

Special Public Prosecutor makes first appearance as Zubeen Garg death case comes up for third hearing

Guwahati, Jan 17: The third hearing in the death case of Zubeen Garg is being held today at the District and Sessions Judge’s Court in Guwahati, with the newly appointed Special Public Prosecutor scheduled to appear before the court for the first time. However, there is little expectation of any major development during the hearing, as the case is still at a preliminary stage. According to court sources, the accused are likely to be produced before the court through video conferencing. The proceedings are expected to move slowly as several accused persons have not yet received all the relevant case documents. Until the documents are formally supplied, the court is unlikely to take up substantive arguments in the matter. The prosecution is expected to seek time from the court to file objections to the bail pleas submitted by Amritprabha Mahanta and Nandeshwar Bora. The government side will also seek additional time to submit objections to the bail applications filed by Sandipan Garg and Paresh Baishya. Time is also likely to be sought to

file a response to the application submitted by accused Shyamkanu Mahanta and Siddharth Sharma. Meanwhile, the court is scheduled to pronounce its order today on the bail pleas of Amritprabha Mahanta and Nandeshwar Bora. Both had filed their bail applications during the previous hearing held on January 3. As per official records, the prime accused Shyamkanu Mahanta and Siddharth Sharma, along with Zubeen Garg’s brother Sandipan Garg and two security guards, are currently lodged at Baksa District Jail. The remaining accused, Shekharjyoti Goswami and Amritprabha Mahanta, are being held at Haflong Sub-Jail. On the legal front, Shyamkanu Mahanta and Siddharth Sharma have engaged a team of senior advocates from Kolkata to represent them. Amritprabha Mahanta is being represented by senior advocate Anan Kumar Bhuyan, while Shekharjyoti Goswami has engaged advocate Sadhan Kalita. To handle the case, the Assam government has appointed five additional Public Prosecutors. The family of



Zubeen Garg has also appointed a private lawyer to assist the prosecution. Zubeen Garg’s wife, Garima Saikia Garg, has engaged young advocate Pradip Tamuli to represent the family’s interests. During today’s hearing, charges are expected to be framed

against the remaining accused. In the previous hearing, the court had already framed charges against Amritprabha Mahanta. The Investigating Officer, Maromi Das, was present at the Sessions Court today. Advocate Anan Kumar Bhuyan, appearing on behalf

of Amritprabha Mahanta, was also seen in court. Zubeen Garg’s wife Garima Saikia Garg, along with her sister-in-law Palmee Barthakur, arrived at the court to attend the proceedings, underscoring the family’s continued presence and involvement as the case moves forward.

Poppy cultivation destroyed in Churachandpur, Kangpokpi

Imphal, Jan 17: A combined team of security forces, forest department along with Executive Magistrate, Churachandpur on Friday destroyed about 10 acres of poppy cultivation at the hill range of Suangkong Hill range under Behiang Police Station, Churachandpur district. Materials found at the site like salt, urea, sprayers etc used in poppy cultivation were destroyed, said a statement of Manipur Police. Another combined team of security forces, forest department on Thursday destroyed about 55 acres of poppy cultivation at the hill range of S. Khonomphai village and Denglen village under Saikul Police Station, Kangpokpi district. Four temporary huts, bags of fertilizer, equipment like spray pumps, pipes and herbicides used for cultivation found at the site were also destroyed, it said. On the other hand, Manipur Police intercepted two Gypsy vehicles without registration number plates at Pallel Maning Leikai area under Pallel-PS, Kakching district. Four occupants of the vehicles, all residents of Zaphou Bazar, Chandel district were arrested: They have been identified as Darshung (24), ST Koko (27), Kophamhring (23), and HP Mono (30). From their possession, the police team seized 219 bottles of 360ml JO-Ei Soju, 685 cans of 500ml Chang beer and two Gypsy vehicles without registration number. Meanwhile, security forces continued to conduct search operations and area domination in the fringe and vulnerable areas across districts. Movement of 144 vehicles carrying essential items along NH-37 was ensured.

Importance of NABL accreditation emphasised

Imphal, Jan 17: The limited number of NABL-accredited laboratories in the State emerged as a key concern during an awareness programme on NABL Accreditation and Its Benefits, held at Manipur Technical University (MTU), Imphal, under the Gunvatta Yatra Initiative of the Quality Council of India (QCI). The programme was organised by the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL), a constituent board of QCI under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, and was hosted by the Department of Civil Engineering in collaboration with the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Cell, MTU. The awareness programme aimed to educate industries, laboratories,

and academic institutions on the importance of The Gunvatta Yatra Initiative is a flagship effort of QCI to promote a strong culture of quality, particularly in Tier-2 and Tier-3 regions of the country. Ashutosh Debnath, NABL Consultant, served as the resource person and delivered an insightful presentation on the accreditation process, eligibility criteria, and benefits of NABL accreditation. He highlighted how accreditation enhances customer confidence, strengthens laboratory management systems, and enables international recognition. The programme concluded with an interactive session followed by a vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to NABL, QCI, university authorities, the resource person, and all participants for making the event a success.

DoNER Secretary inspects cultural heritage centre in Mizoram

Aizawl, Jan 17: Secretary of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Chanchal Kumar inspected the under-construction Cultural Heritage Centre at Kawlri Tlang in Mizoram’s Serchhip district.

The Kawlri Tlang Cultural Heritage Centre is being constructed under the initiative of the Chief Minister of Mizoram, Lalduhoma, who is also the MLA of the Serchhip constituency. The project is funded under the North Eastern Council (NEC). Construction work began in September 2024 and is planned to be completed



by early this year. The total project cost is Rs 4.31 crore, and the work is being executed by Ex-

cell Consultancy Services under the Public Works Department (PWD). As of now, 65 per cent of the

work has been completed.

During the visit, the DoNER Secretary inspected the site in detail and instructed the contractor to complete the work as expeditiously as possible. He also assured that there is no funding constraint from the Ministry. In addition to the original plan, he suggested the inclusion of a trekking route.

The DoNER Secretary was accompanied by UD&PA Secretary Lalmalsawma, Serchhip Deputy Commissioner Paul L Khuma, Additional Deputy Commissioner Lalrinzuala, and other officials.

SIT moves court to attach flat of Zubeen’s manager in Guwahati

Guwahati, Jan 17: Police investigation into Zubeen Garg’s death has revealed that his manager Siddharth Sharma had purchased a posh residential apartment in Guwahati with the money he had misappropriated from Garg.

The special investigation team (SIT) of Assam police, which is investigating the high-profile case, has filed an application in court under Section 107 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) for attachment and forfeiture of Sharma’s residential apartment (flat No.3A) in Orchid Hill View at the Fatasil area in Guwahati on the ground that he had purchased the property with money misappropriated from his employer, late Zubeen Garg.

Section 107 of BNSS deals with the attachment/forfeiture of property derived from criminal activities. The SIT has also initiated the process to attach a packaged drinking water plant owned by Sharma on the same ground.

Sharma, who was arrested in connection with Garg’s death, is currently in judicial custody.

Two more arrested in Dilseng Sangma murder case; total accused held rises to eight

Guwahati, Jan 17: Police have arrested two more suspects in connection with the murder of activist Dilseng M. Sangma, taking the total number of arrests in the case to eight, officials said on Friday. According to police, the latest arrests were made late on Thursday night from Diara in South Salmara district of Assam. The two accused have been identified as Mozahidur Momin (22) and Mofidur Hussain (22). Their arrest was confirmed by the Superintendent of Police of West Garo Hills district. With these arrests, the number of people taken

into custody in the case has increased to eight. The other accused already arrested include Rafiqul Islam (47), Anarul Islam (30), Atowar Islam (40), Ariful Islam (30), Bahadur Shiekh (21) and Moizdur Hussain (22). Police said Ariful Islam was apprehended earlier on the night of January 11. Dilseng Sangma, a member of the pressure group ACHIK, was killed on January 9 while he was inspecting alleged illegal stone quarrying units in the Rajabala area of West Garo Hills district. The incident took place around 2 pm at Goalgoan village. Police said Sangma was

attacked by a group of people during the inspection. The killing triggered strong reactions in the region, with demands for swift action against those involved in illegal quarrying activities and the assault on the activist. Police officials said that the owner of the stone quarry linked to the incident is still absconding. The Superintendent of Police stated that efforts are ongoing to trace and arrest the quarry owner and that teams are conducting searches in different locations. “The investigation is still in progress, and more arrests cannot be ruled out,”



a police official said, adding that all angles of the case are being examined. Meanwhile, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma has assured strict action against everyone involved in the killing. He said those responsible for the death of the ACHIK member under Rajabala Police Station would be brought to justice.

ED files chargesheet in Kohima HC fund misuse case

Kohima, Jan 17: The Dimapur Sub Zonal Office of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a prosecution complaint (chargesheet) before the Special PMLA Court, Dimapur in the case related to the alleged misappropriation of public funds and sub-standard construction of the new Gauhati High Court’s Kohima bench complex. The prosecution complaint was filed against Avituo Sekhose, M/s Hexad Syndicate, Thepfusatio Rio, Mhalelie Rio and Vibeilietuo Kets for alleged misappropriation of government funds while executing the work of the new high court complex.

MoS Tokhan Sahu reviews ongoing schemes in Manipur

Imphal, Jan 17: Tokhan Sahu, Minister of State for Housing & Urban Affairs, chaired a State Review Meeting of ongoing schemes of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India and departmental review meeting of Central Public Works Department (CPWD), Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO), and National Buildings Construction Corporation (India) Limited (NBCC), at the Conference Hall, Old Secretariat, Babupara, Imphal today. Presentation of the various central sponsored flagship programme of the state government were presented at the review meeting. Under the Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM-U) 2.0, implemented with a vision of achieving ‘Garbage Free Status for all Cities’ ensuring cleanliness and hygiene in public places, physical progress of the works of solid waste management, used water management and public toilet were reported in the review meeting. Regarding Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana PMAY(U), it is reported that only Beneficiary-led Construction (BLC) component is implemented in the state. Delays in completion of PMAY-U 1.0, launched on June 25, 2015, was due to the issues and challenges comprising high cost of construction which affects beneficiary contribution leading to delay in completion, Management Information System (MIS) may be

integrated in Fund disbursement portal for timely update of information and onboarding of ULBs/IAs into the SNA SPARSH Model. PMAY-U 2.0 launched on September 2024 will be implemented for the next 5 (five) years. It is reported that Deendayal Antodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) was ended in the year 2024 with formation of 3,535 numbers of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), trained 10,734 individuals in different skills and provided job placement to 9,666 individuals, assisted 123 SHGs and 136 individuals through Bank Linkage Programme, identified 20,841 street vendors and issued 13,952 Certificates of Vending (CoVs) and ID cards. After DAY-NULM, Deendayal Jan Aajeevika Yojana – Shehri (DJAY-S) was initiated and has formed 21 numbers of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), opened bank accounts for six SHGs and Revolving Fund for 1st tranche released. Locality-level camps were conducted for scrutiny and verification of SHGs and Area Level Federations (ALFs). The Prime Minister’s Street Vendor’s AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM-SVANidhi) scheme is being implemented in Manipur to provide collateral-free working capital loans to street vendors and strengthen their economic resilience. At the first implementation, the scheme was implemented successfully but lack of markets

was the main reason for decrease in the later stages. In connection with the Imphal Smart City Mission, 21 numbers of Completed Projects and four ongoing projects were presented at the review meeting. Highlighting the issues and challenges i.e., the challenging security situation that has persisted in the State over the past three years, compounded by unprecedented flooding for two consecutive years hindering timely completion of projects, the implementing department sought to consider time extension through September 2026. Town Planning Department, Government of Manipur, presenting the overview of AMRUT 2.0, a mission with an objective to make cities ‘water secure’, reported that 27 towns of Manipur in 6 districts of Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal, Kakching, Bishnupur and Jiribam are eligible for the mission.

The main focus is on those towns which have not been covered by any previous schemes with funding pattern of 90:10. Under the mission, 66 number of projects comprising 44 number of projects in water supply sector, 20 numbers of projects for Water Body Rejuvenation and 2 projects for Oxygen Park & Rain Water Harvesting Park have been approved. Public Health Engineering Department is the implementing agency for the Water Supply Projects under AMRUT 2.0.

Body recovered from Sela Lake, search continues for missing tourist

Tawang, Rescue teams today recovered the body of one tourist from the icy waters of Sela Lake in Tawang district, while efforts are still underway to locate another tourist who went missing after an accident on the frozen lake earlier this week. Officials said the incident occurred when a small group of tourists stepped onto the ice-covered surface of the lake near Sela Pass. The ice reportedly cracked and collapsed due to unstable conditions, causing two tourists to fall into the freezing water. A third tourist was rescued by locals and security personnel and was later shifted for medical treatment. The recovery operation was carried out under the supervision of



the Additional Deputy Commissioner of Jang, with support from the local police and defence forces.

Teams faced severe challenges during the operation due to extreme cold, strong winds, and the high-al-

titude location of the lake. Despite these difficulties, the body of one tourist was successfully retrieved. Police at Jang Police Station confirmed that both victims were tourists from Kerala who were travelling towards Tawang.

The deceased has been identified as Dinu, while the second missing tourist has been identified as Mahadev. Superintendent of Police Tawang, DW Thongon, said the two tourists drowned after slipping into the lake while walking on the frozen surface. He added that rescue efforts on January 14 had to be suspended due to darkness and poor visibility, making it unsafe for divers and rescue personnel to continue the operation at night.

NE/EAST

In coordinated operations, Manipur police detain four active cadres associated with PREPAK and RPF/PLA

Imphal, Jan 17: Manipur Police and security forces arrested four active cadres belonging to banned outfits PREPAK (Pro), PREPAK, and RPF/PLA from different locations across Bishnupur and Imphal West districts, officials said. The coordinated operations led to the seizure of extortion cash, mobile devices, and identity documents, underscoring intensified counter-insurgency efforts in the state. According to police sources, an active cadre of PREPAK (Pro), identified as Wairokpam Atu Meitei alias Boiton (22), a resident of Phoijing Tera Makhong under Nambol Police Station in Bishnupur district, was arrested from his locality on January 16. A mobile phone was recovered from his possession during the operation. On the same day, Manipur Police also apprehended an active cadre of PREPAK, Malem



Heisnam alias Ngaiba (21), a resident of Karang Maning Leikai under Keibul Lamjao Police Station, Bishnupur district. He was arrested from the Thanga Chingang Playground area, falling under Keibul Lamjao Police Station jurisdiction. In a separate op-

eration, security forces arrested a woman extortionist linked to the RPF/PLA outfit. The accused, Chabungbam Thaibema Devi (49) alias Medha, a resident of Tera Loukrakpam Leikai under Lamphel Police Station in Imphal West district, was apprehended from her residence. During the search, security personnel seized extortion money amounting to Rs 1 lakh, along with one mobile handset and one Aadhaar card from her possession.

Police officials said further investigations are underway to ascertain the accused persons' involvement in insurgent activities and extortion networks operating in the region. Security forces have reiterated their commitment to intensifying operations against militant groups to maintain law and order in Manipur.

Meghalaya cabinet clears community-based skill learning for Classes 6–10

Shillong, Jan 17: The Meghalaya cabinet on Friday approved the introduction of community-integrated skill learning for students of classes 6 to 10 and allowed private candidates to appear for the Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) examinations, Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma said after a cabinet meeting.

Under the initiative, students will be encouraged to identify one or more skills based on their interests and their family or community background. These may include agricultural practices, traditional crafts or other locally available skills, which students will learn, practise and demonstrate as part of the curriculum. "This initiative is designed to help students develop productive skills, preserve traditional

occupations and strengthen family and community participation in education. It is not intended to compel students to follow their parents' professions, but to help them appreciate local livelihoods while building useful skills for the future," the chief minister said. The cabinet also approved a new provision allowing the admission and registration of private candidates for the SSLC examinations under the Meghalaya Board of School Education. Sangma said the decision would benefit those who were unable to clear the matric examination earlier or had to discontinue their studies after Class 8 due to various circumstances, by simplifying the process to complete Class 10. In addition, Sangma announced the

Meghalaya Day Awardees for 2026. Dr Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih has been selected for the U Tirot Sing Award for Arts and Literature.

Father Benoy Joseph for the Pa Togan Sangma Award for Social Services, and Riiohlang Dhar for the U Kiang Nangbah Award for Sports and Games. The cabinet also approved the Meghalaya Border Areas Development Service (Amendment) Rules, 2025, and cleared the extension of services of several senior officials and advisers. It further approved the Republic Day speech for 2026 and the nomination of VIPs to take the salute during the parade, with the chief minister noting that preparations for the celebrations are underway.

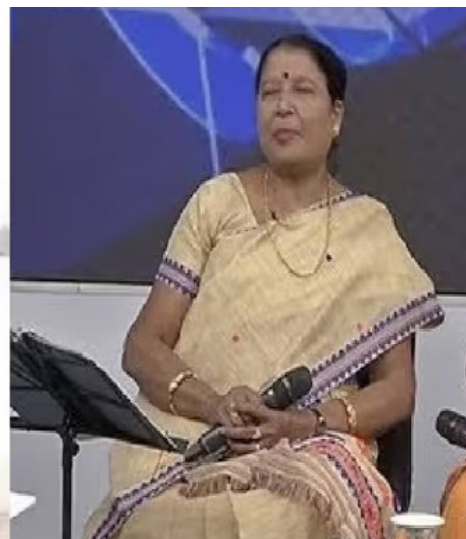
Silpi Awards 2026: Late Assamese singer Samar Hazarika, Dhanada Pathak to be honoured

Guwahati, Jan 17: The Assam government has announced the recipients of the prestigious Silpi Awards for 2026, honouring eminent personalities for their exceptional contributions to the state's cultural landscape. Renowned singers late Samar Hazarika and Dhanada Pathak are among those selected for the coveted awards. The acclaimed singer, who passed away recently, was the younger brother of legendary cultural icon Dr Bhupen Hazarika. Samar Hazarika began his musical journey in the 1960s and released his first album in 1968. He went on to lend his voice to several popular Assamese films, including Uppath, Bowari and Prabhati Pakhir Gaan. Through his numerous albums and lasting musical contributions, he carved out a distinct and respected place in Assam's cultural history. Instituted by the state Cultural Affairs Department, the honours recognise outstanding achievements in the fields of Assamese art, literature, music, theatre, cinema and journalism. The announcement was made by Cultural Affairs Minister Bimal Borah during a press briefing ahead of Silpi Divas on January 17. Alongside the Silpi Awards, the department also declared recipients of several state-level cultural honours for 2025. Eminent litterateur Moneswar Deori will receive the Krishna Kanta Handique Memorial Award, while veteran journalist Dr Amalendu Chakraborty has been selected for the Gopinath Bordoloi Award for National Integration and Contribution.

Noted theatre personality Karuna Deka will be conferred the Natasurya Phani Sarma Award, acclaimed



filmmaker Arup Manna will receive the Bhabendra Nath Saikia Award, and Abani Ranjan Pathak has been named for the Biju Phukan Award. The state government confirmed financial support for artists under welfare schemes. A total of 83 artistes and three differently-abled recipients will receive the regular Silpi Pension, while 170 people will be awarded the Barxik Silpi Sanman. In addition, 26 artists will get a Regular Family Pension, and five families of deceased artists will receive one-time financial aid. These steps highlight the government's commitment to supporting Assam's artistic



community. Silpi Divas, observed annually on January 17, commemorates the death anniversary of Rupkonwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, Assam's iconic cultural luminary—poet, playwright, filmmaker, composer and freedom fighter—who passed away in 1951. Dhanada Pathak and her husband, Rameshwar Pathak, were instrumental in presenting Assamese folk songs in duet and chorus styles, a first in the state. Pathak, along with her husband, is regarded as a doyenne of Assamese folk music and is widely celebrated for their distinctive renditions of traditional tunes.

MoE officials review PM-USHA projects, hold regional RUSA workshop in Nagaland



Kohima, Jan 17: A high-level delegation from the Ministry of Education (MoE), Government of India, led by Shri Armstrong Pame, IAS, Joint Secretary (ICC & RUSA), undertook a three-day official visit to Nagaland from January 14 to 17 to review the implementation of higher education schemes under RUSA and PM-USHA.

As part of the visit, a one-day Regional Workshop on RUSA/PM-USHA was held on January 16 at Kohima for the North-Eastern states of Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram. The workshop was hosted by the Department of Higher Education, Government of Nagaland. Key deliberations during the workshop focused on PFMS and SNA-SPARSH-related issues, the PM-USHA portal, review of ongoing projects, state-specific challenges and sharing of best practices. The workshop aimed to provide handholding support to states and higher education institutions (HEIs) to improve implementation efficiency, fund utilisation and alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and PM-USHA objectives. Nagaland's Minister for Higher Education and Tourism, Temjen Imna Along, also ad-

ressed the gathering. Following the workshop, the MoE officials conducted on-site inspections of PM-USHA projects across the state to assess physical and financial progress. The delegation visited Dimapur Government College, where they reviewed completed and ongoing components including a girls' hostel, academic block, incubation centre and skill hub, and library upgradation works.

The team also inspected two Scheduled Tribe girls' hostels at Kohima Science College and the Professional College of Music and Fine Arts, Tsiemesa. The visit reaffirmed the Government of India's commitment to strengthening higher education infrastructure in the North-East, with a focus on gender equity, skill development and inclusive, sustainable growth under the PM-USHA framework. A high-level delegation from the Ministry of Education (MoE), Government of India, led by Shri Armstrong Pame, IAS, Joint Secretary (ICC & RUSA), undertook a three-day official visit to Nagaland from January 14 to 17 to review the implementation of higher education schemes under RUSA and PM-USHA.

Former Manipur CM Biren in Delhi, likely to meet BJP leaders for govt formation

Shillong, Jan 17: Amid speculations that the Centre is exploring to form a government in ethnic-violence-hit Manipur, former chief minister N Biren Singh has arrived in Delhi and is expected to meet top functionaries of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The state has been under President's rule since mid-February 2025. Talking to the media outside the Imphal airport on Friday, Singh said, "Centre will take action very soon." Sources said Singh was called by the BJP central leadership.

Singh, who has come with party's state unit chief president A Sharda Devi, is likely to meet top BJP leadership including Union Home Minister Amit Shah during his stay in Delhi. Sources in the BJP said the meeting with the central leadership of the party is likely to be held on Saturday and will focus on the possibility of installing an elected government in Manipur. There has been no major incident of violence for a long time in the state, triggering a perception that the Centre will not extend President's rule. It was im-



posed on February 13 last year after Singh stepped down a day before his government was to face a no-confidence motion. Later, it was extended

for another six months from August 13. Last month, BJP's central leadership had convened a meeting with party's Manipur MLAs, including

some from the Kuki-Zo community. Anticipating government formation, the Kuki-Zo community set conditions for participation in it.

Tripura approves Rs 1.07 Cr mushroom spawn production unit in West Tripura



Agartala, Jan 17: The Tripura government has approved Rs 1.07 crore for setting up a Mushroom Spawn Production Unit in West Tripura district under the Tripura Rural Livelihood Mission (TRLM), aimed at strengthening sustainable rural livelihoods and boosting local mushroom cultivation.

Mushroom growers under TRLM, popularly known as didis, currently rely

on spawn sourced from outside the state, resulting in higher production costs and delays in availability. The proposed unit will enable local production of mushroom spawn, helping growers become self-reliant and reducing dependence on external suppliers.

Officials said the locally produced spawn will be supplied to interested didis at lower costs, which is expected to increase mushroom output, improve income opportunities, and support livelihood activities across the district.

As part of groundwork for the project, a team of TRLM officials recently visited Solan in Himachal Pradesh, a nationally recognised centre for mushroom research and spawn production. The visit focused on studying best practices, technologies, and operational models, which will be adapted to suit Tripura's agro-climatic conditions.

A mushroom spawn production unit is a highly controlled facility that produces the seed required for mushroom cultivation. The process includes preparation of mother culture, sterilisation of substrates such as grains or sawdust, inoculation, and incubation under sterile conditions to ensure quality and prevent contamination.

According to officials, the upcoming unit will be equipped with specialised infrastructure, power backup, and trained manpower to maintain strict quality standards. Once operational, it is expected to play a key role in expanding mushroom-based enterprises, promoting women-led economic activities, and strengthening the local agri-livelihood ecosystem in Tripura.

PM Modi to attend grand Bagurumba programme in Guwahati

Guwahati, Jan 17: Guwahati is preparing to host a major cultural programme as Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives in Assam for a two-day visit starting January 17. One of the main events of the visit will be a large-scale Bagurumba dance presentation at Sarusajai Stadium, where thousands of artistes from the Bodo community will perform together. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the Prime Minister is expected to reach the stadium in the evening and will witness the cultural programme organised by the state government. He said the event has been planned to highlight Assam's traditional art forms and present the cultural identity of the Bodo community on a larger platform. According to the Chief Minister, the Bagurumba presentation is part of a long-term effort by the state government to take Assam's art and culture beyond the state. He made it clear that the programme is not intended to set any record, but to present a meaningful cultural performance that reflects the traditions and values of the people. Bagurumba is a well-known folk dance of the Bodo community and is closely linked with nature. The dance movements are inspired by flowers, birds and butterflies, and it is traditionally performed during festivals such as Bwisagu and Domasi. It symbolises peace, harmony and joy, and holds an important place in Bodo cultural life. Officials said that artistes from more than 20 districts of As-

sam are participating in the programme. Rehearsals were held in different Assembly constituencies before moving to joint practice sessions at Sarusajai Stadium. Cultural experts from the Bodo community were involved in planning and designing the performance, while trained instructors coordinated the dancers. Due to the large scale of the programme, special crowd management measures have been put in place. The Chief Minister said that although over 30,000 entry passes have been collected, seating inside the stadium will be limited as some galleries have been closed to create space for the performance area. Separate arrangements have been made for people who may not be able to enter the stadium. The public has been requested to cooperate with the administration to ensure the smooth conduct of the event. People have also been advised not to gather along National Highway routes, as heavy traffic is expected due to the Prime Minister's movement. Police will manage traffic from Jalukbari to Beltola to avoid congestion. BJP workers have been asked not to assemble along highways to welcome the Prime Minister and to limit such activities to areas near the airport. The Chief Minister said these steps are necessary to maintain order and ensure public safety. The state government has also announced financial support for the participating dancers as a mark of recognition for their contribution.

Thadou groups call for halt to census in Manipur over “Any Kuki Tribes” entry

Imphal, Jan 17: Several organisations representing the Thadou community have demanded that any proposed census exercise in Manipur be put on hold until the removal of what they described as the “unconstitutional” entry of “Any Kuki Tribes” (AKT) from the Scheduled Tribes list of the state. In a media statement issued on January 17, Thadou Inpi Manipur, along with the Thadou Students' Association and Thadou Community International, said that proceeding with a census without first deleting AKT would be a serious mistake. The organisations warned that such a move could in-

crease ethnic tensions and push the state back into large-scale conflict. The groups said the deletion of AKT must happen before any census or National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise is carried out. They argued that without correcting what they see as a flawed entry in the Scheduled Tribes list, neither the census nor the NRC would serve its real purpose. According to the statement, the inclusion of “Any Kuki Tribes” in the Scheduled Tribes list in 2003 was allegedly done for political reasons. The organisations claimed this has created a loophole that allows illegal immigrants and

non-indigenous people to obtain residency, constitutional benefits and Scheduled Tribe status in Manipur. They said conducting a census under these conditions would damage the state's demographic structure and harm the rights of indigenous communities. Referring to the 2011 Census, the Thadou bodies pointed out that a Kuki population of 28,342 was recorded for the first time after the inclusion of AKT. They alleged that these figures were never properly verified. Any new census conducted before the permanent deletion of AKT, they said, would give official recognition to unverified and

possibly illegal populations and affect public policy for many years. The organisations also stated that the Manipur government had, through Cabinet decisions in 2018, 2023 and 2024, proposed the deletion of AKT from the Scheduled Tribes list. These proposals, they said, were forwarded to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs but are still awaiting comments from the Registrar General of India. They warned that continued delays, especially in the current law-and-order situation in Manipur's hill districts, could lead to pressure and wrong classification during census operations.

The statement said holding a census under President's Rule without resolving these concerns could have serious consequences for indigenous communities, including the Thadou people. The groups further claimed that in the present situation, where armed Kuki militant groups are alleged to have influence in certain areas, it would be impossible to conduct a free and fair census. They alleged that census officials and local residents could face intimidation and forced classification under the “Any Kuki Tribes” category, making any later correction difficult or impossible.

Child marriage still prevalent in Manipur: MSCW chairperson

Imphal, Jan 17: A one-day sensitisation programme on “The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006” was jointly organised by the Manipur State Commission for Women (MSCW), Phoubakchao Young Muslims Development Association and United Manipur Muslim Women Development Organisation at Phoubakchao Makha Public Community Hall, Phoubakchao, Imphal West. The programme sponsored by the Manipur State Commission for Women (MSCW) aimed at educating the local community and youth about the legal, social, and psychological impacts of child marriage, while enhancing their understanding of the law and their responsibilities in preventing such marriages.

The programme was attended by Thumlip Tiningpham Monsang, Chairperson, Manipur State Commission for Women; Sk. Sophia Moyon, Member (MSCW); W. Phajatombi Devi, MCS, Member, Secretary, MSCW; Najima Phundreimayum, General Secretary, United Manipur Muslim Women Development Organisation and Shahabuddin Cheshaba, Secretary Phoubakchao Young Muslims Development Association as presidium members.

More than 150 men, women and girls from Meitei Pangal community attended the programme. During the event, Thumlip Tiningpham Monsang, Chairperson of MSCW, highlighted that child marriage remains a quiet yet challenging

issue in many parts of Manipur and across India. Parents and stakeholders play an important role in preventing child marriage. Preventing child marriage and protecting children from abuse is not just enforcing the law but building a healthier, stronger and more equal society, she said. She said that every child deserves a childhood of education, safety, and opportunities, not the burden of adult responsibilities. She also encouraged families to seek marriage counselling early, before problems arise.

She further highlighted the role of the Manipur State Commission for Women, which continues to provide support services and plans to operate a dedicated counselling cell to assist women and families in need.

Arunachal Pineapple Festival begins with focus on boosting farmers' income

Itanagar, Jan17: The Arunachal Pineapple Festival's third edition got underway in Bagra, West Siang district, with a major emphasis on growing pineapple production, enhancing marketing and exports, and giving farmers new chances for an agro-based livelihood. The state government has designated the festival, an agro-based effort that began in 2024, as an annual calendar event. The Bagra Welfare Society (BWS) and the state horticulture department work together to organize it.

Speaking at the first event, Lumla MLA Tsering Lhamu stated that Bagra Circle has rich soil that is perfect for growing pineapples and that a number of government assistance programs are increasing farmers' wages.

Tripura clears Rs 1.07 crore plan to set up mushroom spawn unit in West Tripura

Agartala, Jan 17: The Tripura government has approved an amount of Rs 1.07 crore for setting up a Mushroom Spawn Production Unit in West Tripura district. The project will be taken up under the Tripura Rural Livelihood Mission (TRLM) and is aimed at improving rural livelihoods and supporting small-scale farmers and women engaged in mushroom cultivation. Officials said the new unit is being planned to help local mushroom growers, mostly women associated with TRLM and commonly known as didis, who currently depend on spawn supplied from outside the state. Because of this dependence, growers often face higher costs, delays in supply, and uncertainty during peak cultiva-



tion periods. The government believes the proposed unit will help solve these problems by ensuring a steady and affordable supply of quality spawn within the state. With the establishment of the unit, mushroom spawn will be produced locally and supplied to interested didis at a lower cost. This is expected

to encourage more households to take up mushroom cultivation, increase production, and improve income opportunities for rural families in West Tripura and nearby areas. As part of the preparation, a team of TRLM officials recently visited Solan in Himachal Pradesh, which is known as the national

level for mushroom research and spawn production. During the visit, the team studied existing systems, production techniques, and management practices. Officials said these learnings will be adapted to match Tripura's local climate and farming conditions. A mushroom spawn production unit is a specialised facility that produces the seed required for growing mushrooms. The process involves preparing pure cultures, sterilising raw materials such as grains, inoculating them under controlled conditions, and allowing them to grow in a clean environment to prevent contamination. The upcoming unit will have proper infrastructure, power backup, and trained staff to maintain quality standards.

Challenges plaguing IDP children discussed

Imphal, Jan 17: A one-day District Level Convergence Meeting on “Issues of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Children” was held at the Conference Hall of the Deputy Commissioner's Office, Kakching District. The programme was organised by the Manipur Commission for Protection of Child Rights (MCP-CR) in collaboration with the District Administration, Kakching and District Child Welfare Committee. The programme was attended by MCP-CR Chairperson Keisam Pradikumar, Deputy Commissioner Uppuluri Chaitanya, (IAS), Superintendent of Police Priyadarshini Laishram (IPS), Additional Deputy Commissioner P Shantikumar Singh, along with SDOs, SDPOs, DLOs and officials of the District Administration Kakching. Speaking at the occasion, Keisam Pradipkumar said the objective of the MCP-CR is to provide possible interventions for internally displaced children, with its focus centred on protection and mental health.

He stated that the Commission has been actively involved at the grass-root level and that several such discussions have already taken place. He added that convergence, in simple terms means working in a coordinated manner towards one common goal, with different agencies and officials at various levels working together. Applauding the officials, Pradipkumar said several positive developments had taken place in Kakching District in the past and expressed hope that such efforts would continue.

PM SHRI Maibang Higher Secondary School opened its new building

Agency: In the center of Maibang, the newly built G+2 building of PM SHRI (Pradhan Mantri School for Rising India) Maibang Higher Secondary School and the Tularam Senapati Boys' Hostel were officially opened by Debolal Gorlosa, Chief Executive Member of the Dima Hasao Autonomous Council (DHAC). DHAC Chairman Mohet Hojai, Dima Hasao

District BJP President and MAC Dhriti Thaoson, MACs Monjoy Langthasa, Projith Hojai, Ratan Jarambusa, Lalremsiama Darnei, Pronath Rajiyung, John Phoitong, Hirojit Jidung, Ajoy Chakraborty, Krishna Joishi, and Ramsing, as well as Executive Members Donpainon Thaoson, Probita Johori, and Biswajit Daulagupu attended the inauguration ceremony.

MoE team reviews PM-USHA projects, holds regional higher education workshop in Nagaland

Kohima, Jan 17: A high-level delegation from the Ministry of Education (MoE), Government of India, visited Nagaland for three days to review the progress of higher education projects being implemented under the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) and the Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA). The delegation was led by Armstrong Pame, Joint Secretary (ICC & RUSA), Ministry of Education. The visit took place from January 14 to January 17 and focused on assessing both the physical progress and financial utilisation of projects across the state. As part of the visit, a one-day Regional Workshop on RUSA and PM-USHA was organised on January 16 in Kohima. The workshop brought together officials and representatives from Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram. It was hosted by the Department of Higher Education,



Government of Nagaland. During the workshop, detailed discussions were held on issues related to the Public Financial Management System (PFMS), SNA-SPARSH, the PM-USHA online portal, and the overall status of ongoing projects. State-specific challenges were shared, and best practices were discussed to help improve implementation on the ground. The focus remained on ensuring better fund utilisation,

smoother project execution and alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Nagaland's Minister for Higher Education and Tourism, Temjen Imna Along, addressed the participants and highlighted the importance of strengthening higher education infrastructure in the region. Following the workshop, the MoE delegation carried out on-site inspections of several PM-USHA-funded projects. At

Dimapur Government College, the team reviewed facilities such as a girls' hostel, academic block, incubation centre, skill hub and library upgradation works, covering both completed and ongoing components. The delegation also visited two Scheduled Tribe girls' hostels at Kohima Science College and the Professional College of Music and Fine Arts Tsiesema to assess infrastructure development and student facilities.

Four UG cadres arrested in Bishnupur, Imphal West

Imphal, Jan 17: Manipur Police arrested an active cadre of PREPAK (Pro) identified as Wairokpam Atu Meitei @ Boiton (22) of Phojijing Tera Makhong under Nambol Police Station, Bishnupur district from his locality yesterday. A mobile phone was seized from him. On the same day, Manipur Police arrested an active cadre of PREPAK, namely Malem Heisnam @ Ngaiba (21) of Karang Maning Leikai, under Keibul Lamjao-PS, Bishnupur district from Thanga Chingang Play ground area, under Keibul Lamjao Police Station, Bishnupur district. Security forces also arrested an extortionist, a woman active cadre of RPF/PLA, identified as Chabungbam Thaibema Devi (49) @ Medha of Tera Loukrakpam Leikai under Lamphel Police Station, Imphal West district from her residence. From her possession, extortion money amounting a sum of Rs.1 lakh), one mobile handset and one Aadhaar card were recovered. Manipur Police also arrested an active cadre of KCP (Taibanganba), identified as Thangjam Tomba Meitei @ Bikash (31) of Laingoubi Awang Leikai presently staying at Wangoo Ahallup Awang Leikai from the locality of his current residence under Kumbi Police Station, Bishnupur district.



ing a smooth and restful journey for passengers. Railway officials said the new sleeper service is expected to reduce travel time on the Howrah-Guwahati route by around two and a half hours.

The faster connection is likely to benefit daily travellers, tourists, and pilgrims, especially those visiting religious sites in Assam and neighbouring states. Improved rail connectivity is also expected to support trade, tourism, and people-to-people movement between the Northeast

and the rest of the country. The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone for new rail and road infrastructure works worth Rs 3,250 crore. These projects are aimed at improving transport links and boosting overall development in West Bengal and the Northeast. Modi is on a two-day visit to eastern India, covering West Bengal and Assam. The visit includes the launch of major infrastructure projects and comes at a time when political activity is picking up ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections.



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Editorial

The Erosion of Gratitude

Gratitude, once deeply rooted in human relationships, is steadily disappearing from everyday life. In a society driven by ambition and competition, people have become more focused on what they want than on what they already possess. The constant comparison with others, amplified by social media and material expectations, has created a mindset where appreciation is replaced by dissatisfaction. This erosion of gratitude weakens emotional stability and robs individuals of lasting contentment. When people stop valuing what they have, happiness becomes conditional and fragile. The absence of gratitude affects families, workplaces, and communities. In households, efforts are often taken for granted. In offices, dedication is expected but rarely acknowledged. In society, countless contributions by ordinary people go unnoticed. Gratitude is not merely a polite gesture; it is recognition of mutual dependence. Without it, relationships become transactional and cold. People begin to feel invisible, leading to emotional withdrawal and resentment. Reviving gratitude requires conscious cultural effort. Parents must teach children to appreciate care, sacrifice, and support. Schools can promote reflective practices such as journaling, community service, and group discussions that highlight collective contribution. Media must move away from glorifying excess and competition and instead celebrate humility, service, and simplicity. Stories of kindness and appreciation remind society that success is meaningful only when shared with respect. In public life, gratitude strengthens unity. When citizens value each other's roles, cooperation grows. Appreciation encourages responsibility, empathy, and social trust. Gratitude reduces conflict and nurtures harmony by reminding individuals that progress is built on countless unseen efforts. In an age of relentless ambition, gratitude acts as emotional balance. It grounds people, strengthens relationships, and promotes peace of mind. A grateful society is not weaker but wiser. Restoring gratitude is essential to building a humane, respectful, and emotionally stable nation.

A legal action to promote high-quality higher education

The Supreme Court’s order directing all Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) to fill all vacant faculty positions within a period of four months is a timely judicial intervention to end the chronic shortages of faculty that have been gripping universities and colleges in India for long. In the last five years, universities have increased by 22%, colleges have increased by 17%, and the Gross Enrollment Ratio has also gone up to nearly 30% of the eligible students in the age group 18-23 years.

The SC fixing a narrow window period of four months for filling the vacancy lays bare the crisis of a disproportionate faculty-student ratio, raising questions over the quality of education imparted in HEIs. The apex court’s directive follows an interim report submitted by a National Task Force constituted by it to address the mental health concerns of students and prevent the commission of suicides in HEIs.

The SC observed that extremely rigid attendance policies, over-burdening and unplanned phasing/scheduling of the academic curriculum, exam assessment methodologies, faculty shortages, vacant teaching posts, excessive reliance on inexperienced guest faculty, non-transparent or non-existent placement processes, etc. were all pointed out as stressors by the responses received by the NTF from students. While observing that vacancies of teaching as well as non-teaching officials in almost all the Higher Educational Institutions/Central Universities are very high vis-a-vis the sanctioned strength, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports also insisted that the existence of vacancies in HEIs, including technical institutions, impacts the faculty-student ratio and dilutes the quality of teaching in such institutions. The SC also directed that the appointment and filling of vacancies of the post of



vice chancellor, registrars, and other key institutional/administrative positions must also be made within a period of four months. The parliamentary panel’s emphasis, in this regard, on the importance of a regular, full-time VC in running a university, particularly given their critical role in appointing faculty and non-faculty members and overseeing the implementation of development plans, also needs to be noted by HEI for the smooth conduct of faculty recruitment.

The Committee pointed out that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 promises that leadership positions in HEIs will not be kept vacant for long periods and that outgoing and incoming Vice-Chancellors will overlap for some time. Ground realities, however, present a gloomy picture of unfulfilled promises. The SC further directed that since the date of retirement is known much ahead in time, recruitment processes

must begin well in advance to ensure that such posts do not remain vacant for more than a month, and all HEIs must report on an annual basis to the Central and relevant State Governments as to how many reserved posts are vacant, how many are filled, reasons for non-filling, time taken, etc., so that periodic accountability is ensured. Implementation of this directive will be crucial in abolishing ad-hocism in faculty recruitment in HEIs and their over dependence on guest faculty and contractual appointments. “Maintaining a robust and efficient workforce is crucial for the effective functioning of higher educational institutions. Timely and strategic filling of vacancies in both teaching and non-teaching positions based on the principles and procedures for a transparent, merit-based, and efficient recruitment process is essential to ensure continuity of academic delivery, administrative efficiency, and overall institution-

al excellence,” observed the parliamentary committee. The Committee’s recommendation that the Ministry of Education should direct the concerned stakeholders to conduct regular workforce analysis to identify current and future staffing requirements, considering factors like student enrollment, program expansion, faculty retirement, and evolving administrative requirements and academic vision, has got a judicial stamp of approval with SC making annual reporting of faculty strength, vacancy, and recruitment mandatory.

As NEP 2020 envisions that all HEIs by 2040 shall aim to become multidisciplinary, autonomous, and self-governing with larger student enrollments; establish at least one large multidisciplinary HEI in or near every district by 2030; achieve a 50% Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) by 2035; and phase out the affiliation system in the next 15 years, recruitment of qualified and permanent

faculty in the required ratio will be critical to improve the standard of the teaching-learning ecosystem. HEI plays a crucial role in laying the foundation for research and grooming researchers to contribute to the country’s growth in all spheres through quality research work. Apart from fast tracking faculty recruitment, the Committee’s recommendation for providing seed grant facility to the newly recruited faculty at central university and institutions funded by the University Grants Commission to enable top performance by them needs to be prioritised. The central government and state governments earmarking adequate budgetary allocations for higher education will be critical to execute the SC order without any financial hurdles. The Union Budget for 2026-27 can be expected to include policy announcements enabling the HEIs to evolve a dynamic recruitment policy based on the apex court’s order.

Grievance, discussion, and the pursuit of political resolution

Grievance is often spoken of as excess these days—too emotional, too resistant to pragmatism. In political life, it is frequently treated as something to be managed or simply waited out. Yet, grievance rarely persists because it is irrational. It persists because it has not found closure, because it has not been answered in a way that feels adequate. Grievance is not noise. It is unfinished political speech.

In moments of transition, this unfinished quality becomes especially visible. In Bangladesh, political change has a way of drawing unresolved grievances to the surface. Memory sharpens. Old injuries re-emerge. What was once muted becomes loud. This is neither accidental nor inherently destructive. Grievance, after all, is not merely complaint; it is lingering memory seeking relevance. July 2024 marked such a moment for Bangladesh. What unfolded that month was not only a confrontation over power, but a rupture in how political voice was expressed and received. The streets did not merely register dissent; they revealed a deeper exhaustion with being unheard. Grievances that had long circulated in fragments—across campuses, institutions, in hushed conversations—suddenly acquired a collective register. For many, July became less an event than a reference point: a reminder that when dialogue is deferred too long, it does not disappear. It changes form.

What followed in the months after July

was equally telling, and by then, the cost of waiting had already begun to show. Episodes of mob violence—directed at institutions, at symbols, and at times at one another—started to occur. These did not emerge in a political vacuum, nor were they simply moments of unthinking rage. They reflected something more unsettled: the thinning of mediated political conversation. Where dialogue receded, action rushed in. Political theory offers an uncomfortable lens here. The philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin warned against monologic discourse—a mode of speech that allows no reply, that assumes moral finality and treats disagreement not as difference but as bad faith. Monologue, in his formulation, does not merely silence other voices; it reorganises the world so that only one voice feels legitimate.

Unanswered grievance is particularly vulnerable to this narrowing. It begins as a call to be heard. Over time, if met only with deferral or dismissal, it hardens into certainty. The language of injury contracts into a single register. Nuance begins to sound evasive. Alternatives feel suspect. Politics ceases to resemble conversation and begins to resemble performance, often theatrical and increasingly hollow. Mob violence is one of the clearest symptoms of this shift. It emerges not when grievance is loud, but when it is trapped—when there are no institutions that can be trusted, no processes believed to respond, and

no language that feels consequential. In such times, violence becomes not only destructive but also declarative, a way of being seen when other forms of visibility have ostensibly failed. At this point, it is important to clarify that grievance does not curdle into coercion on its own. It does so when state or political actors repeatedly fail to answer it; when deferral is mistaken for stability, and silence is treated as resolution. This is not always malicious. But there are consequences nonetheless.

Politics, like language, cannot survive monologue for long. Bakhtin’s insistence on dialogism—the idea that meaning is produced between voices rather than imposed by one—offers a perspective that is both theoretical and practical. Dialogue does not require agreement. It requires the possibility of reply without dismissal. It requires institutions that absorb conflict rather than expel it, and a political culture that recognises disagreement as a condition of legitimacy rather than a threat to it. For the next government in Bangladesh, this distinction will matter deeply. The task will not be to suppress grievance or replace it with manufactured optimism. That rarely works. And even when it does, it does not last long. The task will be more nuanced and political: to create conditions in which grievance can be articulated without spilling into coercive action.

This is where restraint must be recognised not as weakness, but as political maturity. Restraint does not mean silence. It means calibration. It means recognising that escalation may feel responsive—sometimes even necessary—when patience has already been stretched thin, but when rhetoric becomes the primary currency of politics, strategy thins. Negotiation loses legitimacy. Institutions begin to forfeit their authority. And it is here that closure becomes most elusive.

Closure cannot be declared. It has to be worked towards, collectively. Political closure does not mean forgetting. It means answering. It is not achieved by settling the past once and for all, but by changing how the past is allowed to speak in the present—by widening the range of possible responses without erasing the original injury. Closure is not the disappearance of grievance, but its translation: from the language of injury into the language of outcome.

This translation depends on institutions that function as mediators rather than enforcers: courts that are trusted, administrative systems that respond, political channels that absorb dissent without immediately criminalising it. It depends on communication that is protected from spectacle. Back-channel dialogue matters here as a form of insulation. Quiet conversation allows positions to evolve without public spectacle. It creates space for move-

ment rather than defence.

Equally important is the shaping of public expectations. Governments often underestimate how much reform fails not at the policy stage, but in the gap between what people are encouraged to expect and what politics can realistically deliver. Take the upcoming February election, for instance. So much expectation is being built around it, but practically speaking, how much can the outcomes deliver? When grievance is amplified without limits, outcomes have nowhere to land, except back on the streets. Unresolved grievances demand attention precisely because they continue to shape present behaviour. There is also a need to recognise that attention does not require perpetual escalation. Sometimes it requires patience. Sometimes, it requires accepting that not every answer will arrive quickly or clearly as expected.

As Bangladesh approaches another political transition, the question is not whether grievance will be present. It will be. The question is whether the next government or power structure can sustain a genuinely dialogic political culture, one in which grievance does not have to shout, or strike, in order to be acknowledged, and dialogue does not have to apologise for existing.

That is what political maturity looks like: not the absence of grievance, but the restoration of meaningful dialogue.

I went to A&E with a broken wrist and caught a dose of ‘I’ve been lucky’ syndrome



It was a bad start to the new year. Slipping on ice, I fell and broke my right wrist, so now I can’t hold a pen with my writing hand. But my experience of the NHS was a good reminder of a few facts. Heading to the nearest A&E, I expected one of those 12-hour waits and corridors lined with trolleys of the near-dead, rowdy with drunken and psychotic mayhem. The Guardian recently found that violent incidents recorded by 212 NHS trusts in England rose from 91,175 in 2022-23 to 104,079 in 2024-25, the

equivalent of about 285 cases reported every day. So I was ready for whatever. Notices warned that there would be zero tolerance of abuse of staff. But the place was unexpectedly hushed, with about 25 people waiting – some very old, one a young child, some glum, most calm, with only one swaying and moaning under her breath. Names were called, consulting room doors opened and shut. Sicker patients lay on trolleys in bays with curtains. I was lucky, I reckoned, to be here on a day and at a time when the atmosphere was bustling, but without any mayhem. I settled in for many hours, my fingers swollen like fat sausages, but not in howling agony, not an emergency. How long would it take? After half an hour I was sent for an X-ray. Less than an hour later, a tousle-haired doctor in scrubs told me that, yes, it was broken and needed a cast. He phoned specialists in thumb, hand and wrist care, took their guidance and set to work. I asked about his day: they’d had 71 patients in this fracture clinic, and my plaster cast was the 19th and last of his shift, the length of which – 12 hours – I wouldn’t have guessed from his patience. He booked a follow-up appointment and even wrote it in my diary as, of course, I couldn’t write.

How lucky I was. But then I think a bit more. All my working life I have written about the ups and downs of NHS statistics – some of the best ever in 2010, some of the worst ever since then. How bad are A&E waiting times? The Nuffield Trust and Health Foundation NHS

dashboard shows the 95% target for treatment within four hours has been badly missed for years. The latest figures show a slight improvement: 26.1% of people in England waited for more than four hours. But that means 73.9% of patients didn’t wait too long. So, statistically, I was not especially fortunate, but quite ordinary. As for the disorderly reputation of emergency departments, I hadn’t been all that lucky, either, to find relative calm. A Royal College of Nursing (RCN) report last August found that “during a typical working day in England, A&E staff are now being attacked every hour”. That’s appalling. How could people behave like that? But thinking about the RCN figures, there were 4,054 incidents in the 89 trusts that replied. Multiply that by two to get close to the 200 or so trusts in the UK overall. But then put that number into the context of 6.7 million people attending A&E in the second quarter of 2024-25 in England alone. Many violent incidents against NHS staff were classed by trusts as “unintentional”, the result of delirium or mental health problems, according to a Guardian investigation. Awful things do happen, with a new RCN investigation into the ongoing scourge of corridor care in the NHS calling it “a type of torture” that leads to patient deaths. I fell victim to the “I’ve been lucky” syndrome monitored over decades by the pollster Ipsos, which has tracked attitudes to public services. Many more people think their local NHS provides a good service than think the NHS nationally does

well. That applies to most things – crime, immigration, council services: “It’s terrible out there, but I’m lucky in my home patch.” How dispiriting for politicians that dismal news reports carry more weight than the evidence of people’s own eyes. Painfully slowly, NHS statistics are improving. Waiting numbers fell in 2025 despite it being the NHS’s busiest year – but more of the ageing population joined the queue. Few people will have noted Labour’s focus on health inequality: waiting lists are falling three times faster in areas with the highest joblessness. Ipsos’s annual report, The Perils of Perception, shows how wildly people overestimate social ills. Since ancient times, humans have thought the present worse than imaginary golden ages. But the current pessimism and declinism have a genuine cause, as living standards have flatlined and reckless austerity has diminished public services, in a world where there are more wars and fewer democracies than 20 years ago. Even when things improve, politicians can expect scant credit: the best they get is public concern moving elsewhere, says Gideon Skinner, an Ipsos senior director. It’s for them, he says, to offer words of hope that things will get better. So far, this government has failed to project a belief that we are back on the path of progress. But it only takes a click of a mouse – or a trip to A&E – to find out the facts that will tell you things are usually not as bad as you fear. I should have known better – I certainly do now.

HDFC Bank’: 4 small finance gems with 24% growth potential

New Delhi: Small finance banks have been growing at a steady pace. Their loan books, which have been growing in a CAGR range of 20% to 25%, are getting bigger every year. According to CRISIL, total advances are expected to cross Rs 2 trillion by FY26. Importantly, growth is no longer driven only by microfinance. Loans to small businesses, housing and vehicles are now playing a larger role.

This growth has been backed by better deposit mobilisation. These banks are attracting more small savers. Savings and term deposits form a large part of their funding. This has made their balance sheets more stable and reduced dependence on large or bulk deposits. Small finance banks are no longer just niche micro-lenders; they are maturing into systemic players. A major catalyst for the sector is the RBI’s new roadmap for SFB-to-Universal Bank transitions, which offers a path for high-perform-



ing banks like AU Small Finance Bank to shed regulatory ceilings and compete with banking giants. This transition capability, coupled with a shift toward secured retail assets, is redefining how investors value these stocks. For investors, the timing looks favourable. Loan demand remains healthy across retail

and MSME segments. Asset quality has improved after the stress seen in previous years. With interest rates relatively stable, many banks are now seeing the benefits of scale and operating leverage. The stocks chosen for this article reflect these trends. The focus is on banks where loan and deposit growth is consistent. Profitability and asset quality have also been considered. Together, this helps highlight small finance banks where the core model is clearly working on the ground. AU Small Finance Bank reported a stable performance in the second quarter of FY26 despite a weak demand environment and seasonal disruptions. Deposits grew 21% year on year to Rs 1.3 lakh crore. This was much higher than the system average. The CASA ratio stayed steady at around 29%. A fall in the cost of funds helped ease pressure on margins during the quarter.

Over 250 million 5G subscribers, Jio PAT rose by 3.4% in Q3

New Delhi: Reliance Industries subsidiary Jio Platforms (JPL) on Friday posted a 3.39% rise in its net profit during the December quarter on the back of sequential rise in average revenue per user (Arpu) and uptick in data consumption. JPL’s consolidated net profit in Q3 rose to Rs 7,629 crore from Rs 7,379 crore in the July-September period and Rs 6,861 crore in the third quarter of the previous fiscal, the company said. The revenue rose 2.56% to Rs 37,262 crore from Rs 36,332 crore in the preceding quarter, driven by strong subscriber growth momentum across mobility and homes, increased customer engagement and growth in digital services business. JPL’s Ebitda rose 2.91% on quarter at Rs 19,303 crore from Rs 18,757 crore in Q2FY26 on account of strong revenue growth. Ebitda margin at 51.8% was up 20 basis points sequentially, and up 170 bps year on year. The

firm’s revenue came in ahead of analyst forecast of R 36, 900 crore. PAT and Ebitda also exceeded analyst estimates. Reliance Jio Infocomm, the telecom arm of RIL which commands the lion’s share of JPL’s financials, saw its PAT jump 2.88% q-o-q to Rs 7,173 crore from Rs 6,972 crore in Q2. Its revenue for the quarter grew 2.81% sequentially to Rs 32,751 crore (Q2: Rs 31, 857 crore), and earnings before interest, taxation, depreciation and amortisation (Ebitda) was 2.99% higher at Rs 18,408 crore (Q2: Rs 17,874 crore). Beyond Connectivity company said. 5G SurgeJio’s 5G subscriber base at the end of the quarter was 253 million, rising 19 million from 234 million in Q2 and now accounts for 65% of overall 5G user base in the country. The company added that the share of 5G traffic has increased to 53% of total wireless traffic on Jio network. JioAirFiber userbase was 11.5 million

homes, more or less sustaining the pace of additions from the previous quarter. The total connected premises with fixed broadband on its network reached 25.3 million (Q2: 23 million) in the December quarter. The per capita data usage rose to 40.7 GB per month as compared to 38.7 GB per month in the previous quarter likely because of an uptick in 5G userbase, and FWA base expansion. “This quarter, Jio expanded its subscriber base further, through attractive propositions. The business delivered a robust financial performance with 16.4% growth in EBITDA,” Mukesh Ambani, chairman and managing director, Reliance Industries, the parent company of JPL said. The total wireless data consumption rose to 62.3 billion GB as compared to 58.4 billion GB in Q2FY26 while total voice consumption grew sequentially at 1.53 trillion minutes.

Results for HDFC Bank’s third quarter show an 11% increase in profit to Rs 18,653 crore and an improvement in asset quality

New Delhi: India’s largest private sector lender, HDFC Bank, on Saturday reported its numbers for the October-December quarter, posting a standalone net profit of Rs 18,653 crore for the quarter ended December 31, 2025, marking an 11.5 per cent increase compared to the Rs 16,736 crore reported in the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year. The Net Interest Income (NII) came in at Rs 32,615 crore, up 6.4 per cent from Rs 30,653 crore in the year-ago period. The bank reported Gross Non-Performing Assets (NPA) at Rs 35,179 crore, which is 1.24 per cent of gross advances. This is an improvement from the 1.42 per cent recorded in the previous year.

The Net NPA stood at Rs 11,981.8 crore, translating to a ratio of 0.42 per cent. The bank’s operating expenses for the quarter stood at Rs 18,771.04 crore. The bank

recognised an estimated incremental impact of Rs 800 crore under ‘Employees cost’ during the quarter. This was done to facilitate the assessment of the financial impact arising from the ‘New Labour Codes’ notified by the Government of India, consolidating existing labour laws. The bank also announced the retirement of Bhavesh Zaveri, Executive Director. Zaveri informed the board that he seeks to explore opportunities outside the banking sector and will not seek re-appointment. He is set to retire from his position effective from the close of business hours on April 18, 2026.

The bank remains well-capitalised with a total Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) of 19.87 per cent as of December 31, 2025, significantly above the regulatory

requirement. The Tier 1 CAR stood at 17.8 per cent. HDFC Bank reported strong Q3 FY2026 results with an 11.5% jump in standalone net profit to ₹18,653 crore and improved asset quality, as gross NPAs fell to 1.24% and net NPAs to 0.42%. Key drivers included a 6.4% rise in Net Interest Income (NII) to ₹32,615 crore and stable loan/deposit growth, though some investor focus remained on deposit traction, said Business Today. India’s largest private sector lender, HDFC Bank, on Saturday reported its numbers for the October-December quarter, posting a standalone net profit of Rs 18,653 crore for the quarter ended December 31, 2025, marking an 11.5 per cent increase compared to the Rs 16,736 crore reported in the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year.

From employees to employers: How salary tax compliance is quietly changing

New Delhi: For years, income tax scrutiny around salary deductions has largely been an employee-level issue. If someone claimed an ineligible deduction or inflated an investment, the tax notice went straight to the individual. Employers were seen mainly as facilitators, processing salaries, deducting tax, and moving on. That comfort zone, however, is quietly disappearing. Tax consultant and expert CA Nitin Kaushik says a major shift is underway in how the system views responsibility. “The lens has now moved from employees to employers,” he explains. “Tax authorities are increasingly reaching out to salary-disbursing entities and DDOs instead of individual taxpayers. This is not a small procedural change—it reflects a completely new mindset.”

Until recently, salary declarations worked largely on trust. Employees submitted investment details, payroll teams processed them, and tax was calculated. Proofs were often checked lightly—sometimes not at all. “Earlier, declarations were treated like good-faith statements,” Kaushik says. “You declared, the employer deducted tax, and life moved on. That era is fading fast.” Something quietly changed in the salary tax ecosystem — and most people haven’t noticed yet. For years, income tax scrutiny around salary deductions mostly stopped at the employee level. Wrong claim? Inflated deduction? The notice landed in your inbox. Today, salary processing is no longer viewed as a clerical function. It is becoming a control function. Employers are now expected not just to collect declarations, but to verify them. “The questions have changed,” Kaushik notes. “Were the documents genuine? Did the investment really happen? Was the claim even eligible? Silence or assumption is no longer neutral.” Why does this matter so much? Because unchecked errors



can quickly turn into systemic problems. “One wrong claim is small,” Kaushik says. “But when hundreds of inflated deductions slip through, the gap between declared income and actual tax becomes huge. From a tax perspective, that’s not an error anymore—it’s leakage.” This is where the risk shifts up the chain. What used to be labelled as “employee non-compliance” is now being seen as “process weakness” at the organisational level. And process weakness brings a different kind of response. “It doesn’t invite a gentle query,” Kaushik warns. “It invites scrutiny.” According to him, this change is part of a broader global trend. “Tax systems everywhere are moving closer to the source,” he says. “Salary is predictable. Data is structured. Controls are traceable. Naturally, the spotlight moves to where consistency should exist, the employer.” For organisations, this is less about tax and

more about governance. Strong verification systems reduce exposure, protect HR and finance teams, and build audit confidence. “Think of it as preventive finance, not paperwork,” Kaushik advises. “Good controls today save uncomfortable explanations tomorrow.”

He believes the solution does not lie in complex rules but in a simple shift in approach. “Move from ‘submit whatever you have’ to ‘submit what you can substantiate,’” he says. “That one mindset change reduces risk more than any policy update.” At its core, Kaushik says, this is not about fear—it is about preparedness. “This isn’t just compliance. It’s risk management wearing a tax label. And risk doesn’t show up where intentions are bad. It shows up where controls are weakest. If salary is the most stable income stream, its taxation can’t remain the most casual process anymore.”

Market volatility boosts flexi-cap funds: Comparing Jio BlackRock

New Delhi: Flexi-cap mutual funds saw strong investor inflows in 2025 as market volatility underscored the value of flexibility in portfolio construction. With the ability to invest across large-, mid- and small-cap stocks without fixed allocation limits, the category allowed fund managers to navigate sharp divergences in performance across segments during the year. As several new funds entered the flexi-cap space, investors are now presented with distinctly different approaches to the same mandate. Jio BlackRock Flexi Cap Fund, Capitalmind Flexi Cap Fund and Abakkus Flexi Cap Fund exemplify how strategies within the category can vary significantly in terms of risk management, stock selection and return expectations

Institutional, tech-led approach Jio BlackRock Flexi Cap Fund differentiates itself through an institutional, technology-driven investment framework. Supported by BlackRock’s Aladdin risk management platform, the fund combines systematic models with active oversight to build a diversified portfolio across market capitalisations. With assets under management exceeding Rs 2,200 crore and a relatively low

expense ratio of 0.50%, it is positioned as a scalable core holding for long-term investors. The portfolio has a clear tilt towards large-cap leaders such as HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, Infosys and Tata Consultancy Services, reflecting a preference for stability and risk control over aggressive alpha generation. While the approach offers strong downside management potential, the fund’s relatively short performance track record limits its ability to assess how it may perform across full market cycles. Capitalmind Flexi Cap Fund adopts a markedly different style, emphasising tactical allocation and momentum-based investing. Managed by Anoop Vijaykumar, the fund actively adjusts exposure based on market signals, blending quantitative models with discretionary oversight. This has resulted in higher exposure to mid-cap and emerging companies such as One97 Communications, Narayana Hrudayalaya and Aster DM Healthcare. With an expense ratio of 0.97%, the fund is costlier than some peers but has delivered stronger early returns since inception. Its strategy is suited to investors comfortable with higher volatility and frequent style shifts, as performance may

fluctuate sharply depending on market trends and momentum reversals. Abakkus Flexi Cap Fund represents a more traditional, fundamentals-driven approach. Led by Sanjay Doshi, the fund focuses on identifying high-quality businesses with durable competitive advantages, strong cash flows and consistent earnings growth, acquired at reasonable valuations. With an AUM of over Rs 2,500 crore, it draws on the established Abakkus investment philosophy centred on disciplined stock selection and sector diversification.

The portfolio maintains a balanced exposure across financials, industrials and select consumption themes, aiming to deliver stable, risk-adjusted returns over the long term. Rather than chasing short-term market momentum, the fund seeks to compound capital steadily across cycles. Together, these funds illustrate how the flexi-cap category has broadened to encompass a wide range of investment philosophies, offering investors multiple pathways to participate in India’s equity markets based on their risk appetite, time horizon and conviction in active management styles.

IPOs from January 19–23 Amagi Media Labs and Bharat

New Delhi: The primary market is set for a busy week as several companies are scheduled to tap Dalal Street. Now, those who track the initial public offerings (IPOs) market will see a cuisine of mainboard issues as well as multiple small and medium enterprise (SME) IPOs opening for subscription between January 19-23. Apart from these new openings, the market will also see a list of public offerings scheduled to make their stock market debut during the week. That means, the coming week will feature one large mainboard IPO, along with three SME issues and nine listings. The spotlight of the week will be the Shadowfax Technologies IPO. It is the only mainboard offering opening in the coming week. The size of the issue stands at Rs 1,907.27 crore. This IPO is a mix of fresh equity and an offer for sale by existing shareholders. The IPO will open on January 20 and close on January 22. After the bidding process, the allotment is expected to be finalised on January 23, with listing tentatively scheduled for January 28 on both the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and the National Stock Exchange (NSE).

Alongside the mainboard issue, three SME IPOs will open during the week. Digilogic Systems IPO Digilogic Systems



will open its IPO on January 20 and close on January 22. The issue size is Rs 81.01 crore. The price band is set be-

tween Rs 98-104 per share. After the subscription period, the company is expected to list on the BSE SME platform

on January 28. KRM Ayurveda IPO is another SME IPO that will open a day later, on January 21. The issue will remain open until January 23. The Rs 77.49 crore issue is priced in the range of Rs 128-135 per share. Allotment is likely to be completed by January 27, followed by a tentative listing on the NSE SME platform on January 29. Shayona Engineering will be the third SME IPO to open next week. The issue, which is entirely a fresh offer of shares, will open on January 22 and close on January 27. The company is expected to list on the BSE SME platform on January 30 after allotment finalisation on January 28. The flow of listings continues through the week. On January 21, GRE Renew Enertech, INDO SMC,

Narmadesh Brass Industries, and Amagi Media Labs are expected to make their market debut across the SME platforms and the mainboard. Armour Security is scheduled to list on the NSE SME platform on January 22, while Aritas Vinyl is expected to list on the BSE SME platform on January 23. Amagi Media Labs IPO is open for public subscription today, 13 January, 2026. Ahead of the IPO opening, the company has raised ₹805 crore from anchor investors on January 12, 2026.

South Korean court sentences former president to 5 years in prison

Dubai: A South Korean court on Friday sentenced former President Yoon Suk Yeol to five years in prison on charges including obstructing his arrest, marking the first criminal verdict in a series of cases stemming from his actions during the December 2024 martial law crisis.The ruling is the first judicial decision to address the illegality of both the declaration and implementation of martial law.The court found that Yoon mobilized presidential security officials to block authorities from executing a lawful arrest warrant at his res-

idence. He was also found to have infringed on the right of nine cabinet members to deliberate on the declaration of martial law by convening only a limited number of handpicked ministers, an apparent attempt to make the meeting appear official.The proceedings were broadcast live as Yoon attended the hearing wearing a white shirt and navy suit and showed no visible reaction throughout, including when the court delivered the sentence.Despite having a greater duty than anyone else as president to uphold the Constitu-

tion, he instead disregarded measures designed to prevent presidential arbitrariness,” Judge Baek Dae-hyun of the Seoul Central District Court said.Earlier this week, prosecutors sought the death penalty for Yoon in a separate trial on charges of leading an insurrection. Prosecutors argued his alleged actions posed a grave threat to the constitutional order and warranted the maximum punishment allowed under South Korean law. Insurrection is one of the few crimes still punishable by death in the country.

Mamdani Takes Oath at Abandoned NYC Subway Station to Highlight Plan to Improve

Dubai: New York City started 2026 with a new mayor, as democratic socialist Zohran Mamdani made history when he was sworn in as the city’s first Muslim, first South Asian and first African-born leader, as well as the youngest in over a century. Ahead of a public ceremony on New Year’s Day that drew tens of thousands of people in the freezing cold, Mamdani was privately sworn in at midnight by New York Attorney General Tish James in a small ceremony held at a decommissioned subway station below City Hall. He took his oath using two Qur’ans, including one that belonged to his grandfather. Andrew Epstein, one of Mamdani’s closest advisers, spoke with Democracy Now! about the significance of the private ceremony and how it connected the new mayor to the history of the city he now leads. AMY GOODMAN: Democratic socialist Zohran Mamdani has been sworn in as the mayor of New York City. He was officially sworn in just after midnight on New Year’s Eve. He’s made history as New York’s first Muslim, first South Asian and first African-born mayor, and, at the age of 34, the city’s youngest mayor in more than a century. ANDREW EPSTEIN: Absolutely right, as well as the first lady Rama Duwaji’s parents, their guests, as well, stepped off of the first train. AMY GOODMAN: That was Andrew Epstein, the communications director and, later, creative director on Zohran Mamdani’s

campaign for mayor. He’s now an adviser.

When we come back, we’ll hear more from Friday’s historic — from Thursday’s historic inauguration ceremony on the steps of City Hall, where thousands braved the freezing cold to participate. Stay with us.

AMY GOODMAN: “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” performed by Mandy Patinkin and PS22 Chorus of Staten Island students yesterday at Mayor Zohran Mamdani’s inauguration, New Year’s Day on the steps of City Hall. The song was written by the blacklisted lyricist Yip Harburg. See our December 25th show on The Wizard of Oz, where the song came from, about its significance.And then the next one pulled up, pulled up a little farther, and off stepped then the mayor-elect and his wife Rama. They walked up under the arch that says City Hall station. And at midnight, Attorney General Tish James administered the oath of office.

And then, Zohran, the mayor, had to pay his \$9 in cash to the clerk of the city and sign his name into the book. And I had a great conversation with the clerk. He has physical bound books where every single mayor, going back to the early 19th century, has signed their name, because in the — before the days of photo ID, you know, you matched the signature. How are you going to prove someone is who they are? So, he actually is in possession of these bound volumes. We have the

21st-century one, so it had Michael Bloomberg and Bill de Blasio and Eric Adams. In his office, he has 20th century, 19th century and so on. Ahead of a public ceremony that drew thousands of people in below-freezing weather, Mamdani was sworn in privately at midnight New Year’s Eve by New York Attorney General Tish James in a small ceremony in an old, decommissioned subway station below City Hall. TTORNEY GENERAL LETITIA JAMES: Good evening, everyone, and happy new year to all of you. And I can’t think of a better way to usher in 2026 than to be amongst family and friends and to inaugurate the man who will bring about a new era of progress, promise and prosperity for New York City.

AMY GOODMAN: As the New York Attorney General Tish James swore in Zohran Mamdani, he placed his hand on top of two Qur’ans held by his wife, the Syrian American artist Rama Duwaji, including one that belonged to his grandfather, making him the first New York City mayor to use Islam’s holy text at his inauguration. This is Mayor Mamdani.MAYOR ZOHRAN MAMDANI: Thank you so much for everyone for being here. Happy New Year to New Yorkers, both inside this tunnel and above. And I cannot wait to see everyone tomorrow as we begin our term. This is truly the honor and the privilege of a lifetime. And af-

ter just having taken my oath to become the mayor of the city of New York, I do so also here in the old City Hall subway station, a testament to the importance of public transit to the vitality, the health and the legacy of our city.AMY GOODMAN: That was just after midnight on January 1st. Later, on Thursday afternoon, Senator Bernie Sanders swore in Zohran Mamdani again in a huge public ceremony at City Hall in the freezing weather. We’ll hear more of that soon.But first, this is Andrew Epstein, one of the key people who helped steer Mayor Mamdani’s long-shot campaign, who talked to Democracy Now! just before he was sworn in the second time on the steps of City Hall about the significance of Mayor Mamdani’s midnight swearing-in. And last night, we were just below where we are right now, in the old City Hall station, built in 1905, decommissioned in the 1940s when Fiorello La Guardia was mayor, because the trains got longer and the platform was too short. But it remains beautifully intact in its original form.Last night, the small number of guests and reporters were brought downstairs, waited on the platform, and a 6 train — now, this is the station where the 6 train typically turns around. But a 6 train pulled in. First, Mira Nair and Mahmood Mamdani and the families stepped off the first car on the train.

Mamdani Takes an Oath at a NYC Subway Abandoned



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The new Trump health proposal is difficult for some policy specialists to understand

Dubai: On the last day to enroll in Affordable Care Act (ACA) health insurance plans in most states, President Donald Trump presented his own ideas for a health care plan that left some health policy experts that spoke to ABC News with unanswered questions.Trump has long been asked for a health care plan amid sustained criticism of the ACA, which was signed into law by President Barack Obama. “The Great Healthcare Plan” presents a proposal to shift government insurance subsidies directly to consumers through health savings accounts and take advantage of his “most favored nation” drug price initiative.“My plan would reduce your insurance premiums by stopping government payoffs to big insurance companies and sending that money directly to the people,” Trump said in a video announcing the plan.However, the video and one-page fact sheet posted on the White House website were light on specifics about how much would actually go to Americans or how much funding the plan would require or how the funds would be distributed.Dr. Sachin Jain, a former official in the Department of Health and Human Services during the Obama administration, acknowledged that it’s a “pretty big step” for Trump to articulate health care as a major priority during his second term. Jain, who is now the president and CEO of SCAN Group and SCAN Health Plan, a not-for-profit Medicare Advantage provider, told ABC News “health care is one of these areas where the devil is always in the details” in terms of what changes could be implemented. Aside from lowering drug prices through most-favored nation deals and cutting back on insurance subsidies, the plan proposes a cost-sharing provision that the Congressional Budget Office estimates would reduce most Obamacare premiums by 10%.The plan also proposes to hold insurance companies accountable with a “Plain English” standard and institute pricing requirements for providers who accept Medicare and Medicaid to “prominently post their pricing and fees.”Trump urged Congress to “pass this framework into law without delay.” Some health policy experts believe with just a one-page fact sheet that there’s no way to tell how impactful these ideas could be and if they will expand on the plans already in existence through the ACA.“Several of these provisions would have virtually no effectbecause they’re already in the ACA, or they look very similar to ones that are already in the ACA,” KFF Senior Vice President Cynthia Cox told ABC News.

Cox, the director of the Program on the ACA at the independent health policy research organization, stressed that Trump’s plan, in many respects, already exists, including



price transparency and holding big insurance companies accountable.Speaking about his plan, the president said Thursday that “nobody’s ever heard of” this idea to give money directly to the consumer, but Jain noted that what’s known as “consumerism” has been around for a long time.“One of the big challenges with consumerism is health care is a complex industry to navigate, and people don’t often understand what it is that they’re buying or not buying,” Jain told ABC News. Patients might also have a “degree of anxiety” because they don’t always know what bill they’re going to get, according to Jain.“When it comes to true consumerism, shopping for healthcare isn’t like shopping for other goods and services, mostly because people don’t actually want to consume more health care,” he said.Cox stressed that not only is giving money directly to Americans not a new proposal, it was already in multiple Republican proposals that failed to advance through the Senate in December. It could effectively do away with the pre-existing condition protection provisions of the Affordable Care Act, and at least for people who are buying their own health insurance, which is

over 20 million people,” Cox added.What’s next?

Experts suggest it’s too early to tell how soon the new proposal could impact people’s health care, especially with Congress virtually gone through Tuesday.

White House officials said the president wants Congress to codify his plan, but didn’t specify how much input congressional leaders had on the new proposal.The House last week passed a Democratic-led bill that would see the enhanced premium tax credits extended by three years.But a path forward that sends the legislation through the Senate to the Resolute Desk for Trump’s signature remains in question.GOP Senate Majority Leader John Thune has said that there’s “no appetite” for an extension in the upper chamber but pointed to ongoing bipartisan talks on the extensions between senators and House members.Since Trump’s video announcement, House Speaker Mike Johnson has vowed to continue deliberative discussions with the White House to lower health care costs for Americans.In reference to the president’s healthcare plan, Cassidy said his Senate committee will “take action” on Trump’s affordability agenda.

Republican Sen. Roger Marshall also lobbied to work with the president on a comprehensive package that includes his bill to make health care more affordable.Still, Democratic Sen. Patty Murray blasted the plan in a post on X, writing that it took the president over a decade to come up with a health care plan that is “one entire page.”

“It will do absolutely NOTHING to stop your premiums from more than doubling,” she said.Meanwhile, the president’s plan came on the last day to enroll in ACA health insurance plans in most states, with a few exceptions. According to government data, about 1.4 million fewer people have signed up so far this year, as premiums skyrocketed after ACA tax credits expired at the end of 2025.Cox, at KFF, emphasized that many people could face dire consequences with the health care coverage currently available to them.

“People are really, in some cases, facing life or death decisions because they can’t afford to pay another \$10,000 to keep their insurance coverage, which might mean they go uninsured,” she said.Senate Health Committee Chairman Bill Cassidy argued at the time of the bill’s consideration that his legislative package would have put “thousands in patients’ pockets” to help pay for their out-of-pocket expenses. But the measure failed by a 51-48 vote just days before the expiration of the enhanced ACA tax credits

White House officials on Thursday said Congress’ legislative plans haven’t been able to “effectuate” Trump’s desire to pay people directly for their health care costs. Without referencing any lawmakers and their existing packages specifically, the administration officials told reporters on Thursday that the White House has engaged with many Hill “allies” on the details of the president’s new plan.Cox said she believes the president’s new strategy could also create problems for vulnerable Americans, leaving them with no option for health insurance if they don’t get it through their employer.“One possible interpretation of this [plan] is that, you know, if you give cash to people without any requirement that they use that cash to purchase ACA marketplace coverage -- or coverage that has protections for people with pre-existing conditions -- then you might see that healthy people use taxpayer dollars to purchase coverage that’s not compliant with the Affordable Care Act,” Cox told ABC News.“What that would mean is that the ACA or Obamacare markets become destabilized, possibly to the point of collapsing, which would leave people who have pre-existing conditions and who would otherwise rely on that coverage without any options,” she said.

Five minutes more exercise and 30 minutes less sitting could help millions live longer

Just five extra minutes of exercise and half an hour less sitting time each day could help millions of people live longer, according to research highlighting the potentially huge population benefits of making even tiny lifestyle changes.Until now, evidence about reducing the number of premature deaths assumed that everyone must meet specific targets, overlooking the positives of even minor increases in physical activity.Moderate-intensity physical activity such as brisk walking for an extra five minutes a day was associated with an estimated 10% reduction in deaths, the study of 135,000 people from the UK, US, Norway and Sweden found. Researchers led by the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences also found reducing sedentary time by 30 minutes a day was associated with an estimated 7% reduction in all deaths.The greatest benefit was seen if the least active 20% of the population increased their activity by five minutes each day. The findings were published in the Lancet. The authors stressed that while the findings should not be used as personal advice, such as specific exercise recommendations for individuals, they showed the potentially



vast benefits for populations as a whole.Prof Aiden Doherty, of the Nuffield Department of Population Health at the University of Oxford, who was not involved with the study, said the “excellent” analysis was “a leap forward” from existing evidence.“While this might seem like yet another ‘more physical activity is good for you’ study, the authors have added important new details,” he said“This paper indicates that up to 10% of all premature deaths might be prevented if everyone were to make small and realistic increases to their moderate-intensity physical activity of five minutes a day. Reducing sed-

entary time by 30 minutes a day would likely result in a smaller, but still meaningful, number of averted deaths.”Daniel Bailey, a reader in sedentary behaviour and health at Brunel University of London, who was not involved in the study, said the “really promising” finding was that just five more minutes a day of moderate-intensity physical activity could save lives. “This should be feasible for most people, even those who only do very small amounts of physical activity already. “Moderate activities are those that make us breathe a bit heavier and feel warmer. So simple daily activities like a brisk

walk, housework or gardening will do the trick. And if we want to reduce sitting by 30 minutes a day, this can be swapped for light activities like pottering around the house or a slow walk.”Meanwhile, a second study, published in the eClinicalMedicine journal, found that when combined, small improvements in sleep, physical activity, and diet were linked with a longer life.For example, an extra five minutes of sleep, two minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity – such as brisk walking or taking the stairs – and an additional half a serving of vegetables a day could lead to an extra year of life for those with the worst sleep, physical activity, and dietary habits.Experts led by the University of Sydney gathered information on the levels of activity, diet and sleep of almost 60,000 people taking part in the UK Biobank study. Compared with people with the worst sleep, physical activity and dietary habits, the study suggested that the optimal combination of these behaviours – seven to eight hours of sleep per day, more than 40 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity a day and a healthy diet – was associated with living almost a decade longer.

Strolls with stops use more energy than continuous walking, scientists show

Researchers have hit on an unusual tip for walkers who want to burn more calories: rather than plodding along steadily from start to finish, consider taking rest stops.The advice emerged from a study of volunteers who were put through their paces in the laboratory to measure the oxygen and energy demands of short strolls versus longer walks.Tests on the participants found that walking or climbing stairs in 10- to 30-second bouts required 20 to 60% more oxygen, a proxy for energy consumption, than covering the same distance in one continuous session, largely because walking is more efficient after several minutes in motion.“When we walk for shorter bouts, we use more energy and consume more oxygen to cover the same distance,” said Francesco Luciano, a researcher at the University of Milan and first author on the study. “It’s like having a car that consumes more fuel during the first few kilometres than it does afterwards.”The team launched the study after noticing that many estimates of the energy needed for walking drew on data from people exercising at a metabolic steady state. That is when the heart rate is constant and the body’s energy production and consumption are balanced, a state compared to a car travelling at cruise speed.To learn more about the energy needs for different walks, the scientists recruited 10 healthy volunteers who were monitored as they exercised on a stair climber and a treadmill. The exercises covered three different speeds with bouts lasting from 10 seconds to four minutes. During the exercise sessions, the researchers recorded how much oxygen each person consumed and worked out the metabolic demands for the various walks. They found that more energy was needed at the start of each walk, to get going and warm the body up, than later in the exercise when the body was already moving and working more efficiently.“When we start walking, we may incur some fixed costs at the beginning of the bout,” Luciano said. “In analogy, driving a car needs some fuel to start the engine or get the car out of the garage. We found that when starting from rest, a significant amount of oxygen is consumed just to start walking. We incur this cost regardless of whether we then walk for 10 or 30 seconds, so it proportionally weighs more for shorter rather than longer bouts.”Measurements of the participants on the exercise machines also revealed that in the earliest stages of a walk, people are less efficient at converting oxygen and energy into effective movement, but this improves as they get in their stride.The work reinforces knowledge of the health benefits of brief strolls and bounding up the stairs, particularly for people who are largely sedentary, and may explain the improvements in fitness that come with popular “exercise snacks”. These involve short bursts of activity often lasting no more than two minutes each. The study is published in Proceedings of the Royal Society B.Beyond the implications for healthy people, the work will help inform the design of rehabilitation programmes and exercise advice for those with limited mobility, such as people with obesity and those who have had strokes.“Researchers have usually measured energy demands over walking bouts lasting many minutes. However, many people are not even able to walk for so long. Think of elderly individuals or people with gait disorders,” Luciano said.“If we want to design programmes to promote physical activity or exercise for these people, we need to rethink how to estimate their energy demands and adapt. Understanding the energy demands of short bouts of walking could help us promote physical activity in a more inclusive way.”

Two hours of exercise a week reduces joint pain and visits to GP

People with sore joints who exercise for two hours a week have less pain, visit their GP less and take less sick leave, a study has found.The findings are from an analysis of how 40,000 people across the UK with hip, back or knee pain fared when they did two one-hour exercise classes for 12 weeks.The impact on their lives was so great that it has led to calls for the NHS to make physical activity a standard part of treatment for the millions struggling with musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions.If the 3.7 million Britons with sore joints but without a care plan exercised for two hours a week then they, their families, the NHS and the UK economy would benefit by as much as £34bn, researchers say.Nuffield Health, Frontier Economics and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) analysed the structured exercise programme that the private gym group has offered free of charge to more than 40,000 joint pain sufferers who used their 110 gyms across the UK.They did two one-hour classes a week in a Nuffield gym, led by a rehabilitation specialist, and did exercises to boost their mobility, stability, strength and cardiovascular health. People who took part saw the following benefits:Had on average 35% less pain. Went to see their GP 29% less often. Took almost half as many sick days from work.Needed their family to look after them 21% less.“Tailored, structured exercise is one of the most effective treatments for people with long-term conditions. If movement were a pill, it



would be the most powerful drug on the planet, yet it remains under-prescribed.“Integrating it as a treatment into mainstream healthcare would transform lives on a scale no drug could”, said Dr Davina Deniszczyc, Nuffield Health’s charity and medical director. The analysis found that if 184,000 of the 334,000 MSK patients in Greater Manchester took up Nuffield’s offer of free exercise, that would deliver £1.7bn of “social value”.Expand this to cover the whole and that figure would rise to £34bn, the researchers said. That would be made up of £18bn of benefits of improved health, £13bn of benefits to relatives and carers, a £3bn boost to the economy and £230m in direct savings for the NHS. For example, participants’ health-related quality of life rose by 13%, which was calculated to be worth £6,680 in financial terms. Similarly, their drop in sick days was estimated to be worth £501 while the 10% increase

in their family’s life satisfaction was valued at £4,765.Nick Woolley, a manager at Frontier Economics, said at the start of Nuffield’s joint pain programme, one in four of those who attended the classes could not work and by then end of the 12 weeks, almost one in 10 were fit enough to return to work.Prof Tim Cable, the director of MMU’s institute of sport, said the research showed “the transformative role of movement” in alleviating pain among the 25 million Britons with one or more long-term health conditions and are “a blueprint” for a nationwide programme of NHS-provided exercise. The NHS should “include structured exercise programmes in best practice guidance” and encourage hospitals and GP practices to refer eligible patients to them, the analysis said.However, the chief executive of the charity Versus Arthritis, Deborah Alsina, said that while exercise improved quality of life for people with the condition, it was not the “solve-all” the analysis suggests; they could have trouble fitting exercise into their lives and often experienced “challenges in accessing effective treatment and support from the NHS, long delays to secure a diagnosis and lack of treatment options”, she said.A six-week pain reduction programme of education, exercise and self-management run by some NHS trusts in England, called Escape Pain, which 15,000 people have used, has been found to improve quality of life for people with arthritis and also save the NHS time and money.A Department of Health and Social Care spokesperson said: “We know that living with chronic pain can have a significant impact on quality of life. We will transform the NHS by shifting care from sickness to prevention to keep people healthy and independent for longer through our 10-year health plan.“We will also harness the power of technology which can help keep people active. This includes ensuring all patients with chronic pain have access to wearable technology as part of their care, especially in areas of deprivation.”

Smartwatches offer little insight into stress levels, researchers find

They are supposed to monitor you throughout the working day and help make sure that life is not getting on top of you.But a study has concluded that smartwatches cannot accurately measure your stress levels – and may think you are overworked when really you are just excited.Researchers found almost no relationship between the stress levels reported by the smartwatch and the levels that participants said they experienced. However, recorded fatigue levels had a very slight association with the smartwatch data, while sleep had a stronger correlation. Eiko Fried, an author of the study, said the correlation between the smartwatch and self-reported stress scores was “basically zero”.He added: “This is no surprise to us given that the watch measures heart rate and heart rate doesn’t have that much to do with the emotion you’re experiencing – it also goes up for sexual arousal or joyful experiences.”He noted that his Garmin had previously told him he was stressed when he was working out in the gym and when excitedly talking to a friend he had not seen for a while at a wedding.“The findings raise important questions about what wearable data can or can’t tell us about mental states,” said Fried. “Be careful and don’t live by your smartwatch – these are consumer devices, not medical devices.”Fried said although there was a lot of academic work looking for physiological signals that can act as proxies for emotional states, most were not precise enough. This is because there is an overlap between positive and negative feelings – for example, hair standing on end can signal anxiety as well as excitement. Fried, an associate professor in the department of clinical psychology at Leiden University in the Netherlands, and his team tracked stress, fatigue and sleep for three months on 800 young adults wearing Garmin vivosmart 4 watches. They asked them to report four times a day on how stressed, fatigued or sleepy users were feeling before cross-referencing the data.And the results, published in the Journal of Psychopathology and Clinical Science, found that none of the participants saw the stress scores on their watches meet the baseline for significant change when they recorded feeling stressed. And for a quarter of participants, their smartwatch told them they were stressed or unstressed when they self-reported feeling the opposite.The relationship with physical fatigue, described by Garmin as “body battery”, was “quite a bit stronger than for stress but overall quite weak” said Fried. Garmin does not disclose the calculations it uses to work out the body battery score, though he suspected it was a combination of a pulse measurement and activity levels.The relationship with sleep was stronger again, though Fried noted it measured sleep duration and told us little about how well rested someone was, other than the fact there tended to be a relationship between how long you slept and how well rested you felt.There was a significant association between the Garmin and self-reported data for two-thirds of the sample for sleep. The researchers noted that in nearly all cases, if participants went from one day of self-reporting bad sleep quality, to another day with a good score, they could predict an increase in sleep duration on the Garmin of around two hours. “This is a really noticeable effect,” they said. The research is intended to feed into an early warning system for depression, in which wearable tech users receive data that will help them receive preventive treatments before an episode begins.So far, there are promising signs that lower activity levels could be a predictor, though Fried has been unable to identify whether this is because of exercise’s protective effect against depression or because people feel less energetic as their mental state deteriorates.“Wearable data can offer valuable insights into people’s emotions and experiences, but it’s crucial to understand its potential and limitations,” said Margarita Panayiotou, a researcher at the University of Manchester, after reading the study.“This research helps clarify what such data can reliably reveal and makes an important contribution to ongoing discussions about the role of technology in understanding wellbeing. It’s important to remember that wearable data does not necessarily represent objective truth and should be interpreted alongside broader context, including individuals’ perceptions and lived experiences.”Garmin has been approached for comment.

5 Bodyweight Exercises To Start You Off On Your Fitness Journey At Home

The new year brings with it a lot of resolutions and the promise of starting afresh. One of the most common promises that people make to themselves is to work out and get fit. However, somewhere along the way, motivation fades, and so does people’s attendance at the gym.On a new episode of the podcast All Things Considered on NPR, the experts spoke about how working out in a gym and lifting heavy weights are not the only ways to get fit. In fact, the experts on the podcast shared that bodyweight exercises can go a long way and are a great way to get started if you don’t feel like going to the gym. The podcast host, Juana Summer, said, “You might assume that you have to lift heavy weight to get stronger, but research shows that’s not necessarily the case. You can make real strides using just your own body weight.” Speaking on the episode, James Steele, an exercise scientist from the UK, said that if everyone did just a handful of bodyweight exercises consistently – squats, planks, push-ups, a wall sit, those types of things – that would go a long way. What are bodyweight exercises?These kinds of exercises use your own mass as resistance, building strength, endurance, and flexibility anywhere – no gym needed. They are perfect for beginners, people who don’t have time to go to the gym, or those who travel a lot. They engage multiple muscles simultaneously for functional fitness, improve balance, and burn calories

efficiently through compound movements.Here are 5 exercises that can help you to start doing bodyweight exercises at home:
Squats
Targets: Quads, glutes, hamstrings, core.How-To: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, toes slightly out. Push hips back as if sitting into a chair, keeping chest up, knees tracking over toes (don’t let them cave in). Lower until thighs are parallel to floor. Drive through heels to stand, squeezing glutes at top. 3 sets of 10–15 reps. Beginner Mod: Partial squats to box/chair. Planks
Targets: Core, shoulders, glutes, back.
How-To: Forearms on floor, elbows under shoulders, body straight from head to heels (no sagging hips/arching back). Squeeze glutes/quads, gaze down. Hold 20–60 seconds, breathing steadily. 3 sets. Beginner Mod: Knee plank. Push-Ups
Targets: Chest, triceps, shoulders, core.
How-To: High plank position, hands wider than shoulders. Lower chest to floor by bending elbows (45° from body), body straight. Push up through palms to start. 3 sets of 8–12 reps. Beginner Mod: Incline (hands on bench) or knee push-ups.
Wall Sit
Targets: Quads, glutes, calves.How-To: Back against wall, slide down until thighs parallel to floor (90° knees/ankles). Feet hip-width, knees over ankles. Hold 30–60 seconds, arms out or



clapsed. 3 sets. Beginner Mod: Shorter holds or higher position. How-To: Step forward with right foot, lowering until both knees are 90° (back knee hovers). Front knee over ankle; torso upright. Push through the front heel to start, alternating legs. 3 sets of 10/leg. Beginner Mod: Reverse lunges or stationary split squats.

Sunita Ahuja Responds to Govinda’s Affair Rumors



Mumbai: The difficult marriage between Govinda and Sunita Ahuja has garnered attention over the past year. There has been a lot of conjecture on the future of their marriage after several rumors that Govinda’s multiple affairs caused them to separate. Sunita Ahuja has repeatedly expressed her opinions, and she recently did so once more.Sunita Ahuja may be heard saying, “Aisi ladkiyan bahut aati hain, but tum thodi bewakoof ho,” in a MissMalini podcast promo. Tum 63 ke ho gaye ho. Yash ki career hai, you must marry Tina. Govinda ko nahi maaf karungi main. (There are a lot of these women, but you’re a little stupid. You are now sixty-three years old.

Yash needs to concentrate on his job, thus you must marry Tina. I’m not going to pardon Govinda.”Main Nepal ki hoon; khukri nikal dunga na, toh sabki haalat kharab ho jaayegi,” she continued. Isliye bolti hoon, abhi bhi, satark ho ja beta. (I’m from Nepal; everyone will get into problems if I pull out a khukri. I advise him to exercise caution because there is still time.Sunita Ahuja went on, “Being Govinda’s son, he didn’t tell him, ‘Aap meri help kardo,’” emphasizing Govinda’s lack of advocacy for his son Yash’s profession. “Govinda ne bhi uski koi help nahi ki.” In March 1987, Govinda and Sunita Ahuja were married. Until the birth of their daughter

Tina in 1988, they kept their marriage a secret. Yashvardhan, their son, was born in 1997.Since February of this year, there have been internet rumors that Govinda and Sunita are divorcing. After Sunita Ahuja revealed personal information in a few recent interviews a few months ago, rumors regarding their relationship issues began to circulate.According to a report citing a source amid these rumors, “Sunita apparently sent a separation notice a few months ago, but there has been no movement since then.” The couple reportedly got back together a few months ago, according to reports. The pair posed in front of the media on Ganesh Chaturthi. Declaring that no force could separate her from Govinda, Sunita dismissed any rumors of a separation.Govinda was sent to the hospital after passing out at home earlier this year. The actor was released that same afternoon following a battery of examinations and medical supervision. In his interactions with the media, he declared himself to be in perfect health.Sunita Ahuja, Govinda’s wife, stated in her most recent vlog that she learned of his recent hospital stay from his interview after he was released from Mumbai’s CritiCare Hospital. Sunita Ahuja appeared to be disengaged from the incident because she was out of town. In response to a question from a fan, Sunita stated, “Govinda is fully fit. He passed out while training for his upcoming movie, Duniyadaari.”I just returned and watched an interview where it was mentioned that he suffered fatigue due to over-exercising,” she continued. However, he is presently doing well. Don’t be concerned.Govinda said that “fatigue” from excessive exercise was the reason he passed out after leaving the hospital. Additionally, he suggested that fans incorporate pranayama and yoga into their exercise routine.

Rani Mukerji visits the Dagdusheth Ganpati shrine



Mumbai: Actor Rani Mukerji is starting 2026 on a positive note after completing thirty years in the film industry. To obtain blessings, the actor went to the well-known Dagdusheth Ganpati temple in Pune. She told the news agency ANI that she has made it a practice to visit temples whenever she travels for work after being spotted conducting the aarti inside the temple.”I always come here for darshan,” Rani remarked. I enjoy visiting temples whenever I travel to any city, whether or not a movie is coming out. I frequently came here to pray while I was shooting for Aiyyya. I’ve come to Dagdusheth to ask for blessings because my movie will shortly be released. ”But I always pray that there is peace throughout

the world and that everyone is happy,” she continued. May Dagdusheth Bappa take away every child’s pain and every barrier. May he make everyone happy. I pray for that. I believe that the audience determines if a movie is successful or not. I come to Bappa just to show my appreciation. Without Bappa’s blessings and my audience’s devotion, I could not have worked in this field for thirty years. With Mardaani 3, Rani will resume her action-packed persona. In the third installment of the Mardaani franchise, which is produced by Yash Raj Films, Rani will play the courageous police officer Shivani Shivaji Roy once more as she sets out to save missing girls around India. The movie is slated to hit theaters on January 30.

When Karisma Kapoor Discussed Sunjay Kapur, a “Very Rich Man”

Mumbai: At one point, Karisma Kapoor expressed her opinion that her late husband, Sunjay Kapur, was a “very rich man” and businessman.She stated, “I don’t know about that,” in a previous interview. He must manage both his father’s business and his own. I’ll carry on with my career, but much more covertly. In essence, I want to start a new chapter in my life. For almost thirteen years, I have persevered. It’s time for me to move on to the next phase of my life. I’ve been upholding my moral obligations to my fans, producers, and career thus far.” ”That will continue,” the actress continued. I’ll complete any project that comes my way with excellence. However, it’s time for me to discover happiness for myself. My workload has decreased. People now understand why. I’m not the kind of actor who will seize any opportunity. I’ll keep working on my serial, Karishma: The Miracle of Destiny. and a few movies every year.”In December 2015, Sunjay Kapur filed for divorce in Mumbai on the grounds of cruelty. In 2016, the couple was granted a divorce. Samaira and Kiaan



are their two children.Sunjay Kapur was wed to fashion designer Nandita Mahtani before he wed Karisma Kapoor. Later on, he wed Priya Sachdev, with whom he has a son named Azarias. In addition, Priya’s previous marriage to hotelier Vikram Chatwal produced a daughter, Safira.On June 12, 2025, Sunjay Kapur, the chairman of the auto components company Sona Comstar, passed away after passing out while playing polo in London. Family and close friends attended his final ceremonies on June 19 at the Lodhi Road Cremation Ground in New Delhi.Legal

actions have been started regarding his multibillion-rupee personal estate since his passing. The Delhi High Court wrapped up hearings in a civil lawsuit pertaining to the estate. The children of Sunjay Kapur’s marriage to Karisma Kapoor are involved in the dispute and have requested an interim injunction. Oral arguments had already been finished, according to Justice Jyoti Singh, who also verified that all parties’ written submissions had been recorded. The court additionally stated that before the order is issued, no more submissions will be accepted.

Priyanka Chopra’s manager remembers “Dying Inside” after witnessing the actress’s difficulties in Hollywood

Mumbai: Priyanka Chopra’s ascent to popularity in Hollywood has not been simple, despite her current status as a global icon. Anjula Acharia, the manager, recently talked about how she was made fun of for bringing a “brown Bollywood girl to America”. She also disclosed that she was “dying inside” when she saw Priyanka, who was already a tremendous star in India, having to reintroduce herself in the West. “I remember dying inside,” Anjula Acharia disclosed. Imagine that you are with the Beyonce of a nation, and only you are aware that she is the Beyonce. She introduces herself, stating, “You don’t know who I am, but I am Priyanka Chopra,” as you enter a magazine where she has already appeared on the cover numerous times. I am meeting the assistant’s assistant in a cafeteria. I was heartbroken for her. She had no ego, but she was so amazing.”Priyanka has actually taught me a lot about humility,” she went on. “We don’t need to do that,” I’ve stated numerous times, and she’s responded, “Yeah, we do.” In certain instanc-



es, I’ve thought, ‘We’re above it,’ and she’s responded, ‘No, we’re not.’” ”People told me I was stupid when I brought Priyanka,” Anjula added. “You can’t break a brown Bollywood star in America,” everyone said.She went on, “We signed her jointly through a label

deal, so I went to Jimmy (Jimmy Iovine, co-founder of Interscope Records)… I was experiencing a period of insecurity. There weren’t many, and I said, “Jimmy, people are saying that I’m crazy.” He responded, “Do you know everyone thought I was crazy when I want-

ed to launch a white rapper whose name was Eminem?” In 2015, Priyanka made her Hollywood debut as the star in ABC’s Quantico. After that, she costarred with Zac Efron and Dwayne Johnson in a supporting part in Baywatch. Matrix Resurrections, Citadel, Love Again, and Isn’t It Romantic are a few of her previous ventures. In terms of her career, Priyanka is preparing for Varanasi, the much awaited film directed by SS Rajamouli. In the project, she will portray Mandakini. Along with co-stars Mahesh Babu and Prithviraj Sukumaran and the director, the actress recently attended a promotional event for the movie in Hyderabad. The Bluff, an action drama helmed by Frank E. Flowers, is another project Priyanka has planned. Karl Urban, Ismael Cruz C-CHECK-rdova, Safia Oakley-Green, and Temuera Morrison are among the ensemble cast members of the movie. She will also reprise her role opposite Richard Madden in the spy thriller series Citadel Season 2.

Ranveer Singh is 100/10 and Akshaye Khanna is 10/10, according to Suniel Shetty



Mumbai: Dhurandhar has dominated the box office for six weeks running thanks to the steadfast support of Indian moviegoers. The movie is currently the highest-grossing Hindi film ever, with domestic earnings of Rs 869.80 crore, according to Jio Studios.While promoting his next reality show Bharat Ke Super Founders, Suniel Shetty discussed Dhurandhar throughout its historic run, calling it “an insane film” and admiring its scope, ambition, and performances.Shetty expressed his enthusiastic appreciation for the Aditya Dhar film, characterizing it as a significant cinematic encounter for modern viewers. According to Shetty, Dhurandhar is successful because it recognizes how OTT platforms are influencing viewing habits. He claims that Aditya Dhar has unlocked the secret of modern storytelling. “I think

Aditya Dhar is beyond an end-all of cinema when it comes to writing, direction and belief,” Shetty stated. He described how, rather than opposing long-form storytelling, the director embraced it. “You want OTT?” he asked after realizing that people were accustomed to it. I’ll show it to you on a bigger screen. I’ll give you four hours on the big screen, and the audience loved it.” The actor also took the opportunity to consider a more significant problem in the film industry: colleagues’ lack of support. Shetty emphasized the value of frank criticism while saying that dissecting movies is pointless.“We need our industry to understand that we have to support each other and not run each other down,” he stated. “I’m not saying you shouldn’t criticize movies if you’re a reviewer. I’m advocating for a critical appreciation of film. Even if

you didn’t like something, you should still appreciate the film’s strong points and areas for improvement. Not only ‘iski dhajjiyaan uda di’. I have no idea what’s wrong with us. We must support one another. Shetty was unambiguous in his assessment of performances, praising Ranveer Singh and Akshaye Khanna in particular. He remarked, “The performances are outstanding,” in reference to his Border co-star. Akshaye Khanna is flawless. He’s an amazing actor. However, Shetty claimed that Ranveer Singh was the one who really stood out. “Ranveer Singh is flawless. The entire time, it is Ranveer Singh.Shetty was most impressed with moderation rather than overt bravery. Ranveer’s task was to restrain himself, while Akshaye Khanna had a lot to do on screen. ”Ranveer was restrained, but Akshaye is outstanding.

Rahu Ketu review: The Varun Sharma-Pulkit Samrat film lacks humor and is overly noisy

Mumbai: The movie opens with an idea that instantly piques interest, starring the Fukrey lads Varun Sharma and Pulkit Samrat as Rahu and Ketu, shadow planets intended to punish the wicked and corrupt. Because Manu Rishi’s character is writing a magical book, the two men—who are imaginary characters—literally come to life. Rahu and Ketu, which are set in Himachal Pradesh, were first intended to eradicate corruption just by being there. Rather, they become known for wreaking havoc wherever they go.Enter Shalini Pandey’s character Meenu, whose only goal is to cultivate marijuana and sell it to Mordechai (Chunky Panday) for quick cash. The plot revolves around the mess that results from the collision of these radically disparate agendas. The film, which was written and directed by Vipul Vig, welcomes the audience into a fantastical world and begins on a rejuvenating note. It’s easy to suspend disbelief, at least at first. However, the movie soon starts to seem overburdened, with



too much going on at once, making it challenging to fully immerse oneself in its world.Because it repeatedly returns to the same set pieces of Rahu and Ketu wrecking havoc, the first half feels needlessly drawn out. Meenu’s track and the two protagonists’ tracks never seem to fit together naturally; instead, it seems if convenience rather than narrative logic is pushing the characters together. The film doesn’t appear to know where or how it wants to conclude, which makes the second half even more annoying. You become more and more perplexed about the story’s intended trajectory as each scene that

seems to be moving toward a wrap-up is followed by another. Despite their best efforts, Varun and Pulkit’s portrayal of Rahu-Ketu mostly feels improvised rather than purposefully humorous. It seemed as though they were making a great effort to make the humorous parts work. The majority of Shalini’s track is poor. Chunky Panday is a waste in a position where all he has to do is become upset when someone pronounces his name incorrectly. Both Amit Sial and Manu Rishi, who receives almost no humorous lines, make an effort. Piyush Mishra is a storyteller in his Tamasha persona.

Fans are captivated by Arijit Singh’s singing in O Romeo

Mumbai: The first song from the music album for Shahid Kapoor and Triptii Dimri’s upcoming film, O Romeo, has been made public. Arijit Singh performs the romantic melody, Hum To Tere Hi Liye. Fans responded to the poignant song and praised Arijit’s lovely performance, praising Vishal Bhardwaj’s composition. The song is composed by Vishal Bhardwaj and penned by Gulzar. Reacting to the track, a fan commented, “Another masterpiece by Arijit Singh.” A fan wrote, “Wow the composition is so beautiful, slow and never forceful. I am in love.” A comment read, “Vishal Bhardwaj never disappoints. A truly special number.” “Arijit’s vocals have so much warmth,” noted a second fan. After Haider and Kaminye, Vishal Bhardwaj’s O Romeo is the director’s third project with Shahid. Whether or not O Romeo is based on the life and death of Hussain Ustara has not been stated by the cast or the filmmakers. Gangster Hussain, who lived in Mumbai, was well-known for his

rivalry with underworld don Dawood Ibrahim. Triptii Dimri, Avinash Tiwary, Farida Jalal, Vikrant Massey, Nana Patekar, Tamannaah Bhatia, and Disha Patani are among the film’s impressive ensemble cast. On February 13, it opens in theaters. The teaser for Vishal Bhardwaj’s movie O Romeo has already sparked a small controversy a few days after it was published. The daughter of murdered criminal Hussain Ustara sent a letter to the film’s producers, director Vishal and producer Sajid Nadiadwala, requesting ₹2 crore and delaying the movie’s distribution till her demands are satisfied. The manufacturers have not yet addressed the demand. Although the plot has not been disclosed, the teaser for the movie indicates that it is an action-packed saga with lots of violence and romance. Shahid Kapoor plays a shooter in the movie. Whether or not O Romeo is based on the life and death of Hussain Ustara has not been stated by the cast or the filmmakers.

PM Modi launches the first Vande Bharat Sleeper train in India from Malda

New Delhi, Jan 17: India's first Vande Bharat sleeper train, which would link Howrah, close to Kolkata, to Kamakhya Junction in Guwahati, was approved by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday. West Bengal and Assam, two states currently headed for elections, will get a high-speed rail connection thanks to this cutting-edge service, which is intended to be an overnight link. The first sleeper train in India was launched by Prime Minister Modi from Malda Town, West Bengal. Additionally, he virtually signaled the departure of the Guwahati-Howrah Vande Bharat sleeper train. "The fully air-conditioned Vande Bharat Sleeper train, designed to satisfy the expanding transportation demands of contemporary India, is expected



to provide passengers with an airline-like travel experience at affordable costs. Long-distance travel will be quicker, safer, and more convenient as a result. The train will also greatly increase religious travel and

tourism by cutting travel time on the Howrah-Guwahati (Kamakhya) route by about 2.5 hours, according to a statement from the Prime Minister's office. The train is anticipated to run at a maximum of 120-130

kmph, even though it is designed to reach a top speed of 180 kmph. The ergonomic shapes of the berths are backed by a top-notch suspension system designed to deliver an incredibly smooth ride. All passengers

are given new bedding and towels, and the train uses cutting-edge disinfection technology that can eradicate 99% of germs. With extensive onboard surveillance and the native Kavach automatic protection system installed, security is a top focus. Automatic sliding doors are designed to stay closed the entire way and only open when the train reaches a station. Similar to high-end airline services, the train will provide its customers with local cuisine in addition to speed, cleanliness, and safety. The food, which emphasizes regional flavors and cuisines, is covered by the ticket price. Assamese food will be supplied to passengers traveling from Kamakhya to Howrah, while Bengali food will be enjoyed by those returning from Howrah to Kamakhya.

IndiGo Notifies Aviation Regulator That Refunds for December Disruptions Have Been Processed

New Delhi, Jan 17: Aviation safety regulator DGCA announced on Friday that all customers impacted by flight cancellations between December 3 and 5 had received refunds from domestic carrier IndiGo. "Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is constantly engaging with domestic carrier IndiGo with respect to refunds and compensations provided to the affected passengers due to operational disruptions from December 3-5," it said. "IndiGo informed that all refunds for IndiGo flight cancellations during the period of December 3rd to December 5 have been fully processed and cleared to the original source of payment," the DGCA stated in a statement. The airline has also offered a "gesture of care under which two travel vouchers of Rs 5,000 each are being provided with a validity of 12 months" as an extra step to assist impacted passengers. According to DGCA regula-



tions, travelers who experience "denied boarding, cancellation of flights and delays in flights" are entitled to compensation for "facilities" that airlines are required to provide. Passengers' grievances about not getting reimbursed for "the hundreds of flights cancelled abruptly between December 2-9 by the airline continue to pour in on social media." Union Civil Aviation Minister K Rammoan Naidu informed Parliament on December 9 that "more than Rs 750 crore has already reached passengers and IndiGo was ordered to issue refunds promptly." A four-person group led by Joint Director

General Sanjay K. Brahmane was established by aviation watchdog DGCA in response to the significant interruptions in IndiGo operations. The committee's task was to conduct a thorough analysis and evaluation of the factors that contributed to the significant flight disruptions. "This is not an easy scenario for us to handle. We are conducting an investigation. In the Rajya Sabha on December 8, Union Civil Aviation Minister Rammoan Naidu declared, "We will take very, very strict action not only for this situation but also as an example." On December 27 of last year, the panel delivered its report to the DGCA. Additionally, he stated, "The report has been submitted to the ministry," on December 30 when addressing media outside of an event in Bengaluru. We are reviewing the report, gathering additional feedback from the DGCA, and will take appropriate action.

Dembele's incredible brace propels PSG to the top of Ligue 1

New Delhi: Ousmane Dembele scored twice as champions Paris Saint-Germain defeated Lille 3-0 at a soggy Parc des Princes on Friday to take the lead in Ligue 1.

If Surprise Packages Lens wins at Auxerre on Saturday, they might climb back to the top, but PSG coach Luis Enrique will be encouraged by his star striker's return to form. Despite winning the Ballon d'Or the previous season, Dembele has had a season marred by injuries. But the PSG supporters will be encouraged by his goals on Friday, especially a beautiful lob. On minute thirteen, a self-assured Dembele opened the score with a lovely left-footed shot from outside the box into the bottom corner. Shortly after the hour mark, he chipped Lille goalkeeper Berke Ozer from inside the box for a



luxurious second. "That's the magic of Ousmane, he can do anything, he's just brilliant," teammate Warren Zaire-Emery remarked following the match. Shortly after halftime, he also scored, seeming untouched at the far post but being denied by an offside flag.

In stoppage time, Bradley Barcola, a late replacement for Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, an industrious but misfiring player, scored the third goal by taking advantage of a defensive error that allowed Ozer to beat Lucas Chevalier, the PSG custodian, had little to contend

with during the ninety minutes. When PSG was only behind 1-0, fourth-place Lille pressured them into fumbling multiple loose balls, one of which gave veteran Olivier Giroud a half-chance.

Giroud chipped the ball onto the bar for an excruciating near miss. Key defender Achraf Hakimi, who will represent Morocco in the African Cup of Nations final on Sunday, was absent from PSG's starting lineup, which included Dembele, Desire Doue, and Kvaratskhelia. This lineup was similar to the one that defeated Inter Milan in the Champions League final last May. Last season, the Parisians won the league by a margin of 19 points, but this season, Lens has managed to stay up with the European champions thanks to a nine-match winning streak in all competitions.

Suvendu Adhikari sues Mamata Banerjee for defamation of Rs 100 crore



New Delhi, Jan 17: Suvendu Adhikari, a leader of the opposition in West Bengal, filed a defamation law-

suit against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday, requesting Rs 100 crore in damages for allegedly associating him with a coal fraud. Adhikari claimed in a social media post that he filed the lawsuit before the Alipore court's civil judge, senior division, after Banerjee failed to respond to a defamation notice. "Smt Mamata Banerjee, you obscure persons and topics while I keep my word. The BJP MLA wrote on X, "Your dishonest silence in response to the defamation notice regarding your heinous fictitious accusations of my involvement in some alleged coal scam will not help you salvage the situation." Before joining the saffron party ahead of the state's 2021 assembly elections, Adhikari served as a minister in the Trinamool Congress administration. Adhikari

said, "I kept my word of dragging you to court for your deceitful misadventure and filed the suit against you today," and included a picture of his title suit's registration. "Please get in touch with your learned advocates early or else you will have to soon pay Rs 100 crore as damages to me, which in turn I will be donating to charity," Adhikari stated. Adhikari, who had previously sent Banerjee a legal notice through his attorney, claimed that Banerjee had publicly connected him and Union Home Minister Amit Shah to an alleged coal fraud on January 8 and 9, claiming to have proof but failing to document it. Adhikari had threatened to file a defamation lawsuit against Banerjee if she did not provide proof of her accusations within 72 hours, according to the legal notice.

An Indian ICC official is denied a visa to Bangladesh, T20 World Cup Rivalry Grows

New Delhi: After a two-man delegation was cut in half due to visa issues, the "final round" of crucial talks between the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and the International Cricket Council (ICC) started with a logistical headache. On January 17, ICC Head of Anti-Corruption and Security Andrew Ephgrave traveled alone to Dhaka to discuss the lingering impasse over Bangladesh's participation in the 2026 T20 World Cup. However, according to local media accounts, his colleague, a top ICC executive of Indian nationality, was compelled to stay behind after failing to obtain a visa on time. The visit is perceived as a "last-ditch" attempt by the international governing body of the sport to address a sporting and diplomatic issue that has clouded the tournament, which is set to start on February 7. A security issue brought up by the BCB and the Bangladeshi government is at



the center of the conflict. Citing the current political situation and safety concerns for their players and staff, Bangladesh has formally asked the top cricketing body to move their planned group-stage matches from India to Sri Lanka. Now that his colleague is not there, Ephgrave bears the entire burden of the negotiations. According to Bdnews24, Ephgrave, a former British police officer with substantial experience in international sports security, is anticipated to pres-

ent a thorough security plan intended to reassure Bangladeshi authorities that their players will receive the necessary security cover in India for the T20 World Cup matches. The current political climate between Bangladesh and India is summed up by the fact that an ICC official of Indian nationality was unable to obtain a visa in time to visit Bangladesh. Although there would undoubtedly be dissatisfaction in the workplace, the ICC has not made an official statement regarding the visa problem. Bangladesh and the ICC have fewer than three weeks to find a solution and break the deadlock before the T20 World Cup. Andrew Ephgrave, an ICC official, must persuade Bangladesh to stick to the original schedule if the tournament is to succeed. Even before a single ball is bowled, a failed deal is anticipated to jeopardize the tournament's outcome.

Steve Smith explains why he didn't give Babar Azam a single



New Delhi: During their historic chase against the Sydney Thunder at the SCG on Friday in the Big Bash League, Australia's batting legend Steve Smith talked candidly about a heated tactical argument with his Sydney Sixers teammate Babar Azam. Despite their impressive 141-run opening combination, there was a tense moment in the 11th over that clearly irritated the former Pakistan captain. Babar pushed the last delivery toward long-on for what looked to be an easy single after facing three straight dot balls from spinner Chris Green. Smith, who was at the non-striker's end, firmly sent him back, opting to deny the run in order to keep the strike for the following over. Smith intended to be on strike to

target the shorter boundary during the "Power Surge," a two-over period in the BBL when only two fielders are permitted outside the inner circle.

This was a calculated move. The decision paid out spectacularly. Smith wreaked havoc on Ryan Hadley in the next over, hitting four straight sixes and a four in a 32-run over that was the most costly in BBL history. However, Babar was not pleased to witness Smith undermining his batting prowess. Babar Azam's bat was thrown back by Steve Smith, giving him the strike for the Power Surge! The high-stakes gamble was described by Smith. Smith told the BBC, "We spoke at the ten-over mark, and they [the captain and coach] said take the surge straight-

away." "I thought, 'Nah, give it one over. My goal is to hit the short boundary. I don't want to make a mistake on the first over. I'll attempt to get thirty off that. [I] believe we received 32, so the outcome was favorable.'" Smith acknowledged that his elite partner wasn't initially on board with the concept, even though the strategies worked and the scoreboard showed it. "Not sure Babar was too happy with me knocking back that single," Smith said, grinning. In spite of the mid-pitch drama, Smith's skill made sure the Sixers won the continuing BBL season by a comfortable five wickets. He once again demonstrated his abilities in the shortest format by finishing with a scorching century off just 41 balls.

Hungry Alcaraz, concentrated Sabalenka aims for victory

New Delhi: Aryna Sabalenka is completely focused on winning a third Melbourne title, while Carlos Alcaraz begins his quest for a career Grand Slam on Sunday "hungry" for an elusive Australian Open triumph. In an effort to reduce late-night finishes, the first major of the year begins as a 15-day tournament for the third consecutive year. After failing to go past the quarterfinals in four prior trips to Australia, top seed Alcaraz is eager to win. There are presently two French Opens, two US Opens, and two Wimbledon in his main collection; the title is the only piece missing. "This is my main goal for this year," stated Alcaraz, who will play local player Adam Walton in the night game at Rod Laver Arena. "I'm just hungry for the title, hungry to do a really good result here." At Queen's in London last year, he faced the 79th-ranked Walton and prevailed 6-4, 7-6 (7/4). The 22-year-old would become the sixth person to win all four major titles, behind Andre Agassi, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic, and Rod Laver, if he were to complete the career Slam. Additionally, he would surpass Nadal, who was 24 at the time, to become the youngest.

Amid a cold wave, Delhi-NCR is covered in dense fog, with "severe" air quality

New Delhi, Jan 17: On Saturday, Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) awoke to yet another severe winter morning that exacerbated pain throughout North India due to the combination of dangerous air quality, thick fog, and freezing temperatures. Authorities reinstated tough limitations under Stage-III of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) after the cold wave persisted unabated for the sixth day in a row and pollution levels exceeded the "severe" category. The national capital's minimum temperatures fell well below seasonal averages, intensifying the cold. Safdarjung and Ayanagar weather stations reported 4.7 degrees Celsius a day earlier, while Delhi had a low of 4.3 degrees. Dense fog made the weather conditions much worse, making it much harder to see in the early morning. At roughly 6:30 am, visibility at Indira Gandhi International Airport fell to about 350 meters, which caused opera-

tional difficulties and flight delays. Earlier in the morning, airport officials confirmed that low-visibility protocols were in place for both arrivals and departures by issuing a travel advice.

Delhi Airport stated, "Low Visibility Procedures are in progress at Delhi Airport," in a post on social media site X. Right now, all flight operations are going as usual. For the most recent flight information, travelers are asked to get in touch with the relevant airline. In the meantime, the quality of the air rapidly declined, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) exceeding 350 in a number of places. To prevent more harm to the environment and human health, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) implemented Stage-III GRAP regulations. Welding, plastering, painting, piling, trenching, and flooring work are among the non-essential construction and demolition activities that have been suspended due to these

restrictions. AQI levels at ITO reached 402, clearly falling into the "severe" category, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). AQI levels exceeding 401, according to CPCB regulations, indicate severe pollution and pose major health hazards, especially for children, the elderly, and people with respiratory conditions. Even greater pollution levels were observed in a number of neighborhoods. With an AQI of 437, Anand Vihar was found to be the most polluted location, followed by Patparganj at 429, Chandni Chowk at 426, Nehru Nagar at 421, and Vivek Vihar at 418. Along major traffic arteries, thick pollution was evident, making it harder to see and making commuting more difficult. As the region continues to be affected by the dual effects of extreme cold and poisonous air, authorities have advised inhabitants to limit their outside activities, particularly in the early morning and late evening.

Rohit Sharma (born April 30, 1987, Bansod, In the current captain of the Indian cricket team Sharma was also the captain of India's T20 his retirement on June 29, 2024, after lead-victory. He retired from Test cricket on May He captained the Mumbai Indians, a franchise team in the and led them to five titles. Sharma is known for his batting fans. He is also an occasional off-spinner.Sharma is the only in ODI cricket; no other player has scored even two. He sixes across all formats, most sixes in World Cups, and the a member of the Indian sides that won the 2007 T20I World Council) Champi-
Early life and 1987, in Bansod, noticed his talent. not be able to af- his entire fee so senior-level debut the tournament got scoring 57 and 22, leading (and hard Gujarat, as well as **Indian Premier** \$750,000 a year. that year with his that year. He was to the Champions 2011. He is noted **International** but did not get a didn't get a chance in the quarterfinals for India. Sharma won. He scored torious 2011 ODI captain, Mahendra of the order has double hundred 2013, scoring 177 a few years after a es.In 2015 Sharma rica at Dharamsha- score a hundred in scored a T20I hun- 35 balls, equaling hundred. He was year for the first it to the semifinals. Indian ODI team pointed captain of He led India to hundred.The 2019 the semifinals, saw five centuries, the led the run charts. nament. The year role in Tests for a match against captain of the Test team during the 2020 series in Australia and scored critical runs in a series in the 2021 twin series against England. In February 2022 he was appointed captain of the Indian World Cup, Sharma led the Indian team to a clean sweep in the league phase and, in the process, most sixes in ODI World Cup history. India went on to lose the final against Australia, after which cricket.Sharma led India to its second T20I World Cup victory in 2024 and scored three half-cen- retirement from the T20I format in a press conference soon after India won the final match against Tests ahead of India's tour of England in 2025.
Awards: Sharma was awarded the Arjuna Award, India's second highest sporting honor, by the government of India in 2015. In 2020 he was awarded the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award (since renamed Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award), India's highest sporting honor.Sharma was named the ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year in 2019 and was included in the ICC Men's ODI Team of the Year in 2014 and in each year from 2016 to 2019. He was also included in the ICC Men's Test Team of the Year in 2021, mainly for his achievements on India's Test tour of England that year. For the same achievements, the Wisden Cricketer's Almanack named him one of the five Wisden Cricketers of the Year in its 2022 edition.



Rohit Sharma Indian cricketer

Nagpur, in the state of Maharashtra, India. He first joined a cricket camp in 1999, when coach Dinesh Lad, a friend of his uncle's, Lad used to scout for talent in those days and was very impressed with the way Sharma bowled. Knowing that Sharma's uncle would ford the fees for the school where Lad was coach, Lad convinced the school's director to accept Sharma as a student and waive that he would have access to good training facilities. Sharma started off as a spinner before focusing on batting.Sharma made his in a List A game in 2006, scoring an unbeaten 31 for West Zone against Central Zone in the Deodhar Trophy. His run of scores in him picked for the India A squad, and he made his first-class debut for India Athat team against New Zealand at Darwin later in 2006, respectively. India achieved a 3-wicket win over New Zealand. He subsequently made his Ranji Trophy debut for Mumbai, one of the to break into) teams in the Indian domestic circuit, in the 2006–07 season and impressed with a double hundred while playing against a half-century in a winning cause in the final that year. Sharma has gone on to represent Mumbai throughout his first-class career.
League: Sharma joined the IPL in 2008 and was signed on by the now-defunct franchise Deccan Chargers, based in Hyderabad, for He was part of the Deccan Chargers that won the second edition of the IPL in 2009. He took a hat-trick against the Mumbai Indians part-time off-spin.In the 2011 IPL auction, Sharma joined the Mumbai Indians for \$2 million and scored his first and only IPL century appointed captain of the Mumbai Indians in 2013 and led them to five titles (2013, 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2020). He also led them League T20 title in 2013. Sharma captained the Mumbai Indians until December 2023 and has been retained by them in all auctions since for his calm demeanor and tactical acumen on the field.
career: Sharma's international career kicked off with an ODI match against Ireland at Belfast in June 2007, when he took one catch chance to bat or bowl. His T20I debut was later the same year, in the group game against England in the first T20I World Cup. Again, he to bat or bowl but took one catch, in a match remembered for Yuvraj Singh's six sixes in an over. Sharma was Player of the Match against South Africa. He was also part of the team that won the T20I World Cup final, scoring a quick 30, the second highest score scored his first ODI half-century in November 2007 and had a run of good scores in the 2007–08 ODI series in Australia, which India two ODI hundreds in 2010 but subsequently had a loss of form and fitness, which led to him being dropped from the eventually vic- World Cup team. His loss of form continued for a couple of years, and he continued to be in and out of the team.It was in 2013 that the Singh Dhoni, promoted Sharma as opener, a position at which he has been a success. His partnership with Shikhar Dhawan at the top yielded great results for India. He scored his first ODI double hundred against Australia the same year and followed it up with a second against Sri Lanka in 2014. The latter score of 264 remains an ODI record for highest individual score. Sharma made his Test debut in against West Indies in Kolkata, in Sachin Tendulkar's farewell series. He was, however, unable to hold his position in the Test team for



run of poor scores in overseas Test match- scored a T20I hundred against South Af- la, India, becoming the second Indian to all three international formats. In 2017 he dred against Sri Lanka at Indore in only David Miller's record for the fastest T20I also part of the ODI World Cup team that time and scored one century as India made In 2017, when Virat Kohli, captain on the at that time, was rested, Sharma was ap- the ODI team in a series against Sri Lanka. victory and scored his third ODI double ODI World Cup, where India made it to Sharma in a rich vein of form. He scored most in a single World Cup edition, and He was also vice captain during the tour- also saw Sharma play the opening batsman the first time; he scored two hundreds in South Africa.Sharma was appointed vice India won. He continued to score heavily team in all three formats.In the 2023 ODI set a record for the most hundreds and the Sharma took a break from limited-overs turies in the tournament. He announced his South Africa by 7 runs. He retired from

Twenty20 cricket, truncated form of cricket that revolutionized the game when it was introduced in 2003 with rule changes that put a premium on hitting and scoring, gaining a new audience for cricket.

Rules and history: The basic rules are the same as for the longer versions, but innings are limited to 20 overs a side (an over comprises six balls delivered, or thrown, by a bowler to a batsman at the opposite wicket), with a maximum of four overs for each bowler and restrictions on the placement of fielders designed to encourage big hitting by the batters and high scores. In a short time, T20 became the most popular and lucrative form of cricket, particularly in India, where huge crowds attend matches in the Indian Premier League (IPL) and millions more watch on television. A shortened form of cricket known as Cricket Max was developed in New Zealand in the 1990s by the former Test batsman Martin Crowe, but the official rules for T20 were established by the England and Wales Cricket Board, and the first tournament was played by the English county teams, in 2003. The format was quickly adopted by other countries, and two years later Australia and New Zealand played each other in a lighthearted T20 match in Auckland, the first official international T20 match. Both sides wore uniforms from the 1980s and wore (mostly fake) mustaches. It quickly became apparent, though, that T20 had the potential to attract a new, vibrant, young audience to cricket. The first T20 Men's World Cup, organized by the International Cricket Council (ICC) and played in South Africa in 2007, was won by India, creating a huge market for T20 on the subcontinent that was quickly exploited by the IPL. Subsequent World Cups were played in various cricket-playing countries. Each major cricketing country developed its own domestic T20 tournaments, and a Champions League competition between the best club sides—like that contested in European football (soccer)—is held at the end of each T20 season. Starting with 12 competing teams in 2007, the 2014 World Cup went on to include 16 teams. The 2024 T20 Men's World Cup saw further expansion, with 20 teams competing. Three teams made a T20 World Cup debut in 2024—USA, Canada, and Uganda. This was the first time a major ICC cricket tournament was held in the United States, the co-hosts for the event along with the West Indies.With its cheerleaders, loud music, and quick-fire entertainment, T20 was credited with reviving cricket in the 21st century. After initial doubts, players began to master the new skills demanded by T20 and to improve their fielding, throwing, and fitness. Traditional cricket followers, however, feared that inevitably T20 would threaten the future of Test cricket, regarded as the purest and most intricate form of the game.cricket, England's national summer sport, which is now played throughout the world, particularly in Australia, India, Pakistan, the West Indies, and the British Isles. Cricket is played with a bat and ball and involves two competing sides (teams) of 11 players. The field is oval with a rectangular area in the middle, known as the pitch, that is 22 yards (20.12 metres) by 10 feet (3.04 metres) wide. Two sets of three sticks, called wickets, are set in the ground at each end of the pitch. Across the top of each wicket lie horizontal pieces called bails. The



sides take turns at batting and bowling (pitching); each turn is called an "innings" (always plural). Sides have one or two innings each, depending on the prearranged duration of the match, the object being to score the most runs. The bowlers, delivering the ball with a straight arm, try to break (hit) the wicket with the ball so that the bails fall. This is one of several ways that the batsman is dismissed, or put out. A bowler delivers six balls at one wicket (thus completing an "over"), then a different player from his side bowls six balls to the opposite wicket. The batting side defends its wicket. There are two batsman up at a time, and the batsman being bowled to (the striker) tries to hit the ball away from the wicket. A hit may be defensive or offensive. A defensive hit may protect the wicket but leave the batsmen no time to run to the opposite wicket. In that case the batsmen need not run, and play will resume with another bowl. If the batsman can make an offensive hit, he and the second batsman (the non-striker) at the other wicket change places. Each time both batsmen can reach the opposite wicket, one run is scored. Providing they have enough time without being caught out and dismissed, the batsmen may continue to cross back and forth between the wickets, earning an additional run for each time both reach the opposite side. There is an outside boundary around the cricket field. A ball hit to or beyond the boundary scores four points if it hits the ground and then reaches the boundary, six points if it reaches the boundary from the air (a fly ball). The team with the highest number of runs wins a match.

Should both teams be unable to complete their number of innings before the time allotted, the match is declared a draw. Scores in the hundreds are common in cricket.Matches in cricket can range from informal weekend afternoon encounters on village greens to top-level international contests spread over five days in Test matches and played by leading professional players in grand stadiums.Cricket is believed to have begun possibly as early as the 13th century as a game in which country boys bowled at a tree stump or at the hurdle gate into a sheep pen. This gate consisted of two up-rights and a crossbar resting on the slotted tops; the crossbar was called a bail and the entire gate a wicket. The fact that the bail could be dislodged when the wicket was struck made this preferable to the stump, which name was later applied to the hurdle uprights. Early manuscripts differ about the size of the wicket, which acquired a third stump in the 1770s, but by 1706 the pitch—the area between the wickets—was 22 yards long. The ball, once presumably a stone, has remained much the same since the 17th century. Its modern weight of between 5.5 and 5.75 ounces (156 and 163 grams) was established in 1774.The primitive bat was no doubt a shaped branch of a tree, resembling a modern hockey stick but considerably longer and heavier. The change to a straight bat was made to defend against length bowling, which had evolved with cricketers in Hambledon, a small village in



southern England. The bat was shortened in the handle and straightened and broadened in the blade, which led to forward play, driving, and cutting. As bowling technique was not very advanced during this period, batting dominated bowling through the 18th century.The earliest reference to an 11-a-side match, played in Sussex for a stake of 50 guineas, dates from 1697. In 1709 Kent met Surrey in the first recorded intercounty match at Dartford, and it is probable that about this time a code of laws (rules) existed for the conduct of the game, although the earliest known version of such rules is dated 1744. Sources suggest that cricket was limited to the southern counties of England during the early 18th century, but its popularity grew and eventually spread to London, notably to the Artillery Ground, Finsbury, which saw a famous match between Kent and All-England in 1744. Heavy betting and disorderly crowds were common at matches.The aforementioned Hambledon Club, playing in Hampshire on Broadhalfpenny Down, was the predominant cricket force in the second half of the 18th century before the rise of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) in London. Formed from a cricket club that played at White Conduit Fields, the club moved to Lord's Cricket Ground in St. Marylebone borough in 1787 and became the MCC and in the following year published its first revised code of laws. Lord's, which was named after its founder, Thomas Lord, has had three locations over its history. Moving to the current ground in St. John's Wood in 1814, Lord's became the headquarters of world cricket.In 1836 the first match of North counties versus South counties was played, providing clear evidence of the spread of cricket. In 1846 the All-England XI, founded by William Clarke of Nottingham, began touring the country, and from 1852, when some of the leading professionals (including John Wisden, who later compiled the first of the famous Wisden almanacs on cricketing) seceded to form the United All-England XI, these two teams monopolized the best cricket talent until the rise of county cricket. They supplied the players for the first English touring team overseas in 1859. Until early in the 19th century all bowling was underhand, and most bowlers favoured the high-tossed lob. Next came "the round-arm revolution," in which many bowlers began raising the point at which they released the ball. Controversy raged furiously, and in 1835 the MCC rephrased the law to allow the hand to be raised as high as the shoulder. The new style led to a great increase in pace, or bowling speed. Gradually bowlers raised the leg higher and higher in defiance of the law. Matters were brought to a head in 1862 when an England team playing against Surrey left the field at London's Kennington Oval in protest over a "no ball" call (i.e., an umpire's decision that the bowler has thrown an illegal pitch). The argument centred on whether the bowler should be allowed to raise his arm above the shoulder. As a result of this controversy, the bowler was in 1864 officially accorded liberty to bowl overhand (but not to cock and straighten the arm). This change dramatically altered the game, making it yet more difficult for a batsman to judge the ball. Already a bowler was allowed to take a running start from any direction and for any distance. Once the bowler was allowed to release overhand, the ball could then reach speeds above 90 mph (145 km/hr). Though this is not as fast as the pitching speed in baseball, cricket has an additional twist in that the ball is usually delivered so as to bounce on the pitch (field) before the batsman can hit it. Thus, the ball may curve to the right or the left, bounce low or high, or spin toward or away from the batsman.Batsmen learned to protect themselves with pads and batting gloves, and a cane handle increased the resilience of the bat. Only the best batsmen, however, could cope with fast bowling, because the poor condition of most pitches made it yet more difficult for a batsman to predict the motion of the ball. As the grounds improved, however, batsmen grew accustomed to the new bowling style and went on the offensive. Other new bowling styles were also discovered, causing batsmen to adjust their technique further.