Shraddha Kapoor in an advertisement for the latter’s jewelry line, Palmonas, comparing her young glow to her Vivah days from 2006. Amrita Rao was hired by Palmonas to promote their new mangalsutra line, which was revealed on Wednesday. Shraddha is asked to sign a contract designating Amrita as the new collection’s brand ambassador at the beginning of the commercial. But Shraddha slyly maintains that she could advertise it on her own. The two then engage in a lighthearted conversation when Amrita informs her that she is single. Amrita boldly displays the new collection at the end of the advertisement, making fun of Shraddha for appearing envious before pressuring her to accept the contract.

Sunny Deol visits INS Vikrant and honors the Indian Navy ahead of Border 2

Mumbai: Actor Sunny Deol visited INS Vikrant to spend time with Indian Army officers prior to the January 23 premiere of Border 2. The actor made the patriotic link ahead of the eagerly anticipated movie by sharing moments from the trip on social media and expressing pride in the armed forces and his love for the nation. Sunny shared a selfie with Indian Navy officers on board the INS Vikrant on Instagram. The Gadar actor was spotted posing against a gorgeous sea backdrop while wearing a black turban, dark green

pants, and a green shirt. Sharing the picture, he wrote, “Hindustan Meri JaanMeri AanMeri ShaanHindustan. Pride. Honour. Bravery! Sunny Deol’s connection to Border dates back to the 1997 film, which went on to become one of the most recognizable military dramas in Indian cinema. Sunny disclosed that his father, the renowned actor Dharmendra, was the inspiration for his decision to do Border at the recent release of the song Ghar Kab Aaoge from Border 2. “I did ‘Border’ because I saw my father’s film ‘Haq-e-qat,’” he remarked in an interview

with the media. I really enjoyed it. Back then, I was extremely young. I made the decision to follow in my father’s footsteps when I started acting. On November 24, 2025, Dharmendra, who was 89 years old, passed away. In addition to Sunny Deol, Varun Dhawan, Diljit Dosanjh, and Ahan Shetty have significant parts in Border 2. Hoshiar Singh, the recipient of the Param Vir Chakra, will be portrayed by Varun Dhawan. Varun recently had a meeting with the family of Hoshiar Singh, and he posted pictures from the encounter on social media.

Yo Yo Honey Singh’s “sleazy” comments during a Delhi concert have drawn criticism

Mumbai: Rapper-singer Honey Singh has himself embroiled in yet another scandal. Following the release of a video from his most recent show in Delhi, the musician is receiving harsh criticism on social media. Many social media users are displeased and incensed by Honey’s sleazy comment in the now-viral video, which appears to be inviting people to have sex in cars. The video is from earlier this week’s Nanku and Karun event in Delhi. The video first appeared on Reddit and other social media platforms before going viral. Social media users quickly denounced Honey Singh for the offensive comment, calling it “cheap,” “problematic,” and “deeply disappointing.” One person commented, “Is he trying to prove that for some people all breaks, therapies, and self work do absolutely nothing because eventually you can’t learn sense and tameez (decency),” while another noted, “And this guy was invited by the beci to perform at the opening ceremony of wpl.” One person commented, “Is he trying to prove that for some people all breaks, therapies, and self work do absolutely nothing because eventually you can’t learn sense and



tameez (decency),” while another noted, “And this guy was invited by the beci to perform at the opening ceremony of wpl.” Some dubbed him “Horny Singh” and “Yo Yo Horny Singh,” while others asked, “Cheering for WHAT exactly?” Lastly, Honey Paaji affirms: Volume 1? I did not write this. I didn’t sing. One joked, “Basically... not me,” while another sarcastically wrote, “sex education dera hai thoda casual way (he is giving sex education in a casual way).” One person wrote, “What nonsense.” One said, “Chapri for a reason.” Honey Singh is well-

known for his popular songs, including Chaar Bottle Vodka and Party All Night. After taking a break from her career, Honey made a comeback in 2023 with the song Kalaastar, which was a follow-up to the song Desi Kalaakar featuring Sonakshi Sinha. The singer-rapper is currently getting ready to launch the My Story World Tour, which will begin in Dubai on February 6, 2026, and transport his songs all over the world. The Coca-Cola Arena will host the opening performance. Additionally, he recently released the CD 51 Glorious Days.

Varun Dhawan mocks smile-related memes



Mumbai: Actor Varun Dhawan transformed the teasing into a lighthearted moment by choosing to laugh with the internet when his smile became a meme. The actor, who accepted the jokes with good humor, was spotted instructing vocalist Vishal Mishra on how to mimic the now-famous smile. While traveling to the Karwar Naval Base on Wednesday to promote his forthcoming movie Border 2, Varun went live on Instagram to engage with fans. Singer Vishal Mishra accompanied the actor on the trip. Varun responded to the buzz by saying he was happy to see India grinning with him rather than taking offense. “I know my smile is trending,” Varun added, glancing at Vishal after welcoming his admirers who had joined the live session. Varun was discussing his biased smile. Then he started laughing, which made Vishal laugh too. Varun asked him to try imitating the smile, playing along. “Phele pura smile aur phir ek ko gira do (Give full smile and drop your smile from one side),” Varun then told Vishal. After that, Varun said he was enjoying all the conversation about his smile. “No, I’m glad that everyone

in India was grinning with him. I’m happy and smiling ke pura Hindustan smile kar raha hai mere saath.” Varun has already addressed a social media user who had criticized his acting abilities in the Border 2 song. Varun finally responded to the criticism he has been receiving on social media in the post’s comment area. Anurag Singh’s war movie Border 2 is where Varun will next be seen. Sunny Deol, Diljit Dosanjh, Ahan Shetty, and Varun will all appear in the movie. It is a sequel to JP Dutta’s successful 1997 film Border. Produced by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, JP Dutta, and Nidhi Dutta, the Anurag Singh movie is scheduled to open on the big screen on January 23. His most recent appearance was with Janhvi Kapoor in Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari. The movie, which was directed by Shashank Khaitan, debuted in theaters on October 2 of last year. Under Karan Johar’s production company, Dharma Productions, it was made. Rohit Saraf and Sanya Malhotra were also featured in Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari. The movie did not inspire the anticipated reaction.

The poll body responds to Thackerays’ allegations that pens are used to mark fingers

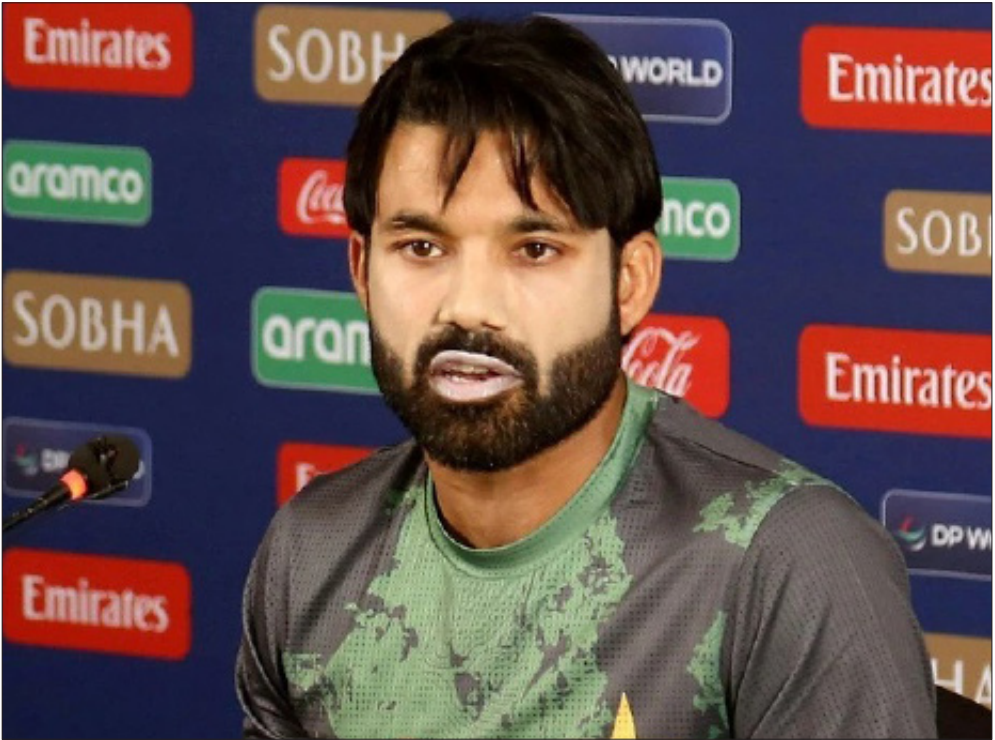
New Delhi, Jan 15: Raj Thackeray, the leader of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), asserted on Thursday that authorities are marking fingers with marker pens following Mumbai civic polls. After casting his ballot for the 227-ward Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) in Mumbai, he told reporters that the ink mark on his finger could be “wiped off with sanitizer.”However, the State Election Commission dismissed the accusation.“Now, the only option left is to apply the ink, go outside, wipe it off, and then go back inside and vote again,” stated Thackeray, who cast his ballot with his family. “The opposition parties are not what the government wants. The government is in charge of the entire administration (to win the polls). This is not an indication of a robust democracy. “Power abuse has a limit,” he stated. In addition, Thackeray criticized the State Election Commission for using the Printing Auxiliary Display Unit (PADU) during public elections. For the first time, PADU is being utilized in the BMC polls to help count votes in the case that electronic voting machines (EVMs) experience technical difficulties. BMC Commissioner Bhushan Gagrani had stated that they would serve as backup units and that, like the other EVM units, they would stay with Returning Officers and be utilized only in an emergency. Thackeray claimed that the poll authority prolonged the



canvassing period to permit the distribution of funds (by ruling parties) and did not even bother to provide any explanation regarding the use of PADU.The polls are being held in the city for the first time since 2017, and he also instructed MNS employees to be on the lookout for any malpractices by rival parties.Uddhav Thackeray, the leader of the Shiv Sena (UBT) and cousin of Raj Thackeray, also brought attention to the matter.He claimed that since the morning, he has been receiving calls informing him that the indelible inks are being removed

after voting with his family. He added that individuals are complaining that their names aren’t on the list of voters. According to the State Election Commission, wiping out the ink would make it “not possible” for a voter to cast another ballot.”Creating confusion among voters by attempting to wipe off the ink from their finger is a wrongful act,” the polling organization stated.Additionally, it said that if a voter is discovered casting a ballot after wiping off the ink, severe consequences will be imposed. Additionally, the commission confirmed that the marker pens have been in use since 2011. Devendra Fadnavis, the chief minister of Maharashtra and a prominent member of the BJP, also denied Thackerays’ accusations. ”A marker has also been applied to me. As he attempted to remove the ink, he asked reporters in Nagpur, “Is it erasing?””The Election Commission should look into this issue and use something else; they can use oil paint if they want,” he said.In an attempt to take control of Asia’s wealthiest civic body, the Thackeray cousins, who split up in 2005, united last month for the BMC elections. The cousins’ campaign is centered on the “Marathi manooos” and Marathi pride. Voting for the BMC elections started this morning at 7:30. Mumbai now has 10,231 voting places, and 64,375 policemen and employees are on duty. Voting will go on until 5:30 p.m.

Muhammad Rizwan ought to return to Pakistan and quit the Big Bash League



New Delhi: Kamran Akmal, a former batsman and wicketkeeper for Pakistan, has asked Mohammad Rizwan to come home from the current Big Bash League (BBL) in Australia. Currently competing for the Melbourne Renegades, Rizwan has had a challenging and somewhat unmemorable season thus far.Rizwan has scored 167 runs at an average of 20.87 and a strike rate of 101.82 in the eight innings he has played in the competition thus far. After scoring 26 off 23 deliveries in a game against the Sydney Thun-

der, the 33-year-old was also asked to retire. Rizwan received a lot of backlash and bullying on social media when his team management made the choice, with Kamran Akmal calling the whole incident “humiliating.” Akmal continued by urging Rizwan to defend himself in a similar way, using the example of former Pakistani captain Younis Khan during the 2008 Indian Premier League (IPL) debut season.We have discussed the necessity for Babar and Rizwan to increase their strike rates in detail on a num-

ber of episodes and on YouTube. In addition to being ridiculed worldwide, Rizwan’s ordeal has caused embarrassment. Rizwan should quit the league and go back home, according to some. Younis Khan played beside you for the Rajasthan Royals during the IPL’s inaugural season, but he was kept on the bench. “I am the captain of Pakistan; I will not sit on the bench,” he famously declared. You have to return me with dignity. “We have witnessed athletes defend themselves in such a manner,” Akmal remarked. Akmal also mentioned how fast-paced T20 leagues are worldwide and said Rizwan needs to adapt his style of play to meet contemporary standards.He is our best player and a proven performer, thus I agree that this shouldn’t have happened. But you have to realize how quickly these leagues have evolved. Since modern cricket is now practiced in every nation, it is imperative that players grow as individuals. Since the start of his T20 career, Rizwan has played with the same mentality.

The game is seen from a certain tactical perspective in Australia. Similar actions have been taken in leagues like the IPL and the ILT20, he continued.Rizwan is presently not included in Pakistan’s T20I team. Since his last appearance in the format during the South African trip in 2024, he has lost the favor of the selectors. Rizwan and Babar Azam were both pulled from the T20I team at the same time, but Rizwan is still not included in the setup while Babar has returned to the team. Given his present condition and difficulties, Rizwan’s chances of making a comeback seem extremely slim given that Pakistan has not yet announced their roster for the forthcoming T20 World Cup.

Novak Djokovic and Jannik Sinner are expected to face off in the semifinals



New Delhi: After the draw was revealed at Melbourne Park on Thursday, defending champion Jannik Sinner and ten-time winner Novak Djokovic might face off in the Australian Open semifinals.In his attempt to win his first championship in Melbourne and become the youngest man to complete a career Grand Slam, world number one Carlos Alcaraz will start his campaign against home favorite Adam Walton. Alcaraz hopes to add the Australian

Open title to his victories at the French Open, Wimbledon, and US Open.Hugo Gaston, ranked 94th in the French world, will face Sinner in the opening round as he attempts to win a third straight championship at Melbourne Park. The Italian added Wimbledon and the ATP Finals to his expanding list of accomplishments after defeating Alexander Zverev in straight sets in the previous year’s final.The 24-year-old will join Djokovic as the only men in the Open era to

win three straight Australian Open titles if he is successful once again.In his quest for a record-breaking 25th Grand Slam victory, fourth-seeded Djokovic takes on 71st-ranked Spaniard Pedro Martinez in the opening match. Sinner and the legendary Serbian were drawn into the same part of the draw, creating the potential for a thrilling semifinal.”The draw is very difficult, it doesn’t matter who you play,” Sinner remarked during the event. ”Even if we are the world’s finest players, there is still a very long and far road to go. We’ll proceed day by day.”In the first round, Zverev, the runner-up from the previous year, will take on big-serving Canadian Gabriel Diallo, while sixth seed Alex de Minaur will face a challenging matchup with former world number six Matteo Berrettini, a 2022 Melbourne semifinalist.World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka starts her campaign against French wildcard Tiantsoa Rakotomanga Rajaonah in the women’s draw. Oleksandra Oliynykova, an unseeded Ukrainian, will face defending champion Madison Keys in the opening round.

Players demand the director’s resignation over the “India Agent”



New Delhi: In response to controversial remarks made by director M Nazmul Islam, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has apologized, clarified that the remarks do not represent the Board’s official position, and warned of disciplinary action for behavior that denigrates players or damages Bangladesh cricket’s reputation. The Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) has issued an ultimatum demanding the resignation of BCB Director M Nazmul Islam due to his remarks directed at senior players, including former captain Tamim Iqbal. The statement comes amid growing criticism from cricket players, according to a re-

lease. ”The Board sincerely apologizes for any comments that may have been insulting, hurtful, or inappropriate. The statement said, “Such remarks do not align with the standards of conduct expected from individuals entrusted with the responsibility of serving Bangladesh cricket, nor do they reflect the values, principles, or official position of the Bangladesh Cricket Board.””The BCB reaffirms that, unless stated explicitly through the Media & Communications Department or the Board’s appointed spokesman, it does not support or accept responsibility for any statement or comment made by any director or Board member. It further stated, “Any remarks made outside of these authorized channels are personal in nature and should not be interpreted as representing the Board’s opinions or policies.” Additionally, the Bangladesh Cricket Board promised to take appropriate disciplinary action against anyone whose actions or remarks insult cricket players or jeopardize the integrity and reputation of Bangladeshi cricket.

In ODIs, Virat Kohli consistently outperforms Rohit Sharma

New Delhi: White-ball cricket icons Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma are two of the best players who have ever played one-day cricket. There are still a few elements that set them apart, despite the fact that both have exceptional numbers in the format.

Rohit is well known for his propensity to produce explosive and game-changing innings starts, whereas Kohli is frequently praised for his unrivaled consistency and “chase-master” status. But in terms of statistics, Kohli has kind of maintained an advantage over Rohit since the beginning of their careers. Mohammad Kaif, a former batsman for India, has explained why. In terms of sheer numbers, Kohli does beat Rohit by some distance.

The latter has scored runs at an average of roughly 49, while the former averages roughly 59 in the ODI format. With a staggering 53 tons to his name in the format, Kohli is unmatched in terms of hundreds; Rohit has only managed 33. This is where Kohli out-



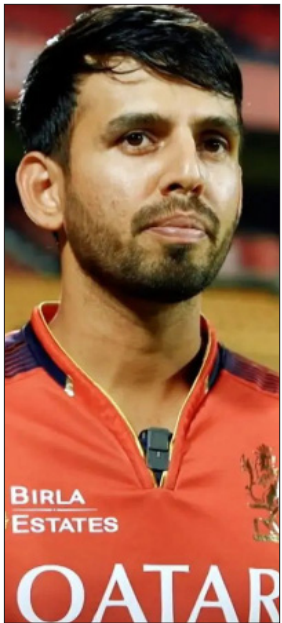
performs Rohit, according to Kaif.”Starts are converted by Virat Kohli. A score of 30 or 40 indicates that he will finish the game, win, and, if he finds his form, become reliable. Virat Kohli has consistently outperformed Rohit Sharma in ODI cricket because of this,” Kaif stated on his YouTube channel. The two Indian mainstays are also distinguished by their mindsets. For Kohli, turning starts into significant blows is always the goal. For Kohli, scoring hundreds is

the standard, and he gets upset if he doesn’t. For Rohit, building a solid foundation is crucial as an opener.”-Kohli regularly plays long innings and scores runs. When Virat Kohli was eliminated in the first ODI, you could tell that he was shaking his head and believed he had made a mistake with his shot, according to Kaif. Both Kohli and Rohit have one goal in mind: to win the 2027 ODI World Cup for India, despite the fact that their paths may have been slightly different.

An RCB star speaks out over the harsh T20 World Cup rejection

New Delhi: India has a wealth of cricket skill, but the team can’t rely on many specialized finishers.

Then came Jitesh Sharma, a wicket-keeper batter for Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), who showed great promise when he was chosen for India’s Twenty20 International team. However, when the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) selected the India team for the forthcoming T20 World Cup, Jitesh was left out for whatever reason. Jitesh stated that there had been no prior communication from the selectors regarding his rejection, even though he chose not to post an immediate response on social media. The wicketkeeper batsman expressed his heartbreak at not being included in the squad in a discussion with CricTracker. Jitesh didn’t know what had transpired until Ajit Agarkar, the head of the selection committee, gave



an explanation for the team alterations.”Until the squad was revealed, I was unaware of my exclusion.

After that, I concurred with the selectors’ justification during the news conference; it was a good one. I later

spoke with the coaches and selectors, and I thought their justifications were reasonable. I agreed with them and fully understood what they were trying to express to me. In addition to Jitesh, the selection committee gave returns to Rinku Singh and Ishan Kishan but excluded Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill from the squad. Jitesh claimed that in order to help himself move on, he talked to former India and RCB player Dinesh Karthik.”I had put a lot of effort into playing in the ICC T20 World Cup, so it was devastating. But I can’t dispute that; it’s fate. I couldn’t process anything at the time because I was numb. “I was able to move forward by talking to Dinesh Karthik and spending time with my family,” Jitesh stated.Jitesh’s predicament is complicated by the selectors’ choice to use an opening batsman as the wicketkeeper, but it is not yet finished.

Against the winning Mumbai Indians, the winless UP Warriorz aim for a comeback



New Delhi: at the eighth game of the ongoing Women’s Premier League (WPL) at Navi Mumbai, UP Warriorz, who are still the only team without a victory three games into the season, will face a formidable opponent in the nascent Mumbai Indians, who are aiming for a third straight victory.With teams playing back-to-back games and little time for rest, the WPL schedule has received criticism. After playing Delhi Capitals the night before, UPW is under pressure going into Thursday’s match at the D.Y. Patil Stadium.

Although the bowlers kept Delhi under strain in their most recent game, the batting once again failed them. With a fluid half-century, Meg Lanning took the lead, but wickets kept falling around her. The Warriorz are still looking for the ideal opening combination after struggling through the middle overs. The Indian middle order has not performed well, despite Lanning’s consistency. The team management must make important choices, such as rearranging the bowling attack, because the upcoming games

will be more difficult. In contrast, Mumbai is soaring. Shabnim Ismail has been astute throughout, Hayley Matthews made a spectacular comeback from injury, Amelia Kerr has been outstanding with the ball, and Nicola Carey has contributed with both bat and ball. With Nat Sciver-Brunt expected to return, MI will have trouble choosing its international players. Mumbai enters the game well-rested and confident after recovering admirably from an early loss. Both teams will be keen to make an impression on the field even if there won’t be any spectators because of the local municipal elections.In the Women’s Premier League, Mumbai Indians Women and UP Warriorz Women have already squared off seven times. UPW has only won twice in this rivalry, while MI-W has won five of those meetings.Although the pitches at Navi Mumbai have historically favored hitters, they are now beginning to show symptoms of wear after several games have been played there.



Sania Mirza

The name “Sania Mirza” doesn’t need any introduction. She is the world-famous International Tennis Player. She is also known as ‘SAM’. The player contributed to Women’s Tennis and played for decades before she finally announced her retirement from the game officially. The mentor, family, close friends, and worldwide fans have been her greatest strength throughout her career span. She bagged several titles and championships because of her extraordinary talent and tremendous focus. She is one of the first female sports personalities in the country to encourage female sports on the international platform. In this informative, we will discuss the biography of Sania Mirza. We will also look into her professional career & how she contributed to the game. Sania Mirza was born on November 15, 1986 in Mumbai to Imran Mirza & Naseema. But after some time, the family moved to Hyderabad. People often search on Google that Sania Mirza belongs to which state. The childhood of Sania Mirza and her younger sister, Anam Mirza, was spent in the Hyderabad city only. Sania got her initial training from her father & then from Roger Anderson as she began to play Tennis when she was 6, and today Sania Mirza’s age is 38. Sania did her schooling at Nasr School, Hyderabad. She earned her graduation degree from St. Mary’s College, Hyderabad. She earned her Honorary Doctor of Letters Degree from the Dr. M.G.R. Educational & Research Institute, Chennai. Sania Mirza is also good at playing Cricket and swimming. She belongs to a Sunni Muslim Family. Her father, Imran Mirza, was a Sports Journalist, and her mother was working in the Printing Industry.

Sania’s younger sister, Anam Mirza, got married to Mohammad Asaduddin, who is the son of former Indian Cricketer Mohammad Azharuddin. She is the owner of a fashion outlet, ‘The Label Bazaar’. The two cricket legends, Asif Iqbal & Ghulam Ahmed are also distantly connected with Sania. Sania started her career as a professional Tennis Player in 2003. She played for 20 years and represented India in the international championships. She won three Grand Slams. In the year 2003, Sania won 10 singles and 13 doubles titles as a junior player. The same year she bagged Afro-Asian Games 2003, and Wimbledon Championships 2003. In 2004, she won 10 ITF singles titles, and she became the first Indian woman to win a WTA doubles title at the AP Tourism Hyderabad Open. She later won the doubles title at the Bangalore Open and became the first Indian woman to participate in the Wimbledon Championships 2006. She earned for herself the world’s singles ranking number 27 in 2007. In 2008, she got wrist injuries & due to that she had to focus more on doubles & mixed doubles tournaments. In 2015, Sania Mirza became the first Indian woman to be the World No. 1 in WTA doubles. In the year 2018, she took a maternity break from the game. She then returned in the year 2020 and won Hobart International. Sania Mirza earned more than \$7.2 million by winning various singles, doubles, and mixed doubles titles. She won the WTA doubles title with Cara Black in 2014. She then defended the WTA doubles title with Martins Hingis in 2015. Sania Mirza’s net worth is calculated around ₹216 crores or approximately \$26 million. Sania Mirza owns luxurious homes in

Hyderabad & Dubai. Sania Mirza has one property in Hyderabad worth ₹ 13 crores. It is a palatial property in beige and brown tones. She loves to spend quality time with her family here. Sania Mirza owns a luxurious property in Dubai with her ex-husband and former Pakistani Cricketer, Shoaib Malik. The two-story villa is located on Palm Jumeirah Island in Dubai. She stays often on this property with her son Izhaan Malik. Sania Mirza also has a rich collection of luxury cars. In her collection, she has Audi, BMW 7-Series, Jaguar XE, Mercedes Benz, Porche, and Range Rover Evoque. She earned handsome reward money from her Tennis career from 2003 to 2023. Sania Mirza earns from Brand Endorsements as she is associated with many popular brands like; Asian Paints, Danube Properties, Harshy’s, and Lakme. The player has made some personal investments for higher returns. She often invests in different financial schemes too. Sania Mirza owns an Academy where she trains young talents for the Tennis Tournaments.

Sania was once engaged to Sohrab Mirza, a childhood friend. However, due to incompetency, they both canceled their planned marriage within six months of their engagement tenure. Later, in the year 2009, Sania Mirza proposed to the Pakistan Cricketer Shoaib Malik. They tied the knot on April 12, 2010, at a function organized at the Taj Krishna Hotel in Hyderabad. The wedding ceremony took place in the Pakistani traditional wedding for the haq mahr of US\$ 137500 or 6.1 million followed by their Walima celebration function at Sialkot, Pakistan. On April 23, 2018, the couple announced their first pregnancy through social media platforms. Sania Mirza gave birth to a baby boy in October 2018 and named him Izhaan Malik. But later, in January 2024, the couple declared their separation. They have both been having marital issues since 2022. Sania Mirza announced her Official Retirement from Tennis in January 2023 when she was competing for the one last time in the Dubai Championship. The former International Tennis Player Sania Mirza is engaged in so many professional activities after retiring from her sports career. Sania Mirza is associated with the Sony Sports Network and works as a Tennis Ambassador. She did commentary for the US Open recently. She was also invited as a guest on Sony’s popular Comedy Show named ‘The Kapil Sharma Show’. Sania Mirza is engaged in her Tennis Academy business where she trains young talents for future Tennis Tournaments at the National & International levels. The former Tennis Player mentored in the Women’s Premier League. She was associated with the Royal Challengers Bengaluru. Sania Mirza runs a YouTube Talk Show with her ex-husband Shoaib Malik named ‘The Mirza Malik Show’. Sania Mirza is not just a tennis superstar; she is a global icon. Her journey from Hyderabad to becoming one of the top tennis players in the world is truly inspirational. Her luxurious homes, successful marriage, incredible story, grand mansion or her house in Mirza continue to live life on. On the ITF Mirza ended up at Beach Challenge she fell Karatan Mirza won singles titles. Going into the tralian Open, Cindy Watson and in the first and second respectively, to reach the was beaten in straight sets Serena Williams. In February, Indian woman to win a WTA Tour title, by winning her hometown event, the Hyderabad Open, defeating ninth-seeded Alona Bondarenko in the final. At Dubai, she upset in round two fourth seed and reigning US Open champion, Svetlana Kuznetsova, to reach the biggest quarterfinal of her career. In the second round of the Wimbledon Championships, she lost to Kuznetsova in a tight three-setter. In August, she reached the third round at the Stanford Classic, falling to Morigami. Mirza reached her second WTA final at the Forest Hills Tennis Classic, falling to Lucie Šafářová. Mirza became the first Indian woman to reach the fourth round of a Grand Slam tournament at the US Open, defeating Mashona Washington, Maria Elena Camerin and Marion Bartoli, before losing to top seed Maria Sharapova, in the round of 16. At the Japan Open, Mirza reached semifinals with wins over Vilmarie Castellvi, Aiko Nakamura and Vera Zvonareva, before being overpowered by Tatiana Golovin. Thanks to a successful 2005 season, Mirza was named the WTA New-comer of the Year.



Novak Djokovic



Novak Djokovic has won a record 24 Grand Slam singles titles making him statistically the greatest tennis player in history. His journey to tennis stardom began at a young age. Born in 1987 in what was then Yugoslavia, he took up the sport aged four when his ski coach father gave him a mini-racket and a ball. It became young Novak’s favourite toy and tennis won out over skiing. The high cost of tennis camps and academies saw his parents resort to high-interest loans to continue Djokovic’s development, in the hope that he would come good and repay them. He has done that many times over.

Novak Djokovic: the making of a legend

The Serbian played in his first professional tournament aged 15 and won his first ATP Challenger tournament a year later in May 2004. In July 2006, he claimed his first ATP Tour title at the Dutch Open without losing a set and finished the year ranked 16 in the world. In 2007, with Roger Federer atop the world rankings, Djokovic and Rafael Nadal emerged as his biggest challengers. The Spaniard beat Djokovic in the Indian Wells final but Djokovic quickly gained revenge in Miami for his first Masters title. Later that year, he reached a first Grand Slam final at the US Open but Federer defeated him in straight sets. Djokovic claimed his first Slam title the following January, beating Jo-Wilfried Tsonga to win the Australian Open. He would have

to wait three years for his second, as he regained his title in Melbourne, and the floodgates opened after that. The ‘Big Three’ of Federer, Djokovic and Nadal dominated tennis for the next decade with occasional interruptions from Stan Wawrinka and Djokovic’s former junior rival Andy Murray.

Novak Djokovic: the history maker

In 2016, Djokovic won the French Open to complete a career Grand Slam and hold all four majors at once - a feat last achieved in the men’s game by Rod Laver in 1969. In 2021, he was one win away from matching Laver’s calendar Grand Slam, but Daniil Medvedev defeated him in the US Open final. His 40 Masters titles, eight year-end number one rankings and 4284 weeks (and counting) at world number one are all records. He is also the only player to win all nine Masters 1000 events in a career. With Djokovic at the helm, Serbia secured a first Davis Cup title in 2010. However, until 2024 Olympic gold continue****d to elude him. He won bronze at Beijing 2008 and went out in the semi-finals of both singles and doubles at Tokyo 2020.

At Paris 2024 the Serbian finally won the Olympic title that was missing from his collection, beating Spain’s Carlos Alcaraz 7-6, 7-6 in an enthralling final at Roland Garros. His victory also ensured he joined a distinguished list of players to achieve the ‘Golden Slam’ - winning all four Grand Slam titles and Olympic gold. Djokovic sought to make history at the 2022 Australian Open by winning his 21st Grand Slam men’s singles title. However, he became embroiled in a dispute involving Australia’s COVID-19 vaccine mandate for those entering the country. The unvaccinated Djokovic was initially granted an exemption, but it came under scrutiny amid a public uproar. His visa was ultimately canceled, and Djokovic was deported before the tournament began. Nadal ended up winning the men’s event to surpass Djokovic and Federer for most Grand Slam titles. Later in 2022 Djokovic competed at the French Open, where he lost in the quarterfinals to Nadal, who went on to win the tournament. In July Djokovic turned around his disappointing season by winning Wimbledon to claim his 21st Grand Slam championship. Shortly thereafter he was forced to withdraw from the U.S. Open because the country’s visa requirements included full vaccination. In 2023, however, Djokovic returned to Australia, which had relaxed its COVID-19 rules. At that year’s Australian Open, he captured his 10th title and again tied Nadal for most Grand Slam men’s singles championships. Several months later Djokovic claimed sole possession of the record after winning the French Open. He advanced to the finals at Wimbledon in 2023 but lost a five-set thriller to the Spanish up-and-comer Carlos Alcaraz. Djokovic re-



bounded at the U.S. Open, winning his 24th Grand Slam title. A favorite entering the 2024 Australian Open, Djokovic lost in the semifinals to Italy’s Jannik Sinner, ending his 33-match win streak at the tournament. Some five months later he competed at the French Open, where he tore the medial meniscus in his right knee in the round of 16. Although he won the match, he subsequently withdrew from the tournament. Following surgery and a quick recovery, Djokovic competed at Wimbledon, and he advanced to the finals, where he lost to Alcaraz. The two men met again in the gold medal match at the 2024 Paris Games, and this time Djokovic was victorious. With that win, he became the fifth tennis player to claim a career “Golden Slam” (winning the four major tournaments and an Olympic gold medal). A month after his Olympic victory, Djokovic entered the U.S. Open as the number two seed. However, he lost in the third round and later said it was “some of the worst tennis” he had ever played. In the months before the 2025 season, Djokovic enlisted his former rival Andy Murray as his coach. At the Australian Open, in January, Djokovic defeated Alcaraz in the quarterfinals but withdrew from his semifinal match with a leg injury. He struggled over the following months, losing the first match in five of the six tournaments he entered, and in May he and Murray announced that their brief partnership had ended.