

In Brief

Cancer awareness and screening programme

Guwahati: A World Cancer Day awareness and screening programme at Digboi Women’s College attracted over 500 participants, emphasizing early detection and cancer prevention. Organized by the Indian Red Cross Society and supported by various local organizations, the event featured a keynote speech by cancer specialist Dr. Duncan Khanikor, who discussed cancer causes, symptoms, and the importance of timely screening. The opening included a cancer awareness drama performed by nursing students. Attendees included notable figures and highlighted the increasing public awareness of cancer in Assam, underscoring the need for regular community screenings.

Tiger attack fallout

Itanagar: A controversy has arisen in Arunachal Pradesh after a tiger attack in Dibang Valley led a resident, Nogoro Melo, to file an FIR against Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Mito Rumi. The complaint accuses the DFO of gross negligence, claiming that the death of Chikseng Manpang on February 2, 2026, resulted from the transportation of a tiger from a zoo, which was allowed to move through populated areas without proper safety measures despite multiple warnings. The FIR cites various sections of the Indian Penal Code related to negligence and public safety. Melo urges the police to investigate the matter and take legal action against the DFO. The state government has offered compensation to the victim’s family and is deploying forest teams to capture the tiger amidst growing scrutiny of the Forest Department’s management of human-wildlife conflict.

Arunachal’s Kabak Yano summits South America’s highest peak

Itanagar: Mountaineer Kabak Yano from Arunachal Pradesh has scaled Mount Aconcagua, the highest peak in South America, as part of her 7-Summit Mountaineering Expedition. She reached the summit of the 22,831-foot peak on Sunday, marking a significant milestone in her journey to conquer the highest mountains on all seven continents. Governor K. T. Parnaik praised her achievement as a reflection of courage and perseverance, expressing hope that it will inspire youth in Arunachal Pradesh to engage in sports and adventure activities. Yano has previously summited Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Elbrus.

Massive Fire Destroys 13 Houses

Haflong: A fire in Subhasnagar, Dima Hasao district, destroyed at least 13 houses on Tuesday morning, leaving families without homes. The fire broke out in a densely populated residential area and was extinguished by local firefighting teams after two hours. Fortunately, there were no reported casualties, although the cause of the fire is under investigation. Residents are highlighting the need for improved fire safety measures, such as more extinguishers and awareness initiatives, due to ongoing vulnerabilities in rural housing. Dima Hasao Autonomous Council Chairman Mohet Hojai visited the site to offer support to the victims.

AI mapping identifies Meghalaya’s landslide hotspots



Shillong, Feb 08: Meghalaya’s landslide-prone areas have been identified by an artificial intelligence-based study, providing authorities with a new tool to plan preventive and emergency response in a state that experiences landslides every monsoon. Using an ensemble machine-learning framework that integrates ten distinct models, the North-Eastern Hill University Department of Information Technology created a Landslide Susceptibility Map. According to researchers, the method outperforms single-model evaluations in terms of prediction accuracy and reliability. Meghalaya is particularly susceptible to slope failures, which result in fatalities and infrastructure damage every year, due to its terrain, which is characterized by delicate geology, seismic activity, and heavy rainfall. The study’s scientists emphasize that minimizing these effects requires early detection and ongoing surveillance of high-risk areas. The model was trained using historical landslide data from the Geological Survey of India and the North Eastern Space Applications Center by the study team, which was headed by Dr. K. Amitab and supported by the Department of Science and Technology’s Science and Engineering study Board. The method predicted landslide-prone areas with an accuracy of more than 90%. The state is divided into five danger categories on the map: extremely high, high, moderate, low, and very low. About 7% of Meghalaya is categorized as extremely high risk, and another 6% is classified as high risk.

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha said that PM Modi’s Viksit Bharat 2047 vision motivates young people

Guwahati, Feb 08: Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, according to Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on February 6, continues to excite young minds and instill confidence among students, encouraging them to approach exams and life with clarity and a stress-free mentality. Speaking after seeing Prime Minister Modi’s Pariksha Pe Charcha engagement with Bardowali School pupils, Saha characterized the meeting as enlightening and inspiring. He said that the Prime Minister’s interactions with students help them become more self-assured, think more clearly, and cope with the stress of exams. ”

It is incredibly motivating to see the Prime Minister’s vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047, which places a great focus on skill development, active youth, teacher, and parent participation,” Saha remarked. In keeping with the Prime Minister’s focus on high-quality education, he said, Tripura is



carrying out a number of projects through the Tripura Board of Secondary Education (TBSE).

Saha emphasized that kids in Classes 1 through 8 are now enrolled in the state’s Sharish pro-

gram. In reference to the Prime Minister’s counsel to students, he stated that kids should be inspired to have great aspirations and put in a lot of effort to realize them. Even while artificial intelligence

is necessary to assist humans, we shouldn’t rely only on it. Additionally, the prime minister has advised pupils to develop their inner confidence,” he stated. The Chief Minister noted that Prime

Minister Modi also shared important guidance for teachers, stressing the importance of confidence-building and time management.

“The Prime Minister explained the role of students and children in making Viksit Bharat 2047 a reality. He emphasised cleanliness, saying that if children keep their surroundings clean, it will create a lasting impact,” Saha said. He further pointed out that initiatives like Mann Ki Baat, held on the last Sunday of every month, and Pariksha Pe Charcha, conducted annually, are valuable platforms for engaging students, parents and teachers. “

Parents must give priority to life skills and other essential competencies alongside academics,” Saha added. The Chief Minister also said that Prime Minister Modi urged teachers to inform students in advance about what will be taught the next day, helping them prepare better and reducing anxiety.

Himanta Biswa Sarma promotes “civil disobedience” as a means of expelling illegal Bangladeshis

Guwahati, Feb 08: On February 4, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced a policy of “civil disobedience and non-cooperation,” inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, aimed at addressing the issue of illegal Bangladeshi nationals in Assam. He stated that his government is creating conditions that will compel these individuals to leave the state. During an event in Sivasagar, Sarma indicated that security forces repel 20 to 30 undocumented migrants daily at the

border but acknowledged the impracticality of mass deportation through official channels. Instead, he advocates for creating difficulties for these migrants in Assam, emphasizing that they must feel compelled to leave voluntarily rather than being forcibly deported. Sarma differentiated his approach from traditional agitation, suggesting his method involves preventing illegal immigrants from accessing resources like land or vehicles, thereby making it un-

sustainable for them to remain. He claimed his strategy has been effective, noting that despite daily pushbacks, no legal challenges have emerged against his government’s actions. Sarma framed his approach as a dual strategy of border enforcement and internal pressure, directly invoking Gandhian principles of non-cooperation. Moreover, he called for grassroots movements of social and economic non-cooperation, urging people to consider the origin of those they

engage with, distinguishing between indigenous Assamese and illegal migrants. Sarma highlighted the need to protect indigenous Muslims from being conflated with illegal migrants and emphasized that while his government would not intervene in actions against illegal migrants, any harassment of indigenous Muslims would be opposed. His comments reflect a complex interplay of immigration policy, state identity, and grassroots activism.



AI is used by the IIT Guwahati team to create high-performance alloys

Guwahati, Feb 08: A team at the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, collaborating with London South Bank University, University of Manchester, and University of Leeds, has pioneered a machine learning-based approach for designing advanced metal alloys devoid of critical raw materials (CRMs). This innovation is poised to enhance sustainable manufacturing practices and bolster industrial security. Alloying, a process dating back to the Bronze Age, has significantly evolved, with recent interest focusing on high-entropy alloys, which contain various metals in near-equal proportions, providing enhanced strength and thermal stability for applications in high-demand fields such as aerospace and energy. However, the dependency on scarce and costly elements like tantalum, niobium, tungsten, and hafnium has raised concerns regarding supply reliability, environmental degradation, and import reliance. To combat this issue, the research team established a machine learn-



ing-assisted framework aimed at designing CRM-free alloys. They categorized critical raw materials based on their supply risks, economic significance, and availability, leading to the creation of a comprehensive database that included 3,608 alloy compositions, predominantly using non-critical elements. The researchers evaluated multiple predictive models, concluding that the Extra Trees Regressor yielded the best accuracy for forecasting Vickers hardness. They integrated optimization techniques inspired by natural phenomena to explore compositions that promised superior hardness while avoiding critical materials. Their efforts culminated in the identification of a novel CRM-free alloy, Ti_{0.0111}NiFe_{0.4}Cu_{0.4},

projected to exceed the hardness of widely utilized alloys incorporating critical materials, which typically register around 480 HV. This alloy was synthesized in a laboratory at IIT Kanpur, where experimental validation confirmed the predictive capability of their AI-driven methodology, with hardness values aligning closely with initial predictions. Prof. Shrikrishna N Joshi from IIT Guwahati remarked on the alloy’s suitability for high-hardness applications while highlighting the framework’s unique contribution as the first validated computational tool for designing CRM-free multi-principal element alloys, relying solely on compositional data rather than microstructural parameters.

Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh will take the oath of office

Imphal, Feb 08: President Droupadi Murmu revoked President’s Rule in Manipur on February 4, 2026, allowing for the formation of an elected government after nearly a year of central governance. This decision followed the resignation of the BJP-led government amid ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities. The 60-member Manipur Legislative Assembly remains suspended, with its tenure lasting until 2027. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has reached a consensus to appoint Yumnam Khemchand Singh as the new Chief Minister, with a swearing-in ceremony scheduled for February 4, 2026, at Lok Bhavan.



With the lifting of President’s Rule, the NDA is poised to formally claim governance and restore populist administration in the state.

Human pressure and climate change have affected the rhino habitat in Kaziranga

Guwahati, Feb 08: The long-term biological history of Kaziranga National Park has been rebuilt by a recent scientific study, which demonstrates how human activities, vegetation changes, and climate change have progressively affected the habitat of the Indian one-horned rhinoceros. The study is based on sediment layers that have been maintained under park wetlands, which serve as a natural archive of environmental change. Scientists were able to track the evolution of massive herbivore populations and landscapes over thousands of years by analyzing pollen grains and dung-associated fungus spores trapped in these strata. From the Sohola wetland in Kaziranga, researchers from the Department of Science and Technology’s independent Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences recovered a sediment core that measured slightly more than a meter.

Every stratum revealed information about the vegetation, temperature, and megaherbivore presence in the past. According to the study, which was published in the journal Catena, Kaziranga’s current grassland and wetland environment differs significantly from its historical state. Additionally, it records the regional extinction of megaherbivores, such as the Indian rhinoceros, from northwest India in the late Holocene, a time of increasing human activity and environmental shifts, especially during the Little Ice Age. In contrast, northeastern India experienced relatively stable climatic conditions over the past 3,300 years and lower levels of human pressure. This stability enabled rhinoceroses and other large herbivores to migrate eastwards and eventually concentrate in Kaziranga, which is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a global stronghold for megaherbivores.

Manik Sarkar disputes statements made by the BJP and Tipra Motha that they won the Tripura council elections



Tripura, Jan 08: Manik Sarkar, a former chief minister, disputes assertions made by the BJP and Tipra Motha that they won the Tripura TTAADC elections. Free and fair voting, according to Sarkar, might change expected results. The head of the CPI(M) demands that voting rights be protected and criticizes the Union Budget. Manik Sarkar, a former chief minister of Tripura and leader of the CPI(M), has vehemently disagreed with statements made by Tipra Motha and the BJP on the impending elections for the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC). According to Sarkar, if people are allowed to fully engage in the voting process, both parties’ claims of winning all 28 seats are

implausible. He urged for the protection of democratic rights in the current political environment and cited historical events that, in his opinion, undermined the integrity of earlier elections. Sarkar called attention to remarks made by the BJP and Tipra Motha, challenging the reasoning behind both parties’ claims of victory over every seat in a council with a total of just 28 seats. He stated, “Sarkar said that if the BJP wins 28 seats and Tipra Motha also wins the same, then there should be 56 seats in the District Council, but unfortunately there are only 28 seats.” Sarkar criticized what he called a lack of legitimate voting in the preceding District Council election, citing assaults and violence against CPI(M) candidates and workers. “Those who are running for office will say such things, even though we in the CPI(M) dislike such statements,” he said. They unleashed fierce attacks on CPI(M) party candidates and workers during the most recent District Council election in 2019, which was not a vote. Their projection of winning all 28 seats will be incorrect if we are able to contact the people and they are able to cast their votes correctly. “There’s no question,” Sarkar stated.

NE/EAST

Meghalaya MP wants a full-time director appointed



Shillong, Feb 08: Concerned about academic and administrative continuity at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Shillong, Meghalaya MP Ricky A. J. Syngkon has written to the Center to request the appointment of a full-time director. Syngkon cited NIFT Shillong's quarterly report for the October–December 2025 period in his letter to the Ministry of Textiles, which disclosed that the organization has been operating without a full-time director. He claimed that there is a lack of consistency in academic and administrative decision-making as a result of the absence of permanent leadership. According to the MP, "the institute's capacity for long-term planning and institutional development has been limited and oversight has been weakened by the absence of stable leadership." Syngkon further noted that a number of authorized administrative positions

are still open, which results in ongoing understaffing and a heavier workload for current employees. According to him, this has resulted in delays in student support services, academic collaboration, and standard administrative procedures.

The MP further emphasized that the institute is mostly dependent on contractual and visiting faculty because a large number of sanctioned teaching positions are unfilled. He warned that this has direct implications for the quality of instruction, faculty–student engagement, mentoring and the continuity of academic programmes. Urging immediate intervention, Syngkon called upon the Centre to appoint a regular director at NIFT Shillong and ensure the time-bound filling of all sanctioned administrative and academic posts to strengthen the institute's functioning and academic standards.

Employee Protest at Golaghat's Bogidhola Tea Garden

Bokakhat, Feb 08: The Bogidhola tea estate, which is currently part of the Khumtai constituency and is under the Numaligarh police station in Golaghat district, saw a difficult situation on Tuesday when employees organized a vigorous protest at the Khumtai branch of ATTSA's initiative. Workers at the tea garden, which hasn't been open for business in eight years, claimed they haven't benefited from government programs like "Eti Koli Duti Pat." The BJP-led alliance administration was accused by the ATTSA organization of ignoring the issues that the workers were facing. As you may remember, there was a violent altercation between the management and the employees on



December 13, 2017, during which the management allegedly started shooting at the employees. The protesting workers also announced that they would not allow any political party to enter the tea garden during the upcoming state assembly elections. They further declared that even the MLA of the Khumtai constituency would be barred from entering the tea garden.

Tarun Chugh is appointed by the BJP as an observer for the Manipur Legislative Party Leader election

Imphal , Feb 08: Tarun Chugh, national general secretary, was designated by the parliamentary board of the Bharatiya Janata Party on Monday as the central observer for the Manipur legislative party leader election. The appointment takes place one day prior to the central leadership's planned meeting with the parliamentarians of the BJP in New Delhi. After almost a year of President's Rule, the action indicates a renewed push for the establishment of a government in the state.

With 37 of the 60 assembly seats currently held, the BJP has the numbers necessary to form the government on its own. "Shri Tarun Chugh, national general secretary, has been appointed by the BJP



parliamentary board as a central observer for the election of the legislative party leader in Manipur," stated Arun Singh, national general secretary and head of

the BJP headquarters. Chief Minister Biren Singh, T Satyabrata Singh, Yumnam Khemchand Singh, Govindas Konthoujam, Basanta K Singh, K Ibomcha Singh,

and Dipu Gangmei are some of the leading candidates for the leadership of the legislative party.

A year has passed since the imposition of President's Rule, and Chugh's appointment coincides with that date. Since May 2023, there have been conflicts between the Meiteis and Kukis-Zo populations in the state, which has had severe ethnic tensions over the past year. Over 50,000 people were displaced and at least 260 people died as a result of the violence; the two villages are mostly located in different districts. The upcoming legislative party election is seen as a critical step in restoring an elected government and political stability in Manipur.

Gaurav Gogoi appointed chairman of APCC State Election Committee ahead of Assam Assembly polls

Guwahati, Feb 08: The Indian National Congress has announced the formation of the State Election Committee of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) as the state prepares for Assembly elections later this year. Congress Member of Parliament Gaurav Gogoi has been appointed as the Chairman of the committee with immediate effect. The decision was conveyed through a letter dated February 3, issued by Congress General Secretary (Organisation) KC Venugopal. In the letter, Venugopal stated that the proposal for constituting the committee had received formal approval from the Indian National Congress President. The newly formed committee brings together a wide range of senior and experienced leaders from the party's Assam unit.

Along with Gogoi as Chairman, the committee includes Debabrata Saikia, Rakibul Hussain, Pradyut Bordoloi, and APCC President Bhupen Kumar Borah. Other members named in the committee are Ripun Borah, Paban Singh Ghatowar, Wajid Ali Chaudhary, Rosilina Turkey, Jakir Hussain Sikdar, Pradeep Sarkar, Arun Dutta Mazumdar, Pranati Phukan, Rance Narah, Abdul Khaleque, Durga Bhumi, Ajit Singh, Nan-



dita Das, Sibamoni Bora, Pradyut Bhuiya, AK Rashid Alam, Jadav Swagariy, Prithvi Majhi, Tanka Bahadur Rai, Praneshwar Basumatry, RP Sharma, Ghana Buragohain, Augustine Enghee, Meghnath Chetry, Balin Kuli, Hafiz Rashid Choudhary, Medi Alam Bora, Subhman Ali Sarkar, Gangajyoti Tayegam, and Mausom Baruah. According to the letter, the committee will also have several special invitees. These include the APCC General Secretary (Organisation), the heads of all

frontal organisations of the party, and the chairpersons of key departments such as the Scheduled Caste, Other Backward Classes, Minority, and Adivasi Congress wings. The Chairperson of the Tea Garden Cell of the APCC will also be part of the committee as a special invitee. The inclusion of these leaders is seen as an effort to ensure broader representation of different social groups within the party's election planning process.

The formation of the State Election

Committee is considered an important organisational step as the Congress begins preparations for the upcoming Assam Assembly elections. The committee is expected to play a key role in candidate selection, coordination at the constituency level, and overall election strategy for the party in the state.

Party sources said the leadership aims to strengthen internal coordination and improve ground-level planning through this committee. Gaurav Gogoi, who represents the Kaliabor constituency in the Lok Sabha, has been a prominent face of the Congress in Assam politics. His appointment as Chairman is being viewed within the party as a move to provide focused leadership to the election process. Gogoi has been actively involved in organisational activities and has frequently raised state-related issues at the national level. The announcement comes at a time when Assam is moving closer to the Assembly polls, expected later this year. The Congress is gearing up to challenge the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, which is currently in power in the state under Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. The elections are likely to be closely watched, as both parties prepare for an intense political contest.

A bureaucratic reorganization resulted in the transfer of eight Arunachal government officers

Itanagar, Feb 08: According to an official announcement, the Arunachal Pradesh government transferred eight Arunachal Pradesh Civil Service (APCS) officers on February 3 as part of a bureaucratic reorganization. According to the announcement made by Chief Secretary Manish Gupta, Dilip Kumar Chutia, the Additional Resident Commissioner and Joint Secretary to the Chief Minister in Guwahati, has been appointed as the Deputy Commissioner of the West Kameng dis-

trict. Lobsang Tsering, the Tax, Excise, and Narcotics Commissioner, will assume responsibility as the Papum Pare district's Deputy Commissioner. Techu Aran has been replaced as West Siang's deputy commissioner by Kalaktang Additional Deputy Commissioner Mindo Loyi.

Aran was moved and assigned to the position of Deputy Commissioner for the Tirap district. Social Justice Empowerment and Tribal Affairs Joint Secretary Gobi Nygyor has been posted as the Deputy

Commissioner of Lower Siang district in place of Rujjum Rakshap, who will now serve as the Director of Tourism. In another key posting, Tirap Deputy Commissioner Liyi Bagra has been appointed as the Director of the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT). The transfers are part of the state government's routine administrative exercise aimed at strengthening district-level governance and ensuring effective delivery of public services.

The government of Tripura will establish an international skill center



Agartala, Feb 08: Prof. Dr. Manik Saha, the chief minister of Tripura, stated on Tuesday that the state government is trying to establish a foreign language school and an international skill center in order to provide Tripura's young with opportunities for employment abroad. Speaking at the 3rd Regional Workshop under NITI Aayog's State Support Mission, which was hosted at Hotel Polo Towers in Agartala, Dr. Saha made the news. He emphasized the wider definition of governance, saying that development is ultimately about enhancing people's quality of life and making sure benefits reach everyone, rather than just systems and procedures. "In order to give our young people access to worldwide employment prospects, we are planning to establish a foreign language school and an international skill center.

Proficiency in foreign languages would now make it easier for state youth to work overseas and communicate successfully, whereas previously they had to relocate," he said. He highlighted a partnership-based approach between the Center and the states and called the State Support Mission a major change in India's federal governance structure. The Chief Minister claims that rather than treating states as just implementing bodies, the effort acknowledges them as equal stakeholders in determining

the course of the nation's growth. According to Dr. Saha, NITI Aayog's mission has reinforced State Institutes of Transformation, which are crucial for policy development, outcome monitoring, and cross-sector collaboration. He emphasized that strong institutions are necessary for sustainable socioeconomic growth and stated the program connects state-level long-term aspirations with the national goal of Viksit Bharat 2047. He made reference to Tripura, saying that the state's Institute of Transformation (TIFT) has quickly become a key force behind reforms and a link between the formulation of policy and its actual execution at the local level. "TIFT has been supporting government departments in policy design, governance reforms and improving the business ecosystem," he said. Highlighting the focus on youth, Dr. Saha said the proposed international skill centre and foreign language school would help young people access overseas job markets. He also pointed out that knowledge of foreign languages would make it easier for Tripura's youth to work and communicate abroad, reducing their dependence on opportunities outside the state. The Chief Minister also said Tripura has set up a public-private partnership (PPP) cell under the Good Governance Department to attract private investment while ensuring balanced risk-sharing.

Ajanta Talukdar, an advocate, is running for the Morigaon Assembly seat on a BJP ticket

Guwahati, Feb 08: Ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections, political activity has increased throughout Assam, with the ruling BJP experiencing increased zeal and rivalry over party nominations. Ajanta Talukdar, an advocate for the Guwahati High Court, has formally applied for the BJP ticket from the 54 Morigaon Assembly constituency, reflecting this trend.

Talukdar officially staked her claim for the party's candidacy from the constituency, which is regarded as a BJP stronghold, when she submitted her application at the Morigaon district BJP headquarters.

According to party insiders, there has been fierce competition for the Morigaon seat this time around, with about ten candidates applying to run for the district BJP president thus far. Speaking to the media after filing her application, Talukdar said she has been actively associated with various party

Political activity has intensified across Assam ahead of the forthcoming Assembly elections, with heightened enthusiasm and competition within the ruling BJP over party nominations.

programmes for a long time. She stated that her decision to seek the BJP ticket was driven by her commitment to ensure holistic development of the Morigaon constituency and to safeguard the legitimate rights of its people.

Even before the announcement of tickets, she outlined several key promises focusing on development and public service in the region. The move has generated considerable discussion in political circles, as a Guwahati High Court advocate has sought candidature from Morigaon, potentially challenging the sitting MLA or other senior party leaders. With multiple aspirants in the fray, it remains to be seen whom



the party leadership will place its confidence in. As the election schedule draws closer, political temperatures in

Morigaon are rising, with the contest for the BJP ticket emerging as a closely watched development in the district.

The Mokokchung band wins Nagaland's youth music competition

Kohima, Feb 08: At Bhagat Stadium, Rangapahar Military Station, the big finale of Fusion of Bands Season 3 came to an end, showcasing Nagaland's youth talent and cultural cohesion. The event, which was organized by the Indian Army's Spear Corps as part of Operation Sadbhavana, brought together up-and-coming bands from several districts for a competitive display of unique music. Along with Lt Gen Abhijit S Pendharkar and S C Jamir, Manipur and Nagaland Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla was the main guest at the finale.

Their participation highlighted the program's emphasis on cultural harmony and youth engagement. Six finalist bands competed: After Party (Dimapur), NTTB – Nikato Tamang and the Band (Dimapur), The Muse (Mokokchung), Rock Revolt (Dimapur), Jack in the Box (Dimapur) and Desi Rewind (Mokokchung).

Desi Rewind emerged winners, securing the top prize of Rs 3.5 lakh. Jack in the Box finished runners-up with Rs 2.5 lakh, while NTTB – Nikato Tamang



and the Band placed second runners-up, winning Rs 1.5 lakh. Each finalist also received Rs 30,000, with semi-finalists awarded Rs 5,000. The competition was judged by a jury comprising Akum Jamir, Bethel Tsuzu and Arenlong. Guest performances by Agukath, Ahio Khieya and the Mahila Police Band added to the evening's programme. The season closed with a renewed emphasis on nurturing local talent and strengthening civil–military ties through cultural initiatives in Nagaland.

The Tripura Congress calls the Union Budget for 2026–2027 “directionless”

Agartala, Feb 08: Tripura Pradesh Congress criticized the 2026-27 Union Budget as “directionless” and lacking a clear vision for the country’s future during a press conference at the Pradesh Congress Bhavan.

Party president Ashish Kumar Saha emphasized that the budget does not offer a roadmap for national development, warning that it could lead to a reduction in employment opportunities and an increase in layoffs, significantly affecting the working class.

Congress spokesperson Prabir Chakraborty joined in the criticism, accusing the budget of facilitating the growth of

black money and questioning the execution of previous budgets. He asserted that the budget fails to inspire hope for millions of unemployed youths and does not address the demands specific to Tripura and the northeastern region.

Chakraborty expressed disappointment over the budget’s inability to fulfill any previously raised demands from the state, presenting statistical evidence that highlights inadequate funding and shortcomings in initiatives crucial for the region’s development.

He concluded by stating that the budget merely reiterates routine measures instead of proposing new strategies,



thereby leaving the country economic and social challenges ill-prepared to tackle ongoing

The Supreme Court submits the case to anti-conversion statutes to a three-judge panel

New Delhi, Feb 08: On Monday, the Supreme Court forwarded several petitions contesting the constitutionality of anti-conversion statutes passed by at least 12 states to a three-judge panel. Additionally, the Center and the 12 states received new notices from a bench consisting of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi asking them to respond within four weeks to a new petition submitted by the National Council of Churches in India. After hearing senior counsel Meenakshi Arora for the NCCI and attorney general Tushar Mehta for the Center and many states, CJI Kant said, “Having regard to the importance of the matter let it be placed before a three-judge bench.”

Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Arunachal Pradesh,



Gujarat, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, and Himachal Pradesh received notices. Arora contended that the anti-conversion laws “incentivises vigilante” groups to file complaints and harass those converting to other religion. Mehta said the Centre and the states were ready with their replies, which would be filed soon. Arora said Odisha and Rajasthan had also come out with their separate laws, and they were not under challenge in earlier pe-

titions. “There are amendments also in other Acts which are not challenged. Let me serve all the standing counsels,” she said. “Issue notice. Let a copy of each be served on advocate-generals also. Let a counter affidavit be filed within four weeks. Let respondents file a common counter affidavit. Having regard to the importance, let it be placed before a three-judge bench,” the top court said in the order. The batch of petitions challenging the anti-conversion laws are pending before the top court since 2020, but had never got any substantive hearing. The delay was caused, in part, by the Covid-19 pandemic and paucity of time that three former CJs — D.Y. Chandrachud, Sanjiv Khanna and B.R. Gavai — encountered.

Rahul Gandhi’s major criticism of the US trade agreement PM is compromised, sold the nation

New Delhi, Feb 08: On Tuesday, Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, made shocking accusations against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying that the “PM has been compromised.”

As the commotion raged over references to China and the memoir of former Army Chief Naravane, Gandhi was addressing outside Parliament after being passed up. Rahul Gandhi claimed that the prime minister was shaken when he signed the trade agreement under duress and is now concerned that his reputation could be tarnished. “Modi ji is shaken. Narendra Modi signed the US-India trade agreement yesterday night after it had been delayed



for several months. He is under tremendous pressure. The reputation of Narendra Modi ji may suffer,” Gandhi stated. During the Motion of Thanks to the President’s address, Gandhi continuously brought up the China problem for the second day in a row, which infuriated him and prevented him from speaking in the Parliament. Gandhi’s allusion to an essay on India-China

ties led the chair to halt him, citing a prior order and a rule infringement. “Our PM is compromised, which is the major issue. The public needs to think about this. The LoP was prohibited from speaking during the President’s speech for the first time. Because he is compromised, Narendra Modi ji has sold your hard work in this trade deal. “He has sold the na-

tion,” he continued. Gandhi further said that the PM “sold the nation” and made a mention of the Epstein Files, allegations related to which India has already rejected. “Narendra Modi ji is scared because those who shaped his image are now breaking this image....There is a case on Adani ji in the US, it is actually a case on Modi ji....The Epstein Files contain even more that the US has not yet released. There is pressure due to that as well. These are the two pressure points. The country should understand this,” Gandhi said. Rahul Gandhi was referring to reports circulating from Epstein files that made references to PM Modi and his official visit to Israel.

JP Nadda criticizes rallies against the India-US trade accord

New Delhi, Feb 08: The Uttarakhand cabinet, led by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, has approved the Uttarakhand Green Hydrogen Policy, 2026, aimed at promoting green hydrogen production and enhancing the state’s clean energy sector. This policy leverages Uttarakhand’s hydropower potential to contribute to net-zero emissions and support industrial growth. Additionally, the cabinet authorized immediate groundwater extraction charges for non-agricultural and commercial usage, a proposal for inter-district transfers for health workers, and the transfer of two airstrips to the defense ministry for development as Advanced Landing Grounds. To streamline land acquisition processes, the cabinet approved agreements for land acquisition under the relevant act. Furthermore, it amended a government order permitting the sub-leasing of land for industrial development and approved new posts for district tribal welfare officers to enhance tribal welfare initiatives. Lastly, the establishment of GRD Uttarakhand University was sanctioned to bolster educational infrastructure. Union Minister JP Nadda accused the opposition on Tuesday of causing confusion and blocking a pact that, he claimed, will boost the nation’s economy as Parliament witnessed boisterous scenes over the historic India-US trade agreement. Speaking in the Rajya Sabha, Nadda stated that the administration was ready to undertake a thorough discussion and provide a detailed explanation on the accord. Congress and its friends, he said, responded to the discovery in a “frustrated” manner. The day after US President Donald Trump declared that Washington would lower reciprocal duties on Indian imports to 18% after speaking with Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the phone, Nadda criticized the opposition. Along with calling Modi a “strong leader” and a “true friend,” Trump also hinted that India might take steps to reduce trade restrictions on American goods. “I would like to state on behalf of the administration that we will make a statement regarding this trade agreement. The relevant minister will give all the information. “We are ready for a comprehensive conversation and to address all



inquiries,” Nadda stated. Nadda claimed that the opposition was now unwilling to accept the cut after previously accusing the government of permitting high tariffs. They had earlier requested a response and claimed that 50% tariffs had been applied. They are still demonstrating today, he claimed, despite the US President personally praising India’s leadership and announcing a reduction. “You are an issueless party, now you have nothing to do with the nation. You have no issues left,” the Union Minister added. He also reiterated that the government was open to debating the issue in Parliament. “We are ready to answer every question. A suo motu statement will be made, and all aspects will be discussed,” he added. Meanwhile, proceedings in the Lok Sabha were adjourned till 2 pm amid protests by opposition members over the trade deal announcement and other issues. MPs also raised objections after Speaker Om Birla declined to allow Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to quote from an unpublished memoir of former Army chief General MM Naravane. The protests began as soon as the House convened, even as the Speaker was making an obituary reference, leading to repeated disruptions.

In the southern Dzükou valley of Nagaland, the wildfire was mostly confined

Kohima, Feb 08: The wildfire in the southern Dzükou valley of Nagaland’s Kohima district, which began on January 26, reached its eighth day on February 2, with authorities confirming that it is now largely contained. Deputy Commissioner B Henok Buchem reported that the fire has mostly been restricted to areas around and below Mount Tempfü, while the main Dzükou valley remains unaffected and poses no immediate threat. Despite some fresh flare-ups near Mount Tempfü and Mount Merata, Buchem stated that the fire near the helipad has been fully contained. A multi-agency firefighting effort involving over 150 personnel has been in progress since the fire’s onset. The challenging rugged terrain and the inaccessibility of certain fire-prone spots

have limited manual firefighting efforts, particularly in the areas behind Mount Tempfü. To combat the fire, two Indian Air Force helicopters were dispatched for aerial firefighting, conducting Bambi bucket sorties to drop water on the affected zones. Preliminary assessments indicate that nearly one-third of the Dzükou area may have sustained damage, though the main valley remains unscathed. Officials noted that most harm has been restricted to dwarf bamboo vegetation, which is expected to regenerate naturally in the coming months. Firefighting operations are supported by teams from various agencies, including the district administration, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), police, forest department, fire and emergency services, and

local organizations such as the Southern Angami Youth Organisation (SAYO). SAYO president Zaseitsole Beio highlighted that the fire originated between the Jakhama and Viswema entry routes and spread towards Kehoke and Mount Tempfü, exacerbated by dense vegetation and challenging conditions for firefighters. Both the district administration and SAYO expressed ongoing concerns regarding recurrent wildfires in the Dzükou valley, emphasizing that they are largely due to visitor negligence. Plans are being considered to implement guidelines aimed at managing and maintaining the Dzükou valley, with a strong appeal to trekkers and tourists to behave responsibly and adhere to established guidelines for preserving the delicate ecosystem.

Assam will receive tax devolution of over Rs 50,000 crore

Guwahati, Feb 08: Following the presentation of the Union Budget, the Union Ministry of Finance released an official announcement stating that Assam will get around Rs 50,000 crore as its share of tax devolution in the 2026–2027 fiscal year. The 2026–2027 Budget was delivered to the Lok Sabha on Sunday by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. According to the ministry, central transfers to Assam have significantly increased over the course of several Union Budgets, indicating a persistent effort to fortify the state’s development cooperation with the Center. In addition to Rs 29,548 crore in grants-in-aid for 2025–2026, Rs 49,725 crore has been set aside for tax devolution for the 2026–2027 fiscal year. According to the statement, the Union Budget has strengthened Center-state collaboration by boosting capital investment assistance and guaranteeing a consistent flow of resources through flagship welfare programs, grants-in-aid, and tax devolution. It claimed that these actions are boosting economic growth, enhancing long-term assets, and raising Assamese people’s standard of living in general. The Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure program, which provides Assam

with 50-year interest-free loans for the development of infrastructure, still accounts for a sizable amount of the Center’s assistance. The ministry pointed out that these loans go beyond the Finance Commission’s suggestions. Assam received Rs 17,104 crore under this initiative between 2020–2021 and January 12, 2026, allowing for extensive asset generation and infrastructure development. Alongside capital investments, the Centre highlighted the impact of flagship schemes in delivering socio-economic benefits in the state. As of January 2026, more than 2.55 crore Jan Dhan accounts have been opened in Assam, strengthening financial inclusion. Social security coverage has expanded with 58 lakh enrolments under the PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, 1.45 crore enrolments under the PM Suraksha Bima Yojana and around two lakh subscribers under the Atal Pension Yojana. The ministry said that under the PM Mudra Yojana, loans amounting to a cumulative Rs 74,884 crore have been disbursed in Assam to promote entrepreneurship and support small businesses. Progress has also been recorded in welfare and infrastructure-focused schemes, with more than 40 lakh rural households provided



toilets under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) and 57 lakh rural households receiving tap water connections under the Jal Jeevan Mission. Further, over 50 lakh LPG connections have been released under the PM Ujjwala Yojana, while 1.76 crore Ayushman cards have been created to enhance health security in the state. Food security measures have covered over 2.4 crore beneficiaries under the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, and 19.3 lakh farmers have benefited from income support under the PM-KISAN scheme. The ministry said these sustained investments through fiscal transfers, capital support and welfare programmes underline the Union Budget’s commitment to Assam’s inclusive and long-term development, aligning the state’s growth trajectory with the broader national vision of Viksit Bharat.

Manipur Congress demands special crisis package



Imphal, Feb 08: The Manipur Congress criticized the Union Budget, demanding a special crisis package and accelerated rehabilitation for the state, which has faced severe ethnic violence since May 3, 2023. Congress president Keisham Meghachandra pointed out that the budget failed to address the humanitarian and infrastructural crises resulting in over 260 deaths and mass displacement. He emphasized the need for national support beyond routine schemes, urging for innovative measures to ensure long-term peace and stability. Meghachandra warned that neglecting Manipur could jeopardize national unity and security, calling for urgent and decisive intervention from the Centre.

The first North East Quality Conclave 2026 is held in Guwahati by GNRC

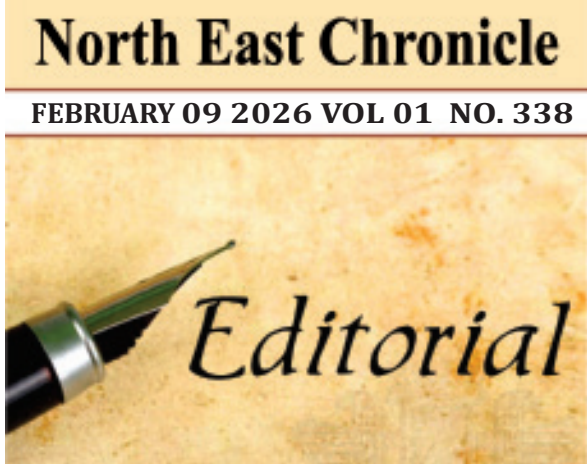
Guwahati, Feb 08: The first North East Quality Conclave 2026 was held on February 7 at the NEDFi Convention Centre in Guwahati by GNRC Hospitals in collaboration with the Association of Healthcare Providers-India (AHPI) NE-1 and the Consortium of Accredited Healthcare Organizations (CAHO). Healthcare executives, physicians, quality experts, and solution providers from all over Northeast India were invited to the event. Participants gathered to talk about ways to promote patient safety and healthcare quality excellence across the area. Hospital representatives, government authorities, and well-known medical specialists actively participated in the conclave. In order to promote a culture of continuous improvement in healthcare service, attendees took part in four themed sessions, saw presentations of quality improvement projects, and entered an interactive quiz contest. With his keynote talk, “Healthcare Quality 360° – The Future is Now,” Dr. Lallu Joseph, Secretary General of CAHO and Quality Manager & Associate General Superintendent at Christian Medical College, Vellore, established the tone for the day and sparked conversations about the direction of healthcare quality. Additionally, the conference honored Dr. Kh Palin, Dr. Harsha Bhattacharjee, Dr. Narendra Nath Dutta, and Prof. Dr. Subhash Khanna for their contributions to healthcare in the area.

Revision of RBI’s Upward Inflation: Impact of Precious Metals



Mumbai, Feb 08: Due in major part to rising precious metal prices, the Reserve Bank has updated its inflation forecast for the current fiscal year to 2.1%. The forecast is 4% for the first quarter and 4.2% for the second quarter of the next fiscal year. Interestingly,

core inflation—which does not include gold—remains steady at 2.6%. While highlighting geopolitical concerns and energy price volatility as possible inflation problems, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra also highlighted promising possibilities for food supplies.



The US military claims to have sent some troops to Nigeria

The United States has deployed a small team of troops to Nigeria, marking the first acknowledgment of US forces on the ground since airstrikes were executed on Christmas Day under President Donald Trump’s orders. These airstrikes targeted Islamic State-related threats in the region, and the US has been conducting surveillance flights over Nigeria since at least late November from Ghana. General Dagvin R.M. Anderson, head of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM), stated that the US presence is a result of mutual agreement on the need to combat the terrorist threat in West Africa, enhancing cooperation between the two nations. However, specific details regarding the team’s size and mission scope were not disclosed.Nigeria’s Defense Minister Christopher Musa confirmed the presence of the US team, although additional information was not provided. According to a former US official, the team is likely focused on intelligence gathering and supporting Nigerian forces in striking terrorist organizations. The Nigerian government faces considerable pressure from Washington due to accusations of failing to protect Christians from Islamist attacks, particularly in the northwest, where violence has escalated. Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) have intensified assaults on civilians and military personnel, exacerbating the situation in the country.Additionally, a US military strike carried out in Sokoto state—coordinated with Nigerian authorities—resulted in the deaths of multiple ISIS militants. President Trump has emphasized the existential threat to Christianity in Nigeria, warning of potential military intervention if the Nigerian government does not effectively address violence against Christian communities. The Nigerian government, on its part, has denied systemic persecution of Christians, asserting that it is actively targeting Islamist militants and other violent groups attacking both Christian and Muslim civilians.

Why Deoband should not be involved in India-Taliban relations

Afghanistan’s Foreign Minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi, recently visited India, where he engaged in discussions with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. The backdrop of this meeting is marked by the complicated historical relationship between the Taliban and India, primarily influenced by the Taliban’s close ties with Pakistan. After the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, India’s concern for its security, particularly relating to Kashmir-centric terrorist groups, heightened. However, the situation took an unexpected turn as relations between Pakistan and the Taliban deteriorated, which has opened a window for renewed engagement between New Delhi and the Taliban.Despite the cautiously optimistic overtures, significant ideological differences between India and the Taliban were revealed during Muttaqi’s visit. This divergence is crucially linked to the ideological orientation of the Deoband seminary in India, which the Taliban visited as part of their

Muslims in India: Participants, Not Outsiders

Citizenship is an innate claim based on identification and belonging rather than a gift given to a minority by the majority. For Indian Muslims, this assertion is fundamentally emotional, cultural, and ancestral rather than just legalistic. A recurring narrative that portrays Indian Muslims as either foreigners or permanent victims of history is challenged when they are discussed as stakeholders. The energy of a community that has inhabited this place for more than a millennium and actively created its spirit cannot be adequately described by either term.For Muslims in India, the path to equal citizenship in the republic was not a passive one. It was a deliberate, difficult decision. When the subcontinent was partitioned in 1947, millions who chose to stay did so out of a deep conviction that their destiny was tied to the pluralistic vision of a secular India. MaulanaAbulKalam Azad reminded the masses that the very stones of Delhi and the waters of the Ganges bore witness to their ancestors’ sweat and blood. His words were not just a plea for peaceful coexistence - they asserted equal stakes and ownership in the nation’s existence and political processes. He argued that a thousand years of joint life had melded Hindus and Muslims into a single nation, a Qaume-Wahid, where the contribution of one was indistinguishable from the other. This sense of ownership is rooted in a history that far exceeds the narrow binaries of current divisive discourse. Long before the

British arrived, Indo-Islamic culture had revolutionized social life in the subcontinent, including science and aesthetics. The administrative reforms of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughals - ranging from Sher Shah Suri’s land revenue systems to the Fatawa-i-Alamgiri legal framework - laid the groundwork for the modern Indian state. In science and technology, the contributions were equally foundational. From introducing papermaking and perfecting the astrolabe in medieval observatories to Tipu Sultan’s legendary rocketry (which even the British military admitted was superior to their own), Indian Muslims were pioneers of innovation. The contemporary narrative often skips over these structural contributions, preferring to focus on victimhood. While grounded in real socio-political challenges, this approach often ignores the proactive agency, scientific rigor, and critical thinking of the community. . To be a stakeholder is to move beyond grievance and assert one’s rightful place.This assertion was most visible during the Indian freedom struggle. From the fiery rebellion of 1857, where Bahadur Shah Zafar became the symbolic head of a united Indian resistance, to the revolutionary zeal of Ashfaqulla Khan, who went to the gallows dreaming of a free India - Muslim participation was integral. BadruddinTyabji, the third President of the Indian National Congress, insisted that Indian Muslims must

Being a stakeholder means putting aside complaints and claiming one’s proper position.During the Indian independence movement, this claim was most evident. Muslim involvement was essential during the 1857 raging uprising, when Bahadur Shah Zafar emerged as the symbolic leader of a united Indian resistance, and throughout Ashfaqulla Khan’s revolutionary fervor, when he was hanged for his dream of a free India. The third president of the Indian National Congress, Badruddin Tyabji, emphasized that Muslims in India must take part in the national movement as essential members of the Indian political system rather than as a distinct group. This legacy moved from the battlefield to the laboratory, the judiciary, and the marketplace in the post-independence age. In addition to leading, individuals like Dr. Zakir Husain and Maulana Azad established organizations like Jamia Millia Islamia and the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), guaranteeing that the fledgling republic had the intellectual foundation necessary to thrive. Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam’s commanding presence in science served as a reminder that Muslim minds influenced the highest levels of Indian scientific and strategic thought. The boardrooms of multinational companies and the centers of Indian startups still exhibit this mentality today. From Azhar Iqbal’s Inshorts in digital media to Habil Khorakiwala’s Wockhardt in pharmaceuticals, the community’s entrepreneurial presence is growing thanks to a generation that doesn’t let boundaries define them. The current climate of alienation, fuelled by polarizing rhetoric and systemic challenges, undeniably creates a sense of siege. However, a counter-narrative is already being written on the ground, often in unexpected places. An innovation

revolution is happening in the heartlands of Uttar Pradesh, Hyderabad, and Kerala, where young Muslim women are transitioning from traditional education to careers in AI and coding. This is the new face of the Indian Muslim stakeholder - one who balances religious identity with professional excellence, refusing to see them as contradictory. They are not waiting for the state to uplift them. They are creating self-sustaining ecosystems of education and microfinance, reclaiming their agency through constitutional patriotism. To view Indian Muslims through the lens of victimization is to deny them their history of resilience. The Pasmanda movement, for instance, represents a democratization within the community itself, as those on the social margins demand their share of the stakeholder pie. This internal churning is a sign of a healthy, evolving community that is increasingly aware of its rights and power within the democratic framework. They are no longer a vote bank to be managed, but a civic force to be reckoned with. Their struggle for equity is not a sign of being outsiders - it is the ultimate proof of being stakeholders. The future of India is not a zero-sum game between its various communities. It is a collaborative project where Indian Muslims are not alien to Indian democracy - they are among its architects. By moving beyond outdated narratives of alienation and embracing a proactive role in the nation’s socio-economic progress, the community can ensure that its contribution remains, as it always has been, indispensable and continuous. Indian Muslims are the soul of India’s pluralism. Without them, the story of India is incomplete. Wahhabism. It spread fast.

In Pakistan’s Punjab province, the spread of the Deoband movement led to the massive decline of Sufi Islam. Tahir Kamran’s study shows in detail how the spread of Deobandi seminaries in Pakistan after 1947 coincided with the decline of Sufism and the rise of Jihadi extremism. South Asian jihadism found its fountainhead in the Deobandi ideology. In Pakistan, Deobandis have been at the forefront in the Islamisation of the Pakistani state and society. The Deobandi ecosystem in Pakistan, emboldened with Arab petro-dollars and ISI-CIA’s blessings, transformed into a brutal and horrific Jihadist juggernaut. Terrorist outfits such as Jaish-eMohammad, Harkat-ul-Ansar, Harkat-ulMujahideen, Harkat-ul-Jihad-Al Islami, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Sipah-eSahaba Pakistan, besides the Taliban, subscribe to the Deobandi school of Islamic thought. These groups have killed thousands of Shias, Ahmadiyas, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, and Sufi Muslims. With their robust links with Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda, Deobandi terrorist groups established an invincible jihadist and radicalisation infrastructure in South Asia. The Deobandi offshoot, Tablighi Jamaat, has been at the forefront of proselytisation and radicalisation activities. The world’s leading intelligence platform, Stratfor, in its 2008 report, describes Tablighi Jamaat as an indirect line to terrorism. Its name figured in connection with the 2006 terror plot to bomb airliners en route from London to the United States. French TJ expert Marc Gaborieau goes further and has suggested that the supreme goal of TJ is nothing less than a “planned conquest of the world in the spirit of Jihad”. US officials stated in

2003: “We have a significant presence of Tablighi Jamaat in the United States, and we have found that Al-Qaeda used them for recruiting now and in the past.” In the early 2000s, a Pakistani intelligence source informed that 400 American terrorist recruits in Pakistan or Afghanistan had emerged from the American TJ network. French intelligence, meanwhile, has claimed that 80 per cent of its own Islamist extremists may have once been part of TJ, referring to it as an “ antechamber of fundamentalists”. In Pakistan, former ISI chief Javed Nasir was affiliated with Tablighi Jamaat. In Jammu & Kashmir, Tablighi Jamaat’s 40- day religious tours have contributed significantly to radicalisation. Lately, Deobandi Dar-ul-Uloom have come up in large numbers in J&K. Their teachings and curriculum have intensified religious extremism among the youth, particularly in Doda, Kishtwar, Poonch and Rajauri. Deobandi scholars argue that the Indian Deoband has no ties with Pakistani Deoband institutions, and Deoband has given a fatwa against terrorism and suicide bombing. However, the fundamental philosophy, orthodoxy and puritanism remain the same in Indian and Pakistani Deoband institutions. It is not the first time that Amir Khan Muttaqi has visited Deoband. In 1994, when Harkat-ul-Mujahideen terrorist mastermind Masood Azhar came to India, his first visit was to Deoband because of its esteemed importance in the minds of jihadist and terrorist organisations adhering to Deobandi ideology. what the Taliban did in Afghanistan. Indian society is currently highly polarised along religious lines, and if the restive Muslim population gets inspired by the Taliban playbook, it can be dangerous for India’s security.

The US military claims to have sent some troops to Nigeria

The United States has deployed a small team of troops to Nigeria, marking the first acknowledgment of US forces on the ground since airstrikes were executed on Christmas Day under President Donald Trump’s orders. These airstrikes targeted Islamic State-related threats in the region, and the US has been conducting surveillance flights over Nigeria since at least late November from Ghana. General Dagvin R.M. Anderson, head of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM), stated that the US presence is a result of mutual agreement on the need to combat the terrorist threat in West Africa, enhancing cooperation between the two nations. However, specific details regarding the team’s size and mission scope were not disclosed.Nigeria’s Defense Minister Christopher Musa confirmed the presence of the US team, although additional information was not provided. According to a former US official, the team is likely focused on intelligence gathering and supporting Nigeri-

an forces in striking terrorist organizations. The Nigerian government faces considerable pressure from Washington due to accusations of failing to protect Christians from Islamist attacks, particularly in the northwest, where violence has escalated. Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) have intensified assaults on civilians and military personnel, exacerbating the situation in the country.Additionally, a US military strike carried out in Sokoto state—coordinated with Nigerian authorities—resulted in the deaths of multiple ISIS militants. President Trump has emphasized the existential threat to Christianity in Nigeria, warning of potential military intervention if the Nigerian government does not effectively address violence against Christian communities. The Nigerian government, on its part, has denied systemic persecution of Christians, asserting that it is actively targeting Islamist militants and other violent groups attacking both Christian and Muslim civilians.

India-Au ECTA

Under the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), effective immediately, all Indian exports will gain duty-free access to the Australian market. This agreement signifies a crucial development in the bilateral trade relationship, rooted in a decade-long push to enhance economic ties, expand market access, and foster beneficial trade exchanges. The ECTA grants duty-free access to 100 percent of Indian tariff lines, positively impacting various sectors, including gems and jewellery, textiles, leather, footwear, furniture, food products, engineering goods, medical devices, and automobiles. Historically, these sectors have been hindered by tariffs and trade barriers, affecting their competitiveness in international markets.In reciprocity, India will provide preferential access for over 70 percent of tariff lines to Australia, primarily benefiting raw materials and intermediates such as coal, mineral ores, and wine. This reciprocal arrangement reflects a strategic balance between domestic industrial interests and the cultivation of international trade partnerships. On December 29, marking the third anniversary of the ECTA, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal characterized this move as transformative, poised to fortify trade relations, promote investment, and create opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises. Additionally, it aims to enhance supply chain integration and foster technological collaboration.Officials project that the agreement will significantly elevate India’s exports to Australia by alleviating tariff obligations, ensuring market predictability, and providing Indian firms a competitive advantage in sectors where India excels globally, including pharmaceuticals

and automotive components. This will empower Indian businesses to assert themselves in a market recognized for its high standards and rigorous regulatory frameworks, encouraging Australian investments in India’s dynamic economy.Trade analysts assert that the duty-free access will solidify India’s strategic export orientation, diversify its trade portfolio, and reinforce the country’s stance within the Asia-Pacific region. The ECTA additionally promises to open new trade routes for high-value goods and intermediate products and includes measures aimed at easing non-tariff barriers, optimizing customs procedures, and promoting regulatory cooperation. Such provisions are designed to facilitate seamless cross-border trade, guaranteeing that exporters and importers benefit from transparent and efficient transactional processes.Moreover, the ECTA is expected to spark broader economic cooperation beyond mere trade, encompassing technology sharing, skill development, joint ventures, innovation, and investment in critical sectors like renewable energy, infrastructure, and digital services. This multifaceted partnership between India and Australia aims to bolster sectors like gems and jewellery and textiles, which provide employment to millions in India, thereby significantly enhancing market access through reduced duties. while also reinforcing the broader strategic partnership between India and Australia, which encompasses shared values, security cooperation, and regional development initiatives, as trade experts have highlighted that by eliminating tariffs on all Indian exports, the agreement addresses historical barriers, strengthens competitiveness, improves market access.

Sun Pharma attributes growth to innovation and observes that US generics are stabilizing



Mumbai: Sun Pharmaceutical Industries is concentrating on innovation-led growth, strategic acquisitions, and significant near-term opportunities like the introduction of generic semaglutide in India in order to stabilize its US generics business as manufacturing compliance improves and new product launches resume. Following the company's December quarter reports, Sun Pharma's management told analysts that if production and regulatory issues are handled, the pressure on the US generics portfolio—which has experienced price erosion and competition—should lessen. "The generics business will start to recover once we are in manufacturing compliance for a number of our sites in order to launch new products," Richard Ascroft, chief executive officer, North America, said during the call.

The company's US business saw innovative medicines offset weaker generics sales in the quarter, underlining Sun Pharma's broader strategic shift toward specialty and novel therapies. In Q3FY26 United States pharmaceutical sales stood at \$477 million, marginally up by 0.6 per cent due to the decline in generics business. US sales accounted for approximately 27.5 per cent of total consolidated sales. The management reiterated that the US remains a key geography for innovation-led growth. "US continues to be an important part of our focus, specifically for the innovative medicines," Executive Chairman Dilip Shanghvi said, adding that the

company is equally focused on expanding its innovative portfolio globally. Sun Pharma is currently ramping up two key specialty launches in the US—UNLOXCYT, an immunotherapy for advanced cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma, and LEQSELVI, a treatment for severe alopecia areata. Early physician feedback and market engagement have been encouraging, according to the company. "Our early interactions have been positive. We have completed initial stocking and had our first orders from distributors," Ascroft said on UNLOXCYT. He added that discussions with major health systems and cancer centres have progressed well, with formulary conversations moving forward. "The message is resonating in terms of the balance that this product provides in efficacy and safety. It's something clinicians have been looking for," he said. On LEQSELVI, Ascroft noted that physicians are reporting early signs of hair regrowth in patients, including some who had failed other JAK inhibitors, broadly mirroring clinical trial outcomes. Sun Pharma is also pursuing lifecycle management opportunities for both assets. "We are in active discussions about lifecycle management for both products," he said, indicating potential expansion into new indications over time. Beyond the US, the company's medium-term innovation strategy is supported by a growing clinical pipeline. Sun Pharma recently initiated global Phase 2 trials of GL0034 in type-2 diabetes and plans to present Phase 2a

data for diabetes and NASH at scientific conferences over the coming months. "We continue to invest in building a R&D pipeline for both the Global Generics and Innovative Medicines business," Shanghvi said, noting that innovation remains central to long-term value creation. A key near-term catalyst for the India business is the planned day-one launch of generic semaglutide following patent expiry. Sun Pharma has already secured regulatory approvals for both chronic weight management and type-2 diabetes indications. "We are looking forward to expanding our portfolio with the launch of semaglutide upon the expiry of semaglutide patents in India," Managing Director Kirti Ganorkar said. "Sun plans to be in the market on Day 1 of a generic launch," Ganorkar added, highlighting that the company has ensured sufficient supplies and easy-to-use formats across strengths to meet anticipated demand. He said the entry of generics is expected to improve patient access and expand the overall market for GLP-1 therapies in India. On capital allocation, Sun Pharma reiterated its disciplined stance on mergers and acquisitions, particularly in emerging markets. "We want to remain disciplined about acquisition. Our focus is on finding a way to grow our business organically," Shanghvi said, adding that acquisitions would be considered only if they strengthen long-term strategic capabilities. He also noted that the company is comfortable using debt for the right opportunity, supported by a strong balance sheet. Together, management commentary points to a company navigating near-term generics challenges while positioning itself for sustained growth driven by innovation, specialty launches and selective expansion—both in India and global markets.

Hyundai Motors India's sales rise 11.5%



New Delhi: Hyundai Motor India said on Sunday that its January sales reached 73,137 vehicles, an 11.5% year-over-year rise. According to a statement from Hyundai Motor India, the company's overall sales in January of last year were 65,603 units. According to the automaker, it sent 59,107 vehicles to domestic dealers last month, up 9% from 54,003 units during the same period previous year. Compared to 11,600 units in January 2024, exports last month totaled 14,030 units. Hyundai Motor India said, "Achieving our highest-ever monthly domestic sales of 59,107

units and our highest-ever total sales of 73,137 units with a strong 11.5% year-over-year growth reflects not only Hyundai's brand leadership but also the collective strength of our people, partners, and customers." "Achieving our highest-ever monthly domestic sales of 59,107 units, alongside highest-ever total sales of 73,137 units with a strong 11.5 per cent year-on-year growth, reflects not only Hyundai's brand leadership but also the collective strength of our people, partners and customers," Hyundai Motor India MD and CEO Tarun Garg said in a statement.

The center is thinking about increasing the FDI cap for public sector banks



New Delhi: In an attempt to improve the capital basis of public sector banks (PSBs), the finance ministry is thinking of increasing the FDI cap to 49% from the existing 20%. Financial services A final decision on the plan has not yet been made, according to secretary M. Nagaraju, who stated that interministerial deliberations are under progress. While private-sector banks are allowed to accept up to 74% foreign investment, PSBs are currently limited to 20% FDI. Up to 49% of FDI in private banks can be made automatically; investments exceeding 49% and up to 74% need government approval. The government's shareholding in the 12 public sector banks remains high and is above 90 per cent in at least three lenders.

The private sector banks, meanwhile, have attracted strong foreign investor interest in 2025, with RBL Bank, Yes Bank, IDFC First

Bank and Federal Bank together securing investments of over ₹54,000 crore. Industry sources said this underscores the depth of overseas capital available for India's banking sector and strengthens the case for widening access to foreign funds for state-owned lenders as well. The private sector banks, meanwhile, have attracted strong foreign investor interest in 2025, with RBL Bank, Yes Bank, IDFC First Bank and Federal Bank together securing investments of over ₹54,000 crore. Industry sources said this underscores the depth of overseas capital available for India's banking sector and strengthens the case for widening access to foreign funds for state-owned lenders as well. In the Union Budget presented on Sunday, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that a high-level committee will be set up to undertake a comprehensive review of the banking sector to align it with India's next phase of growth, while safeguarding financial stability, inclusion and consumer protection.

Advent is paying Rs.2,750 cr to acquire a 14.3% stake in Aditya Birla Housing Finance

The ₹2,750-crore primary capital infusion by Advent International values Aditya Birla Housing Finance at ₹19,250 crore and will support growth and market expansion

New Delhi: For ₹2,750 crore, private equity firm Advent International will purchase a 14.3% share in Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited (ABHFL), valuing the mortgage lender at ₹19,250 crore. Aditya Birla Capital Limited (ABCL) is the sole owner of ABHFL. "A proposal for a primary capital infusion of ₹2,750 crore in ABHFL (a wholly owned subsidiary of ABCL) from Indriya Limited, one of the entities of Advent International (Advent), was approved by the boards of directors of Aditya Birla Capital Limited and Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited," ABCL stated in a press release. The transaction is contingent to regulatory approvals, shareholder approval, and



other standard requirements. ABHFL intends to use the funds to maintain the current growth momentum and expand its market position. As of December 31, 2025, the company has ₹42,204 crore in assets under management.

Over the previous three years, the mortgage lender's AUM increased at a compound annual growth rate of 48%. With a gross Stage 3 ratio

of 0.54% and a net Stage 3 ratio of 0.23%, it has maintained best-in-class asset quality, according to the press statement. Vishakha Mulye, managing director and CEO of Aditya Birla Capital Limited, stated, "With this proposed capital raise, we enter the next phase of expansion for our housing finance business with a clear focus on sustaining growth momentum and increasing market share." Kumar

Mangalam Birla, chairman, Aditya Birla Group, said the proposed capital infusion will strengthen ABHFL's financial foundation, enable deeper market penetration, and enhance its ability to shape India's inclusive and sustainable housing finance ecosystem. "India's housing sector is at a defining inflection point, driven by progressive policy initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, a sustained thrust on affordable urban housing, and the expanding reach of urban and rural infrastructure," Birla added.

"Aditya Birla Housing has built a high-quality, trusted franchise with strong risk practices and governance standards that are synonymous with Aditya Birla Group companies," said Shweta Jalan, managing partner at Advent International. Upon completion of the transaction, ABCL will hold about 85.7 per cent and Advent will hold about 14.3 per cent stake in ABHFL.

Maruti Suzuki considers raising prices despite the fact that demand for its vehicles exceeds supply

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki India Ltd. is considering a price hike due to increasing commodity costs, despite strong demand for its vehicles. Senior Executive Officer Partho Banerjee indicated the company is monitoring the situation closely, noting that while they strive to minimize price increases, they may need to adjust prices accordingly. The specific timeline for any price change has not been disclosed. The demand for cars significantly increased following a reduction in GST rates for small cars and SUVs. Maruti

Suzuki has experienced a 20% growth in monthly sales since October 2025, and implemented a price protection scheme for first-time customers who have placed orders, ensuring that they will not face price hikes. Currently, the company has 175,000 outstanding orders due to production limitations, leading to extended waiting periods for popular models like the Wagon R. Production constraints are expected to persist for several more months, although the company is working on expanding produc-

tion capacity, with a new plant in Kharkhoda set to operationalize by April 2026, which will add up to 500,000 units in production capacity annually. In January 2026, Maruti Suzuki recorded its highest monthly sales, largely driven by exports, and noted a significant increase in bookings, highlighting a robust demand backdrop. The broader Indian automotive market is projected to grow at a 6-7% CAGR in FY26, although Banerjee cautioned that rising commodity prices could affect future forecasts.

A 198 MW wind project has been put into service by Tata Power Renewable Energy

Chennai: Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (TPREL) has commissioned a 198 MW wind energy project for Tata Steel in Karur, Tamil Nadu, representing one of India's largest wind projects. The project, consisting of 55 wind turbine generators, will produce 31 million units of clean electricity annually, contributing to Tata Steel's decarbonisation and off-setting 26,350 tonnes of CO2 per year. Notably, TPREL executed the project using a self-EPC model, showcasing



its engineering excellence. Despite facing challenges such as transporting

large turbine components and managing excavation, the project achieved significant milestones, with foundation work completed in 126 days and turbine installation in 167 days. This initiative enhances TPREL's role in India's renewable energy expansion, complementing Tata Power's goal of 100% clean energy by 2045. TPREL's renewable utility capacity now stands at 11.6 GW, with ongoing projects expected to be completed in staggered phases over the next two years.

Russian oil wind-down timeframe sought by Indian refiners

New Delhi: Before imports from Russia can be stopped, Indian refiners will need a wind-down period to finalize oil transactions with that nation, and the government has not yet directed them to do so, according to two refining sources. On Monday, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump struck a trade deal that would stop India's purchases of Russian oil.

According to the sources, a wind-down period would be required to fulfill current obligations because Indian companies have already scheduled shipments loading in February and arriving in March. They were not permitted to speak to the media, so they spoke under the condition of anonymity. In exchange for India decreasing trade barriers and ceasing to buy Russian oil, the trade agreement would reduce U.S. tariffs on Indian commodities from 50% to 18%. Instead, it would



purchase oil from Venezuela and possibly the United States. After the conflict in Ukraine in 2022, India emerged as the largest purchaser of discounted Russian seaborne crude, which sparked a backlash from Western countries that imposed sanctions on Russia's energy industry. In order to hinder Moscow's ability to finance the war, the US seeks to reduce Russia's oil earnings. Trump remarked of his conversation with Modi, "We talked about a lot of things, including

trade and ending the war with Russia and Ukraine." "He agreed to stop buying Russian Oil, and to buy much more from the United States and, potentially, Venezuela." Modi followed with a post on social media that he was delighted with the reduced tariff, but made no mention of a halt to purchases of Russian oil. India will gradually cut its Russian oil imports, a third source said, adding that a complete halt would hit operations at Russia-backed Indian refiner Nayara En-

ergy's 400,000-barrel-per-day refinery. Nayara relies solely on Russian crude after Iraq's SOMO and Saudi Aramco pulled back amid payment difficulties following European Union sanctions imposed on the refiner in July last year. This source said Nayara's Russian oil imports in April would be negligible as it shuts its refinery for over a month from April 10 for maintenance. Reuters reported US told Delhi: India may resume Venezuelan oil.

Hyundai Motor Q3: Brokerages cut targets

Mumbai: Hyundai Motor India reported a Q3FY26 consolidated net profit of ₹1,234 crore, a 6.3% increase year-on-year, but a 21.5% decrease quarter-on-quarter. Revenue from operations reached ₹17,617.8 crore, up from ₹16,323 crore a year ago.

Despite an Ebitda of ₹2,020 crore falling below expectations due to rising raw material and new plant costs, revenue remained robust, supported by high SUV demand and strong bookings for the new Venue. Analysts from Nomura have maintained a 'Buy' rating with a revised target price, anticipating substantial growth driven by upcoming model launches.

Results for Ather Energy's third quarter: 50% increase in revenue

Mumbai: Even while its net loss is significantly decreasing, Ather Energy Ltd., which is perhaps India's fastest-growing electric two-wheeler manufacturer, is on the verge of operational profitability. According to an exchange filing, the Bengaluru-based EV manufacturer's standalone net loss decreased to ₹84.6 crore in the three months

that ended on December 31, 2025, from ₹198 crore in the same period last year. Revenue increased by 50.2% to ₹953.6 crore as a result. Ather Energy's stock dropped 2.97% to ₹607.00 on the BSE on Monday, despite the benchmark Sensex closing the day 1.17% higher at 81,666.46 points.



Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget 2026 is praised by billionaire banker Uday Kotak

New Delhi: Business executives across took notice of India's 2026-2027 budget when Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled it on Sunday. Kotak Mahindra Bank founder Uday Kotak expressed his opinions on X (previously Twitter), calling it a "budget for the real economy." Uday Kotak emphasized the positive rise in defense spending while pointing to the overall fiscal restraint. He claimed that the budget, which aims to enhance various sectors throughout India, seemed to carefully balance the financialization of the economy with long-term



development. "The focus on development and real economic growth is evident, but fiscal discipline is still in place," he continued. In order to fulfill three major obligations and create a developed India

by 2047, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled a budget. She presented a "three-pronged kartavya framework" in her speech to direct the government's social and economic objectives. The three tasks center on increasing and maintaining economic growth, ensuring that everyone has access to opportunities, and fulfilling people's ambitions through skill and capacity development. On the consumer front, the Budget has adjusted duties on several items. Prices drop for drugs, electronics, exports; luxury watches, imported alcohol become costlier.

The World Bank president thinks that Pakistan has to generate 30 million jobs over the next ten years



Islamabad: In an interview with Reuters, World Bank President Ajay Banga stated that Pakistan’s population dynamics mean that employment creation will remain a binding constraint on growth over the long term rather than a secondary policy goal. Pakistan must create up to 30 million jobs over the next ten years to turn its youth bulge into an economic dividend or risk instability and outward migration. In addition to working with the International Monetary Fund to stabilize its economy, Pakistan is beginning the implementation phase of a 10-year Country Partnership Framework (CPF) agreement that was reached with the World Bank last year. However, Islamabad continues to face growing pressure to provide jobs and steady growth. “We’re trying to move the bank group as a whole from the idea of projects to the idea of outcomes,” Banga stated to Reuters while visiting Pakistan this week in Karachi. As millions of young people reach adulthood, Pakistan must create 2.5 million to 3 million jobs annually, or between 25 to 30 million over

the next ten years, according to Banga. If this isn’t done, “illegal migration or domestic instability” may increase. Banga stated that rather than being a secondary policy objective, employment creation would continue to be a binding restraint on development in the long run due to Pakistan’s demographic dynamics.”This is a generational issue,” he stated. About half of the \$4 billion in annual public and private funding committed by the CPF is anticipated to come from private-sector activities headed by the International Finance Corporation. According to Banga, a nation where 90% of employment are produced in the private sector and the government has little spending power is reflected in the reliance on private capital. According to Banga, Pakistan’s employment strategy is based on three main pillars: increased access to finance and insurance, especially for small businesses and farmers who usually do not have bank credit, business-friendly regulatory changes, and investments in human and physical infrastructure. He stated that the labor-in-

tensive industries with the most employment potential were infrastructure, primary healthcare, tourism, and small-scale agriculture. He added that farming alone could provide around one-third of the jobs Pakistan needs to produce by 2050. A increasing number of independent contractors also demonstrated Pakistan’s propensity for entrepreneurship, but he noted that in order for them to evolve into companies that create jobs, they require improved access to funding, infrastructure, and assistance. The departure of competent professionals is a clear indication of the strain. According to Gallup Pakistan statistics based on Bureau of Emigration records, about 4,000 physicians left Pakistan in 2025, the largest annual outflow on record. This underscores worries that bad working conditions and limited employment opportunities are driving skilled professionals outside. Banga stated that the most pressing short-term goal is to fix Pakistan’s power industry, pointing out that despite increases in generation capacity, development has been constrained by losses and inefficiencies in the distribution of energy. Growing debt from distribution losses, poor bill recovery, and delayed government subsidies have long afflicted Pakistan’s electricity industry, straining state budgets and deterring private investment. IMF-backed reform initiatives have frequently focused on the debt, with successive administrations finding it difficult to limit losses while maintaining the affordability of electricity.

Trump Petro discusses defusing the conflict and signaling a turnaround in US-Colombian ties at the White House



Washington: Months of sarcasm are replaced by smiles as presidents discuss counternarcotics, clean energy, sanctions, and compliment discussions, while Colombians in Bogota and Washington respond with relief. The meeting between US President Donald Trump and Colombian President Gustavo Petro on Tuesday was the first in-person meeting between two leaders who are known for voicing their thoughts, and many were afraid the worst. The two have been at odds over words and ideologies for a year, and Trump has used his power by ambushing foreign leaders during White House visits. Additionally, Colombia is the world’s main supplier of cocaine, and Trump has promised to dismantle international drug trafficking organizations, some of

which have headquarters there. However, following a more than two-hour private meeting, the first pictures showed the two leaders grinning broadly while surrounded by high-ranking officials. Next came a picture of Trump writing, “I love Colombia,” and a signed copy of Trump: The Art of the Deal for Petro with the dedication, “You are great.” From the streets of Bogotá, the capital, to the embassy in Washington, Colombians appeared to exhale in unison. “With God’s blessing, the gathering was a huge success! In a text message to The New York Times, diplomat Oscar Gamboa said, “Long live Colombia,” and included an emoji of the Colombian flag. Despite the fact that the Caribbean was now the “eye of the storm”

of US foreign policy, Petro claimed he had left the White House visit feeling “optimistic and positive” in a press conference. (Some narcotics headed for the US depart from the lengthy Caribbean coasts of Venezuela and Colombia.) At the Colombian embassy in Washington, Petro spoke on what he called a “difficult” time for Venezuela and Colombia. He said he had suggested to Trump that Colombia and the US strengthen their relationship by working together to combat drug trafficking organizations operating on both sides of the Colombian-Venezuelan border and by making investments in sustainable energy that might provide power to both nations. For his part, Trump said that his meeting with Petro went well. Trump told reporters at the

White House, “We worked on it, and we got along very well,” in response to a question about whether the two had reached a consensus on counter-narcotic activities. Experts said there had been solid cause to think the two Presidents may fight on Tuesday. From deportations to US Navy boat attacks against alleged drug traffickers, Petro has criticized Trump on a wide range of issues. Last November, Petro’s visa was canceled by US authorities, and he, his family, and his government were subject to penalties. For his travel to the capital this week, Petro was granted a temporary visa by the US authorities. Following the meeting, Petro gave it a “nine” on a scale of one to ten and said that “not even a second” had been spent

talking about the sanctions or his visa concerns in an interview with a Colombian radio station. Following the meeting, Trump stated that the two were “working on some other things too, including sanctions” in addition to counternarcotics. Compared to the situation a month earlier, it was an unexpected improvement. Following the US military operation in Venezuela that resulted in Nicolás Maduro’s overthrow, Trump hinted that Colombia would be his next target. After leaving the White House, Petro was seen wearing a red MAGA hat. He claimed to have added a S to the cap that President Trump had given him, turning his counterpart’s famous catchphrase—“Make Americas Great Again”—into his own.

India joins the US’s vital minerals bloc to oppose China after a trade agreement is reached



Washington: India was one of 54 nations welcomed by the Trump administration for the crucial minerals meeting, which External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attended. India and the US appear to be working together on another front, the Critical Minerals Ministerial, to challenge China’s hegemony in the world, only days after striking a trade agreement. India was one of 54 nations welcomed by the Trump administration for the crucial minerals meeting, which External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attended. US Vice President JD Vance presented proposals for the new trading zone at the meeting, which was called by US Secretary of State Marco

Rubio. “Building diversified production centers, stable investment conditions, and supply chains that are resilient to the types of external disruptions we have already discussed are our long-term objectives within that zone,” Vance stated. Later, in an interview with the media, Jaishankar stated that the conference was the main reason he was in the United States. Additionally, he stated that India was backing the Forum on Resource, Geostategic Engagement (FORGE), a program that was introduced during the summit on key minerals. Additionally, he spoke at the conference in Washington, DC, where he emphasized the dangers of excessive concentration and

the significance of de-risking supply chains through global collaboration. The Trump administration’s 2026 Critical Minerals Ministerial initiative aims to change the global market for rare earths and critical minerals, which is presently dominated by China. About 70% of the world’s rare earth mining and more than 90% of its processing capability are produced in China, which also leads the world in the production of 30 minerals that the US Geological Survey has classified as essential. The United States and its partner nations, whose officials attended the critical minerals conference, will try to create robust and safe essential mineral supply

chains through this bloc. The United States and its partner nations, whose officials attended the critical minerals conference, will try to create robust and safe essential mineral supply chains through this bloc. The Trump administration’s action follows India’s announcement that it will strengthen its government’s rare earths program. Finance Minister Nirmla Sitharaman stated that the government will assist mineral-rich states like Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Odisha in creating specialized rare earth corridors during the Union Budget 2026–2027 presentation on February 1. Additionally, she unveiled the Indian Semicon-

ductor Mission 2.0, which aims to break the monopoly of China’s competitive semiconductor sector and broaden the nation’s semiconductor mission. Jaishankar emphasized India’s efforts in the critical minerals sector, notably the National Critical Minerals Mission and rare earth corridors, when speaking at a ministerial summit in the United States. Days after Washington and New Delhi signed a trade agreement, India’s support for the US’s most recent effort to challenge China’s worldwide hegemony on vital minerals also gains relevance. The current US tariffs on Indian goods were reduced from 50% to 18% as part of the deal.

New Delhi may purchase oil from any nation under the US-India trade agreement

Russia: Nearly 88% of India’s crude is imported, with Russian oil becoming a major supplier after 2022. India is free to diversify, but it is not easy to replace Russian quantities on a commercial level, according to Moscow. Russia stated on Wednesday that New Delhi’s attempt to diversify its oil sources is not novel nor aimed against Moscow, and that India is free to purchase petroleum from any nation it wishes. Following US President Donald Trump’s assertion that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had reached a trade agreement to cease purchasing Russian oil and instead buy petroleum from the US and potentially Venezuela, the statement was released. Russia has never been India’s exclusive energy supplier, according to Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov, who rejected claims that a change in supply would be uncommon. Russia is not India’s exclusive supply of oil and petroleum products, as we and all other world energy specialists are well aware. India has consistently bought certain goods from other nations. So, we don’t see anything new here,” Peskov stated at a press conference. In order to protect its citizens’ energy security and adjust to changing global conditions, India is expanding its energy mix, as recently noted by Trade Minister Piyush Goyal. But according to Peskov, Moscow has not heard anything formal from India on stopping its imports of Russian oil. A day before, he had emphasized that no such signal had originated from New Delhi. The hydrocarbons trade benefits both nations, according to Maria Zakharova, spokesperson for the Russian Foreign Ministry, who supported further collaboration. “India’s acquisition of Russian hydrocarbons benefits both parties and contributes to the stability of the world energy market. At a briefing, she declared, “We are prepared to maintain close collaboration with our Indian partners.” It is

not feasible for Indian refiners to completely replace Russian oil, according to Russian energy researchers. The majority of US shale exports, according to Igor Yushkov of the National Energy Security Fund, are light grades, whereas Russian Urals crude, which is utilized by Indian refineries, is heavier and contains more sulfur. “India would have to mix different types of US oil, which would increase expenses. It’s not possible to make a straightforward substitute,” he stated. According to Yushkov, the US is unable to readily match the 1.5–2 million barrels that Russia normally delivers to India every day. “It looks like Trump is trying to project the talks as a win entirely on US terms,” he stated. Additionally, he noted that in 2022, when Russia rerouted supplies from Europe and the US to India, it reduced output by around one million barrels per day, driving up world prices to approximately USD 120 per barrel and setting new records for US gasoline and diesel prices. Due to New Delhi’s imports of Russian energy, which the White House claims is funding Vladimir Putin’s war against Ukraine, Trump levied high tariffs on India last year. Trump just announced a trade agreement that will instantly reduce tariffs on Indian goods from 50% to 18%. Almost 88% of the crude that India uses to make fuels like gasoline and diesel is imported. Up until 2021, just 0.2% of India’s imports came from Russian oil. However, as Western nations distanced themselves from Moscow after its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, India became the biggest consumer of cheap Russian crude. India’s imports of Russian oil fell to over 1.1 million barrels per day in the first three weeks of January, from an average of 1.21 million barrels per day the month before and from over 2 million barrels per day in mid-2025, according to data from real-time analytics company Kpler.



Explore the States of India Through a Single Hill Station

If you find yourself weary of the bustling streets of Shimla, the traffic congestion in Manali, or the influx of tourists in Ooty, India has a serene secret awaiting your discovery. Various states throughout the nation feature a single hill station: distinctive, lesser-known havens that are remarkable precisely due to their solitude. These locations not only serve as refreshing alternatives to the more popular destinations but also provide insight into local culture, landscapes, and traditions that remain largely unspoiled by mass tourism. Below is a comprehensive overview of Indian states that possess only one hill station, along with reasons to consider planning your next journey there.

Morni Hills, Haryana: Situated in the Shivalik foothills, Morni Hills is the sole hill station in Haryana. Approximately 45 kilometers from Chandigarh, it elevates above the predominantly flat landscape of the state, providing sweeping views of pine-covered slopes and glistening lakes. Morni is an excellent destination for trekking, birdwatching, and boating, with its twin lakes being the main attraction. The Morni Fort, which dates back to the 17th century, contributes a historical element to the area's natural splendor. In contrast to the lively towns of Himachal, Morni maintains a tranquil atmosphere, making it perfect for weekend retreats.

Mount Abu, Rajasthan: Situated in the arid state of Rajasthan, Mount Abu

stands as the sole hill station, elevated at 1,220 meters within the Aravalli Range. Renowned for its temperate climate and abundant greenery, it presents a remarkable contrast to the dry terrains below. Key attractions include Nakki Lake, the Dilwara Jain Temples, and Sunset Point, all of which are essential destinations. Additionally, Mount Abu hosts the Summer Festival, which features traditional Rajasthani folk music and dance. For those who perceive Rajasthan solely as a land of forts and sand dunes, Mount Abu provides a refreshing alternative—lush hills, cascading waterfalls, and a climate that feels entirely different from the scorching desert heat.

Rajgir, Bihar: Bihar's only hill station, Rajgir, is steeped in history and spirituality. Surrounded by rocky hills, Rajgir was once the capital of the Magadha empire and is closely linked to both Buddhism and Jainism. The hot springs here are believed to have medicinal properties, while the Vishwa Shanti Stupa atop Ratnagiri Hill is a major attraction. Rajgir also hosts ropeway rides, caves, and ruins that narrate stories of ancient India. Unlike the Himalayan retreats, Rajgir's charm lies in its blend of spirituality, archaeology, and natural beauty.

Haflong, Assam: Known as the "Switzerland of the East," Haflong is Assam's only hill station. Located in the Dima Hasao district, it is famous for its rolling hills, orchids, and vibrant tribal culture. The

Haflong Lake is a serene spot for boating, while nearby villages offer glimpses into Dimasa traditions. Birdwatchers flock here to spot rare species, and the surrounding tea gardens add to the scenic appeal. Haflong remains relatively unexplored compared to Shillong or Darjeeling, making it a hidden gem for travelers seeking tranquility in the Northeast.

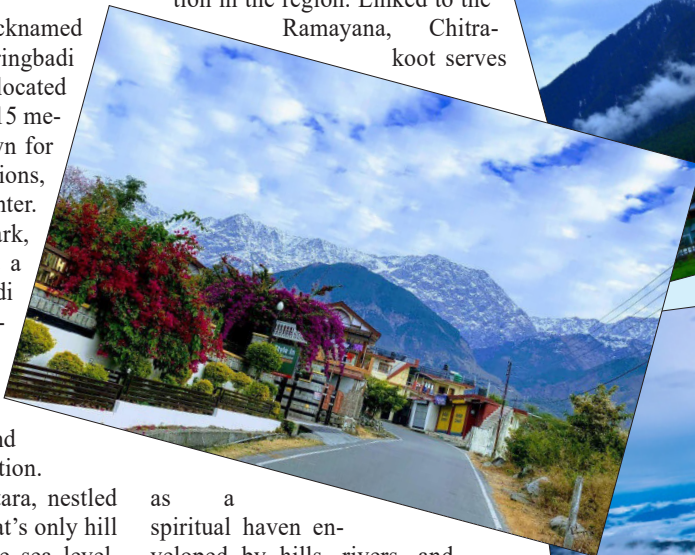
Daringbadi, Odisha: Nicknamed the "Kashmir of Odisha," Daringbadi is the state's sole hill station, located in the Kandhamal district. At 915 meters above sea level, it is known for its pine forests, coffee plantations, and occasional snowfall in winter. The Doluri River, Hill View Park, and nearby waterfalls make it a picturesque retreat. Daringbadi is also home to tribal communities, offering cultural experiences alongside natural beauty. For those who think Odisha is only about temples and beaches, Daringbadi is a revelation.

Saputara, Gujarat: Saputara, nestled in the Sahyadri range, is Gujarat's only hill station. At 1,000 meters above sea level, it is known for its pleasant climate, tribal heritage, and lush landscapes. The Saputara Lake, Artist Village, and Ropeway are popular attractions. The hill station also serves as a gateway to the Dang forests, rich in biodiversity. Saputara is particularly appealing during the monsoon, when the hills

turn emerald green. For travelers exploring Gujarat's deserts and Gir forests, Saputara offers a refreshing change of scenery.

Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh: Although Uttar Pradesh is primarily recognized for its flatlands and sacred pilgrimage locations, Chitrakoot distinguishes itself as the sole hill station in the region. Linked to the Ramayana, Chitrakoot serves

as a spiritual haven enveloped by hills, rivers, and forests. Notable attractions include Kamadgiri Hill, Ramghat, and the Gupt Godavari caves. Chitrakoot harmoniously combines mythology with stunning natural scenery, rendering it a distinctive destination for individuals in search of tranquility and cultural richness.



Travel guide for Amrit Udyan in 2026: Top attractions and transportation

Amrit Udyan, historically known as the Mughal Garden, is one of New Delhi's most iconic and picturesque green spots, tucked within the enormous Rashtrapati Bhavan complex. Nature lovers, families, students, and tourists from all over India have the opportunity to witness breathtaking floral displays, thoughtfully planned garden sections, and an unforgettable experience of nature and heritage combined every year when this garden is opened to the public during the annual Amrit Udyan Utsav. The dates of the Amrit Udyan Utsav in 2026 are set for February 3–March 31. The gardens are open from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM, with the last entry at 5:15 PM, six days a week (closed on Mondays and on March 4 for Holi). Magnificent Floral Displays: With thousands of flowers in full bloom, including vivid roses, colorful tulips, lilies, petunias, marigolds, and seasonal Indian flowers arranged in artistic designs, the garden offers stunning views and ideal photo locations. Musical Fountains: Children and adults alike will pause to take in the revitalizing sounds and movement of the rhythmic water features that add elegance to your walk. There are stops close to Rashtrapati Bhavan on a number of DTC (Delhi Transport Corporation) bus routes.

Finding the closest stop is easy when you use an app or bus route planner. Although there isn't much parking close to the Udyan, using a ridesharing service, taxi, or car is an easy method to get to the event. Major train sta-



tions including New Delhi Railway Station, Nizamuddin Railway Station, and Old Delhi Railway Station are about 4–9 kilometers away from the garden.



Five Nations Showcasing Waterfalls Worldwide That Naturally Change Their Colors

From vibrant electric blues to deep murky browns and shimmering turquoise, many of the world's most famous waterfalls change their colors with the shifting seasons, variations in light, and mineral composition. Across different continents, these natural marvels illustrate how water, geological structures, and climate contribute to the creation of ever-changing visual spectacles. Kuang Si Waterfall is considered one of the most breathtaking sites in northern Laos. During the dry season, the waterfall displays a striking electric blue color, with its pristine waters and serene lower pools ideal for swimming.

In contrast, in the monsoon season, it transforms into a raging muddy brown torrent, roaring with sediment-filled water, where sheer force replaces calmness, creating a visually distinctive experience. Costa Rica boasts numerous waterfalls renowned for their vibrant colors. Río Celeste, located in Tenorio Volcano National Park and previously referred to as Buena Vista, is particularly famous for its brilliant blue shade. The waterfall's unique coloration results from an optical effect. Sunlight disperses through river water that contains a whitish compound made up of aluminum, silicon, and oxygen, which

coats the stones on the riverbed.

Muradiye Waterfall, located in the Van

sites. Mamquam Falls in British Columbia is known for its striking seasonal colour shifts. In winter, frozen glaciers leave the water clear with a greenish tint. By late summer, melting ice releases fine silt, transforming the falls into a vivid turquoise, an almost unreal hue. The waterfall's appearance varies with the seasons, showcasing the significant impact of glaciers on the color of the water.

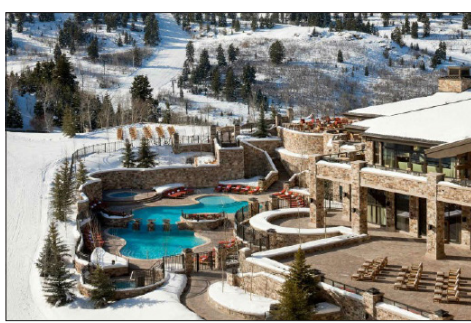
Enclosed by thick forests, Plitvice Lakes are famous for their colors that transform each day, transitioning from emerald green and turquoise to deep blue and gentle grey.

These variations are influenced by factors such as water chemistry, depth, light, and weather, resulting in a continuously changing natural display.

Kuang Si Waterfall is among northern Laos's most breathtaking sights. During the dry months, the waterfall turns a striking electric blue, crystal clear with gentle lower pools ideal for swimming. In the monsoon, it transforms into a muddy brown force, roaring with sediment-heavy water, raw power replacing serenity, making every experience visually distinct.



Winter Getaways: The Most Captivating Retreats of the Season



Winter possesses a distinctive capacity to slow down all activities; the air turns crisp, the mountains enveloped in mist, and the world seems quieter, gentler, and more inviting. It is the time of year when travelers long for warmth, cozy corners, the tranquility of nature, and the simple joy of waking up to a view that feels like a deep breath. Whether you picture pine forests, snow-covered hills, peaceful lakesides, or extended evenings by a crackling bonfire, winter getaways offer the perfect chance to escape from the chaos of urban life. This is the opportunity to flee, explore, and fully engage with the magic of the mountains at their most tranquil.

Pebbles & Pines, Jim Corbett
As winter settles over the city and the air turns crisp, Shervani Hotels invites travellers to unwind amidst nature at Shervani Pebbles & Pine, Jim Corbett, a serene retreat where wilderness meets warmth and luxury. Just a few hours' drive from Delhi, this boutique property offers the perfect winter escape for those seeking tranquillity, adventure, and connection with nature. Winter is one of the most magical seasons to experience Jim Corbett National Park. Clear skies, rustling forests, and invigorating mountain air create the perfect setting for safaris, riverside walks, and long sun-soaked afternoons. With temperatures between 8°C and 20°C, the region becomes a haven for wildlife en-

thusiasts and nature lovers alike. Migratory birds arrive in vibrant flocks, bonfire nights glow under star-studded skies, and early morning jeep rides through misty trails become unforgettable memories. Set against the stunning backdrop of the Corbett forest, Shervani Pebbles & Pine blends rustic elegance with modern comfort. The property features spacious rooms and cottages with panoramic views, lush lawns, and intimate outdoor sit-outs ideal for soaking up the winter sunshine.

Guests can enjoy a 24/7 multi-cuisine restaurant serving Kumaoni, Indian, Continental, and Pan-Asian dishes (80 indoor seats, 24 outdoor). Unwind with a book, relax to the soothing sounds of nature, or embark on guided safaris led by expert naturalists. Nature walks, birdwatching, cycling trails, village visits, and bonfires add to the immersive experience.

Located approximately 260 km from Delhi, the retreat is an easy 5–6-hour drive — the perfect long-weekend getaway for couples, families, and nature lovers. This season, trade the city's chill for Corbett's warmth. Whether you're chasing adventure or craving quiet relaxation, Shervani Pebbles & Pine offers a winter escape that feels both rejuvenating and unforgettable. Te Aroha by Shervani, Mukteshwar As winter deepens in Delhi and the city's pace quickens, it's the perfect time to retreat to the calm of the hills.

Tucked away in the peaceful village of Dhana-chuli near Mukteshwar, Te Aroha by Shervani is a charming boutique retreat offering misty mornings, sweeping Himalayan views, and the soul-soothing quiet that winter wanderers crave. More than just a stay, Te Aroha is an experience, nostalgia, comfort, and quiet luxury wrapped in traditional Kumaoni warmth. Winter transforms Mukteshwar into a tranquil haven. Clear skies unveil snow-covered Himalayan peaks, while forests around Te Aroha glow in golden hues.

Salman Khan on ridiculing the Battle of Galwan

It's a Colonel's look, not a romantic one



New Delhi: Actor Salman Khan has responded to the mocking on social media on his appearance in the Battle of Galwan trailer. Critics pointed to a scene in the teaser where Salman stands between the enemy and his soldiers while holding a log of wood. The actor has now addressed the critics who criticized him for lacking the stamina required of a soldier in a war film. A video of Salman visiting

an ISPL function on a Saturday morning and conversing with former cricketer and analyst Mohammad Kaif was posted on X by a fan handle. In jest, Kaif urged Salman to recreate the same still from the Battle of Galwan. The Battle of Galwan actor then took the same pose and said, “Ab kisi ko ye samajh mein aata hai ki ye romantic look hai, lekin Colonel hoon bhaiya. Aur ye Colonel ka look hai, jo

ki samajhta hai ki apne team waalon ko, apne jawaanon ko kaise hosla dena hai. Iss sabka koi matlab hai nahi, iss look ka koi matlab hai nahi. Toh aise hi chalta aaya hai aur aise hi chalta rahega, aap sabki dua se. (Now some might think this is a romantic look, but I am a Colonel. And this is the look of a Colonel, who understands how to encourage his team, his soldiers. None of this is required. It has always been this way and it will continue to be, with all your blessings.)” A few weeks ago, Political analyst and former Bigg Boss contestant Tehseen Poonawalla came forward in support of Salman as the actor was being trolled for his look in Battle of Galwan teaser. In his X post, Tehseen wrote, “Those trolling Salman for that slight smile in the Battle of Galwan teaser are missing the point. That isn’t casual – it’s composure. It’s calm aggression. It’s the look of a soldier who understands what he’s walking into and refuses to panic when the enemy is right in front of him,” highlighting his view that the smile should be read as a mark of inner control.” Battle of Galwan is directed by Apoorva Lakhia and also features Chitrangada Singh, Abhilash Chaudhary, among others. The film is set for a theatrical release on April 17, 2026.

Alia Bhatt describes daughter Raha as a little lawyer



New Delhi: After marrying her longtime companion Ranbir Kapoor in 2022, Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt welcomed parenthood with the birth of their daughter, Raha, that same year. In a letter to her younger self, Alia described how her kid is a miniature replica of herself and how her husband, Ranbir, is the person she

feels safest around. Alia shared a letter she wrote to her younger self in an interview with Esquire India. “Dear little me, please don’t cry over that stupid boy in high school, it’s not worth it,” she remarked, referring to her constant obsession on Ranbir. You will eventually meet the world’s greatest boy, I assure you. He will love you with re-

spect, comfort, tranquility, and laughter—the person you’ve always secretly had feelings for. He knows everything about you and will be your best buddy and safest haven. He will fulfill your lifelong dream of having someone read your thoughts. “Little me, you’re going to have good and bad days, but you are mostly going to have grateful days, and that dream of taking care of a mini you comes true,” she continued when discussing parenting her daughter Raha. Your heart will expand beyond your wildest dreams, and you will have the world’s most beautiful daughter. Prepare yourself because she will also be a lawyer in the future. She also encouraged her younger self to love her mother and sister even more and to never stop

dreaming. Both her mother and her followers were profoundly touched by the actor’s letter. “Ohhhh,” wrote Soni Razdan. How lovely this is. Alia is just stunning. “That was so sweet Raha the little lawyer ,” a fan wrote. “Got emotional listening to this,” wrote someone else. “This is so heart-touching, and I love her confidence,” said another. After collaborating on Ayan Mukerji’s Brahmastra, which went into production in 2018, Ranbir and Alia started dating. The pair got married in April 2022 after dating for a few years, and later that year they welcomed their daughter Raha. In Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s Love & War, Ranbir and Alia will reconnect on screen. The movie, which is presently in production, also has Vicky Kaushal in a major part.

Hema Malini at 77 Reveals Her Easy Yet Powerful Dietary Tricks

New Delhi: Hema Malini, an actress, dancer, and current Member of Parliament, has long been a Bollywood star. She just disclosed one of her age-defying secrets. Her diet is based on simplicity and Indian culture. Today marks Hema Malini’s 77th birthday, and the festivities are already underway. It’s intriguing to note that the seasoned

actress is as fit as a fiddle as admirers and well-wishers join in. Her workout regimen isn’t as rigorous as those in the present era, which is not surprising given her career spanning more than 60 years. Rather, Hema Malini decides to base her well-being on a rigorous vegetarian diet and a healthy mix of exercise and discipline. When asked

about her diet, Hema Malini herself said that it was really straightforward. She doesn’t eat meat at all. Her “South-Indian” heritage is the source of her inspiration and favorite meals. She occasionally skips meals or consumes foods that are easy on the stomach. Tamarind, tomatoes, and spices are frequently used to make this light soup meal, which

is typically eaten with rice. Because it is high in antioxidants and helps with digestion, it is the perfect rasam for your health.

Fermented rice and lentil cake is a diet meal that is very simple to prepare, low in oil, and a good supply of readily digested proteins and carbohydrates. Hema Malini eats a well-balanced diet that is limited



to a few meals each day and heavily favors traditional Indian cuisine. The actress also fasts on one day per week. Fasting has been shown to help people lose weight and provide a number of scientifically supported health benefits, including boosting metabolism and cell regeneration. Lastly, her work in dance, particularly Bharatanatyam,

is closely linked to her fitness and wellness. Since dancing is actually the most well-rounded type of exercise, the popular figure is still as nimble and active as she was when she was younger, even at the age of 77. She stays active and improves her strength, flexibility, and endurance through dance. as well as mental coordination.

Lisa Ray celebrates 25 years of Kasoor

New Delhi: Lisa Ray has celebrated the 25th anniversary of her 2001 picture Kasoor, describing it as one of her most significant works to date. At a time when such stories were rare in Hindi cinema, the actor claimed that the movie stood out for its strong female character and emotional depth.

Lisa celebrated the occasion by posting the “Mohabbat Ho Na Jaye” music video and a thoughtful reflection on the film’s meaning to her on Instagram. Twenty-five years of Kasoor. Give that some thought. Saying yes to this movie felt like taking a silent but significant step into my authority. A strong woman. An actual arc. complexity of emotions. No grand dance routines.

No recipe. She went on to describe Kasoor as a film driven by mood and emotion rather than spectacle, noting how different it was from the mainstream Bol-



lywood template of the 1990s. “It was dark, internal, and led by feeling rather than spectacle. In many ways, Kasoor represented everything Bollywood wasn’t at that moment.”

Recalling the period when the film was made, Lisa shared that she was discouraged from taking on the role, with many insisting that audiences were not ready for strong female-led stories or darker narratives. “In the 90s,

after refusing many mainstream offers, I was told - very confidently - this film won’t work. No one wants to watch a strong female character. It’s too dark. Well here we are.” Expressing gratitude to her collaborators, Lisa praised co-actor Aftab Shivdasani for his sincerity and commitment, and thanked director Vikram Bhatt and the Bhatt family for believing in the story’s quiet strength.

Sonam Kapoor proudly displays her baby belly while wearing an exquisite all-white outfit

New Delhi: Sonam Kapoor, a style icon and Bollywood actress, attracted attention once more with her most recent city outing. Sonam demonstrated that maternity attire can be both easy and stylish while she was expecting her second child. She chose a simple, all-white outfit that accentuated her expanding baby belly while keeping comfort in mind, avoiding bulky layers and extravagant looks. Sonam selected a custom white cotton shirt by Dhruv Kapoor with full sleeves, a crisp collar, and padded shoulders for her day out. The garment, which was slightly unbuttoned to subtly highlight her baby bulge, was styled by her sister Rhea Kapoor and celebrity stylist Sanya Kapoor. She added movement and elegance to the ensemble by pairing it with a modern maxi skirt that had a low-rise, balloon-like design. Sonam used accessories that were dramatic but basic. She wore aviator sunglasses, white ballerina flats, silver jhumkas, and gold statement jewelry. The all-white ensemble was

subtly contrasted with a green shoulder purse, which added a splash of color. Sonam chose to wear fresh, minimal makeup, sticking to her typical understated glam: winged liner, feathery brows, delicate blush, and rosy lips. Her hair, which complemented her stylish ensemble, was arranged in a sloppy twisted updo with loose strands framing her face. Sonam Kapoor, who wed businessman Anand Ahuja in 2018, already has a kid, Vayu, who was born in 2022. She raised the standard for maternity wear with this outing, demonstrating that being pregnant doesn’t have to mean sacrificing style. Both fashion enthusiasts and soon-to-be mothers will be inspired by her effortlessly stylish appearance.



Hrithik Roshan shares his most unusual post-workout meal

New Delhi: Fans were taken aback when Hrithik Roshan revealed his most surprising post-workout meal, which has nothing to do with costly chemicals. Rather, the actor claims that one of his favorite culinary eccentricities is a healthy meal of jwar rotis served with a mixture of vegetables and protein. Along with egg whites and dal, the actor’s lunch consists of bhindi, beetroot, baingan, papdi, and lauki. Although this combination may seem unusual, it represents a smart balancing act between fiber, protein, and minerals. Hrithik proudly referred to it as his own “Indian mishmash.” Hrithik is well-known for his rigorous exercise regimens, but his dietary choices demonstrate that eating boring or monotonous meals is not always the best way to keep in shape. His post demonstrates how, when consumed with awareness, traditional Indian cuisine can be filling and nourishing following a strenuous workout. Hrithik’s lighthearted tone was particularly noteworthy as he referred to the lunch as one of his peculiarities and concluded his post with the sincere question, “Uff... is there anything better?” The piece



felt less about diet guidelines and more about enjoying meals guilt-free because of the honesty. Hrithik quickly shifted the focus to shared experiences by asking followers about their most peculiar food desires as he concluded his post. He once again demonstrated that even Bollywood’s most fit celebrity finds happiness in straightforward, desi comfort food by using the hashtag #IndianMishmash. With “Storm,” Hrithik is now making his OTT debut as a producer. For the thriller, which takes place in Mumbai, Hrithik is collaborating with Prime Video. According to variety.com, production is expected to start soon. The

celebrated filmmaker Ajitpal Singh, who directed the Sundance selection “Fire in the Mountains” and the television series “Tabbar,” is the creator and director of “Storm.” As he handed over the reins of a series he had developed and cultivated over the last 22 years, it was revealed in April 2025 that Hrithik will be making his directorial debut with “Krrish 4.” In collaboration with Rakesh Roshan, Yash Raj Films is producing the movie. As he plays the franchise’s title superhero, Indian superstar Hrithik Roshan will alternate between directing and acting. The movie’s filming is scheduled to start early next year.

Farhan Akhtar will take time to surpass 120 Bahadur failures

Mumbai: Farhan Akhtar’s recent film as an actor, 120 Bahadur, did not perform as expected at the box office. The film’s lukewarm commercial response has prompted conversations within the film industry about the unpredictable nature of success and failure in cinema.

Farhan’s mother, writer Honey Irani, shared her thoughts on how the actor-director is processing this setback and highlighted the emotional impact such outcomes can have on those involved in filmmaking. Honey Irani spoke candidly about the challenges faced by Farhan and her family in the wake of the film’s performance. She told Vicky Lalwani in an interview, He and Zoya both have gone through it. Of course, it is your personal loss because you have worked so hard on it and so many people are involved with the film and so much money is involved with the film. And when that film doesn’t work, it pains a lot.”Irani spoke about Farhan’s upbringing and how she’s taught them to handle criticism. She further remarked on Farhan’s path forward, acknowledging that recovery from a creative disappointment is not always immediate.

Mumbai Police file a complaint against the Dhurandhar 2 team



Mumbai: Fans discovered an old iThe location manager for the movie Dhurandhar 2 has been charged by Mumbai Police with deploying a drone in the South Mumbai neighborhood of Fort without the required authorization. Following alleged infractions during the film’s continuing production, the case was filed at the MRA Marg police station on February 1. Officials claim that Rinku Rajpal

Valmiki was the subject of a first information report (FIR) under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for “willful disobedience to lawful orders of authority,” which is stated in the complaint.

According to police records, the team did not get the necessary authorizations prior to using airborne equipment to film scenes. Because of its close proximity to important government and

financial organizations, the Fort region has severe regulations regarding the use of unmanned aerial vehicles. Law enforcement organizations keep a close eye on the area and take violations of aviation restrictions very seriously. According to the authorities, problems started on February 1 when the entire crew—including actor Sanjay Dutt—gathered for filming. Today was the third day of Dhurand-

har 2 filming in the area. Unauthorized drone activities during this schedule prompted the police to intervene. As part of the film’s set design, the production team began altering sections of the ancient Fort complex on January 30 to mimic a bustling old Pakistani street.

The large-scale transformation drew attention from both local residents and security personnel due to the alteration of the public space. Upon identifying the drone use, officers issued a notice to the location manager, who was subsequently allowed to leave after the formalities were completed. The FIR, however, remains active and further investigation is underway to assess the extent of the violation. The police emphasised the need for strict compliance with regulations governing the use of drones and other recording devices in zones.

Early maturity carries hidden health costs

Women who experience puberty before the age of 11 or give birth before turning 21 may face significantly higher health risks later in life, according to a new study. The research reveals that early reproductive events can double the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, heart failure, and obesity, and increase the likelihood of severe metabolic disorders by four times. Researchers have found strong genetic links between the timing of puberty and childbirth and long-term health outcomes. The study shows that women who undergo later puberty and delay childbirth tend to live longer, experience less frailty, age more slowly on a biological level, and have a lower risk of age-related diseases, including Alzheimer's and Type 2 diabetes.

"Genetic factors that promote early reproduction appear to come with hidden costs," said lead researcher and professor Pankaj Kapahi. "While early reproduction may enhance survival chances for offspring, it seems to accelerate ageing and increase disease risk for the mother." The findings are based on a comprehensive regression analysis involving nearly 200,000 women in the UK. Researchers identified 126 genetic markers that link early reproductive events with ageing-related outcomes. One of the key mediators in this process is Body Mass Index (BMI).

The study found that women who experience early puberty or childbirth often have a higher BMI, which in turn raises the risk of metabolic diseases. The study also explored how the body's ability to absorb nutrients, while advantageous for supporting a pregnancy, can become a liability in nutrient-rich environments, potentially leading to obesity and diabetes. Experts say these insights could help shape personalized health strategies. "Understanding how reproductive timing influences long-term health opens the door to preventive measures," Kapahi added. He emphasized that lifestyle changes, regular metabolic screenings, and customized dietary plans could help mitigate these risks. The study underscores the need to consider reproductive history as a crucial factor in women's long-term health planning.

Probiotics Versus Fermented Foods: What Your Digestive System Truly Requires



ut health has subtly transitioned from the periphery of wellness discussions to a prominent position. Encompassing aspects such as digestion, immunity, mental clarity, and energy levels, the gut microbiome is now central to holistic health. As an increasing number of individuals aim to enhance their digestive wellness, two solutions frequently take precedence in the conversation: probiotics and fermented foods.

While the terms are frequently used interchangeably, they are not the same. Understanding the difference is key to making informed dietary choices.

The Difference Between Probiotics And Fermented

Food

Probiotics are live, beneficial microorganisms consumed in specific, measured amounts, usually through supplements or fortified foods. They are designed to deliver targeted strains such as Lactobacillus or Bifidobacterium to support particular health outcomes.

"Probiotics are live, beneficial bacteria taken in specific amounts. Because the strains and doses are controlled, probiotics are especially helpful for targeted needs such as after antibiotics, during digestive upset, or when stress throws your gut off balance," explains Preety Tyagi, Nutritionist and

Founder of Nutrishifts.

Fermented foods, on the other hand, are whole foods transformed through natural fermentation. Yoghurt, kefir, kimchi, sauerkraut, miso, tempeh, kombucha, and traditionally fermented pickles all fall into this category.

"Fermented foods don't just support gut bacteria. They also provide fibre, enzymes, vitamins, and antioxidants," Tyagi adds, highlighting their broader nutritional value beyond probiotics alone.

Precision Vs Nutrition: The Key Difference

From a clinical standpoint, probiotics and fermented foods serve distinct yet complementary roles. Jeevan Kasra, Chairman at Steris Healthcare, underscores the scientific distinction. "Probiotics are scientifically studied formulations that contain specific, well-defined strains at clinically validated doses. This makes them particularly useful in situations that require targeted gut support, such as during antibiotic use, digestive discomfort, or immune support," he notes.

Kasra also points out an important nuance often overlooked in wellness trends: "Not all fermented foods qualify to be called probiotics in the therapeutic sense of the word." The bacterial content in fermented foods can vary widely depending on preparation, storage, and processing methods.

Why Fermented Foods Still Matter

Despite their variability, fermented foods play a vital role in long-term gut health. Their strength lies in diversity and daily nourishment rather than precision.

According to Tyagi, "Fermented foods support long-term gut health through everyday nutrition and variety." They introduce a range of beneficial microbes while improving digestion and nutrient absorption. These benefits cannot be fully replicated by supplements.

This makes fermented foods particularly valuable as part of a balanced, habitual diet rather than a short-term intervention.

A Cardiologist's Guide to Managing Cholesterol in the Winter Season



The winter season in India signifies the arrival of comfort food. With dishes such as gajar halwa, pakoras, and sweets rich in ghee, indulgence is prevalent. However, these seasonal delights may also elevate cholesterol levels, thereby heightening the risk of heart disease.

Dr Pandey confirms that many people show a noticeable rise in cholesterol levels during the winter months. He explains that while cold weather can have some impact on cholesterol, seasonal lifestyle changes play a far bigger role.

"Reduced physical activity, larger portion sizes, and increased consumption of fried and comfort foods contribute far more to rising cholesterol levels than cold weather itself," he says. Dr Pandey explains that when cholesterol levels rise, excess fat circulates in the bloodstream and gradually gets deposited along the walls of arteries. Over time, this buildup narrows the blood vessels, restricting blood flow and increasing the risk of heart disease.

He adds that low-density lipoprotein (LDL) is commonly known as "bad cholesterol" because it promotes plaque formation in the arteries. High-density lipoprotein (HDL), on the other hand, is considered "good cholesterol" as it helps remove excess cholesterol from the bloodstream, offering protection against heart-related conditions.

Do All Winter Foods Harm Your Heart?

Dr Pandey points out that while foods like ghee and butter often receive negative attention, they can still be part of a well-balanced diet when consumed in moderation. He explains that completely avoiding traditional

fats is not always necessary, as long as portion sizes are controlled. "Mustard oil contains heart-healthy fats when used and heated appropriately. Peanuts also provide healthy fats along with protein. The real concern is excessive consumption of these foods, which becomes more common during winter cooking," he says. Dr Pandey advises that fried snack foods should ideally be limited to once or twice a week. Consuming fried items daily, even in small portions, can significantly increase the intake of unhealthy fats. From a health perspective, he notes that eating smaller portions occasionally is far better than consuming larger quantities of fried snacks regularly throughout the winter months.

Warning Signs Your Cholesterol May Be Rising

Dr Pandey explains that high cholesterol usually does not cause any noticeable symptoms in its early stages, which is why it often goes undetected. As cholesterol levels rise over time, some people may begin to experience fatigue, shortness of breath during physical exertion, or episodes of chest discomfort. "However, these symptoms tend to appear much later, once the condition has already progressed." A blood lipid profile test remains the only reliable way to detect cholesterol imbalance at an early stage, especially for those with a family history of high cholesterol, obesity, or diabetes, or for individuals who follow a largely sedentary lifestyle, he says.

Lack of sleep linked to shorter lifespans, study finds

For decades, sleep has often been treated as expendable — something to be trimmed to make room for longer workdays, late-night scrolling, or packed schedules. But a major new U.S. study suggests that chronic sleep deprivation may come at a far greater cost than previously thought: a shorter life.

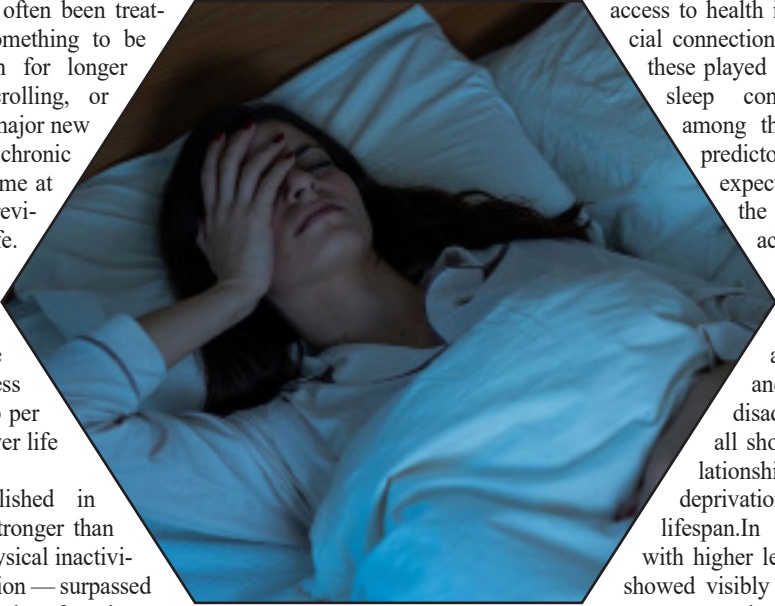
Researchers at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) report that communities where people regularly get less than seven hours of sleep per night have noticeably lower life expectancy.

The association, published in SLEEP Advances, was stronger than links tied to poor diet, physical inactivity, obesity, or social isolation — surpassed only by smoking. Rather than focusing on individual habits, the research examined sleep trends at a population level. Scientists analyzed CDC survey data from more than 3,000 counties across the United States, spanning 2019 to 2025.

When sleep duration was compared with life expectancy year by year, a clear and consistent pattern emerged: counties with higher rates of insufficient sleep consistently had shorter lifespans. "Honestly, I didn't expect sleep to be so strongly correlated with life expectancy," said senior author Dr. Andrew McHill, an associate professor at OHSU's School of Nursing and School of Medicine. "We've always known sleep is important, but this really emphasizes that people should aim for seven to nine hours whenever possible."

Sleep Outpaces Other Health Risks:-

The researchers evaluated a wide range of factors known to influence longevity, including smoking, obesity, diabetes, physical inactivity, education, unemployment, food insecurity,



access to health insurance, and social connections. While many of these played a role, insufficient sleep consistently ranked among the most powerful predictors of shorter life expectancy. Remarkably, the trend held true across geography and income levels.

Large cities and rural counties, affluent regions and economically disadvantaged areas all showed the same relationship between sleep deprivation and reduced lifespan. In Oregon, counties with higher levels of sleep loss showed visibly lower life expectancy compared to neighboring areas where residents slept longer — a pattern echoed nationwide.

A Wake-Up Call for Public Health:-

Much of the analysis was conducted by graduate students in OHSU's Sleep, Chronobiology and Health Laboratory. While the health benefits of sleep are well established, the strength and consistency of the findings surprised even seasoned researchers. "It makes intuitive sense, but seeing it appear so strongly across every state and year was striking," McHill said. Although the study did not explore biological mechanisms directly, researchers noted that sleep is essential for cardiovascular health, immune function, metabolism, and brain performance. Chronic sleep loss has already been linked to high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, depression, and anxiety. "This shows we need to prioritize sleep just as much as diet and exercise," McHill added. "A good night's sleep doesn't just help you feel better — it may help you live longer."

The Consequences of Excessive Screen Time on Children's Myopia and Measures Parents Can Adopt

In the age of digital learning and prolonged gaming activities, screens have become a fundamental aspect of childhood. Nevertheless, behind this appealing convenience lies a silent epidemic — childhood myopia, commonly referred to as nearsightedness. Worldwide, children are facing vision problems at an unparalleled rate, largely due to increased screen time and reduced exposure to natural light. What was once a concern primarily for teenagers has now permeated the primary school age group, raising serious alarms about eye health. Experts caution that unaddressed myopia is not merely a matter of requiring glasses. It represents a public health issue with enduring consequences if it remains undiagnosed or untreated. According to Dr. Amod Nayak, Head of Clinical Services, Dr. Agarwals Eye Hospital, Bangalore, "Myopia has emerged as one of the most alarming paediatric ophthalmic conditions worldwide, and the increase in screen exposure is a major contributing factor." He explains that prolonged near work on devices demands sustained focus and convergence, and since digital screens are often held closer than books, they strain the visual system further.

Dr. Nayak adds, "Extended screen time replaces outdoor activity, which is vital because exposure to natural light plays a protective role in preventing myopia. Early diagnosis allows timely interventions like corrective lenses, orthokeratology, or pharmaceutical treatments that can slow its progression."



The Digital Disconnect: How Screens Are Changing Young Eyes

The shape of the human eye is changing, quite literally. Dr. Shweta Ravichandran, Associate Consultant, Ophthalmology, MGM Healthcare, Chennai, explains, "Myopia occurs when the eye's shape causes light to focus in front of the retina instead of directly on it, leading to blurry distant vision." She notes that too much screen time promotes eye elongation, which worsens the condition.

"Children who spend less time outdoors are more at risk. Natural daylight stimulates dopamine release in the retina, which supports healthy eye growth," she says.

Dr. Ravichandran points out early warning signs that parents should never ignore: "If your child is squinting, sitting too close to screens, complaining of headaches, or struggling to see the board in class, it's time for an eye exam."

Modern Treatments, Smarter Prevention

Although myopia cannot be reversed, various advancements can help manage its progression. Dr. Ravichandran states, "Low-dose atropine drops, orthokeratology lenses, and specialty glasses have been shown to slow eye growth." Dr. Nayak emphasizes the importance of behavioral changes: "Promote the 20-20-20 rule — every 20 minutes, focus on an object 20 feet away for 20 seconds — and guarantee a minimum of two hours of outdoor play each day." Childhood myopia is increasingly common, and the pandemic has further exacerbated its prevalence. The World Health Organization forecasts that by 2050, half of the world's population will be myopic, highlighting the critical need for early eye examinations.

ICC is awaiting official word from PCB



New Delhi: To break the impasse resulting from the Pakistani government’s decision to boycott the T20 World Cup group match against India in Colombo on February 15, backroom channel talks between the International Cricket Council, its various stakeholders, and the Pakistan Cricket Board continued until Monday. The ICC has not yet notified its board members of any emergent meetings, according to sources. Additionally, the PCB has not formally informed the ICC of its decision to forfeit the well-known match. An emergent meeting cannot be called using a social media post as a legitimate document. In its statement on X, the Pakistani government gave no explanation for the choice. “The Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan grants approval to the Pakistan Cricket Team to participate in the ICC World T20 2026, however, the Pakistan Cricket Team shall not take the field in the match scheduled on 15th February 2026 against India,” the tweet read. If the PCB sticks to their decision to not play against India, the ICC board must approve the sanctions that would be applied. In addition to ICC chair Jay Shah, the board has sixteen members: twelve full members and three associate nations. Although he does not have a vote, chief executive Sanjog Gupta also attends board meetings. In a strongly worded statement released late on Sunday, the ICC stated that it will not permit selective participation and that it “expects the PCB to explore a mutually acceptable resolution, which protects the interests of all stakeholders.” “While the ICC awaits official communication from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), this position of selective participation is difficult to reconcile with the fundamental premise of a global sporting event where all qualified teams are expected to compete on equal terms per the event schedule. The Pakistan squad landed in Colombo on Monday afternoon and will play their first match against the Netherlands on Saturday.

Pakistan’s Latest “Email” Scandal, One Day After Avoiding India’s T20 World Cup Match

New Delhi: There is still turmoil around Pakistan’s plans for the T20 World Cup. The Pakistani government declared on its official X handle on Sunday that it will participate in the 2026 T20 World Cup but will not attend the February 15 group-stage match against India. There is still turmoil around Pakistan’s plans for the T20 World Cup. The Pakistani government declared on its official X handle on Sunday that it will participate in the 2026 T20 World Cup but will not attend the February 15 group-stage match against India. Pakistan will not formally write the ICC about boycotting the T20 World Cup match against India, according to insiders who spoke to NDTV. This implies that the boycott drama will not end. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has yet to provide an official statement to the International Cricket Council (ICC). The ICC may also have to wait before determining its next line of action in the absence of such notification. The Pakistan Cricket Board’s reported stance of “selective participation” in the Men’s T20 World Cup might have significant repercussions for



both the PCB and the global cricket ecosystem, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Sunday. The ICC noted that the Pakistani government’s statement directing its national team to abstain from the T20 World Cup group league match against India in Colombo on February 15 was incompatible with the fundamental tenets of a global competition where all eligible teams are expected to compete under a common schedule. “While the ICC awaits official communication from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), this position of selective participation is

difficult to reconcile with the fundamental premise of a global sporting event where all qualified teams are expected to compete on equal terms,” the international organization said in a strong statement. The ICC emphasized that any departure from full participation would compromise the “spirit and sanctity” of its events, which are based on “sporting integrity, competitiveness, consistency, and fairness.” Notably, the highest authority advised the PCB to consider the long-term effects of its position on cricket in Pakistan. The statement made it apparent

that the issue could have an impact on Pakistan’s standing in the international arena. “The ICC hopes that the PCB will consider the significant and long-term implications for cricket in its own country as this is likely to impact the global cricket ecosystem, which it is itself a member and beneficiary of,” it stated. The International Criminal Court said, without directly contesting Islamabad’s order: “While the ICC respects the roles of governments in matters of national policy, this decision is not in the interest

of the global game or the welfare of fans worldwide, including millions in Pakistan.” The governing body restated that the seamless execution of the T20 World Cup was still its top priority and that all member boards shared responsibility for ensuring the event’s safety. Delivering the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup successfully is still the ICC’s top objective, and it should be the duty of all of its members, including the PCB. It further stated, “It also expects the PCB to investigate a mutually agreeable resolution that safeguards the interests of all stakeholders.”

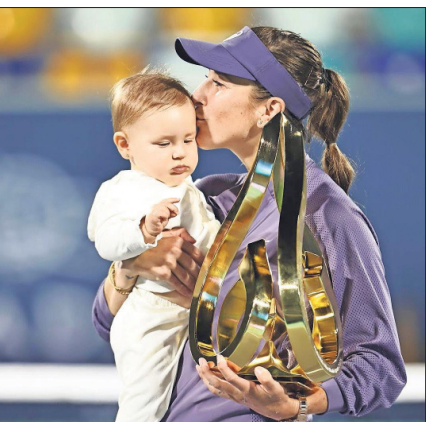
Carlos Alcaraz withdraws from Rotterdam Open hours



New Delhi: Hours after the Spaniard won his first Australian Open championship, the tournament announced on Monday that Carlos Alcaraz had withdrawn from the ABN AMRO Open in Rotterdam. The 22-year-old, who won the ATP 500 event in Rotterdam the previous season, will not be attending the indoor hard-court competition, which is set for February 9–16. Alcaraz became the youngest player to accomplish a career Grand Slam on Sunday when he defeated Novak Djokovic in four sets in the Australian Open final. With top-10 players Alexander Zverev, Felix Auger-Aliassime, and Alex de Minaur scheduled to compete, the Rotterdam Open will have a formidable field despite Alcaraz’s absence. The tournament organizers announced his withdrawal on social media, citing the physical demands of the previous two

weeks. “In Rotterdam, Carlos Alcaraz will not defend his championship. The statement said, “The Australian Open championship concluded that he needs more time before returning to action after his exertions over the past two weeks.” Intercontinental travel and the short time between the Australian Open final and the start of the Rotterdam event are thought to have had a role in the decision. Alcaraz is now anticipated to compete once more at the Qatar Open in Doha, another ATP 500 event that starts on February 16. Alcaraz’s triumph in Melbourne marked his 15th ‘Big Title’, a category that includes Grand Slam titles, ATP Masters 1000 trophies, Nitto ATP Finals victories and an Olympic singles gold medal. However, the world No. 1 insisted that completing the Career Grand Slam at 22 has not diminished his motivation.

Mothers Belinda Bencic and Elina Svitolina Create History in the Tennis Top 10



New Delhi: The WTA Tour’s governing body called it “an incredible moment for women’s sport” when Belinda Bencic and Elina Svitolina became the first moms to be ranked in the top 10 at the same time. The WTA Tour’s governing body called it “an incredible moment for women’s sport” when Belinda Bencic and Elina Svitolina became the first moms to be ranked in the top 10 at the same time. For the first time since leaving the court in September 2023 to give birth to daughter Bella, Switzerland’s Bencic made a comeback to the top 10 in January. Following the Ukrainian’s journey to the Australian Open semifinals last week, Svitolina, Skai’s mother, joined her in the most recent rankings, which were made public on Monday. Through its Family Focus Program, the WTA has worked to assist players in maintaining

their professional careers and becoming parents in recent years. It comprises paid maternity leave, postpartum assistance with a return to play, and ranking protection during pregnancy. “It’s an amazing moment for tennis and women’s sport that two mothers are ranked inside the WTA’s Top 10 rankings for the first time,” stated WTA CEO Portia Archer. This not only draws attention to Belinda and Elina’s outstanding accomplishments, but it also confirms the WTA’s dedication to fostering an atmosphere that allows moms to compete and thrive at the top levels of sport or any other career. “The Special Ranking Rule for returning mothers was exploited by both Svitolina and Bencic. “Coming back to the WTA Top 10 one year after returning to competition after maternity leave is something I am incredibly proud of,” said Bencic, who is ranked ninth. Few people are aware of how challenging that path is, but my team, my family, and I have dedicated all of our time, effort, and energy to achieving this goal.” Svitolina, ranked tenth, went on to say: “Returning to the WTA Top 10 is an incredible dream.” I’m proud of my perseverance and battle, and it means a lot to me to do it as a mother.” Mirra Andreeva, Jessica Pegula, Amanada Anisimova, Coco Gauff, and Jasmine Paolini complete numbers four through eight, respectively. Mirra Andreeva, Jessica Pegula, Amanada Anisimova, Coco Gauff, and Jasmine Paolini complete numbers four through eight, respectively.

The Padma Shri Award Reaction From Rohit Sharma: “Very Special Moment”

New Delhi: After receiving the Padma Shri, one of the nation’s highest civilian honors, Rohit Sharma expressed his thanks, calling it a momentous occasion for him and his family and promising to keep winning games for India. After receiving the Padma Shri, one of the nation’s highest civilian honors, former Indian captain Rohit Sharma expressed his thanks, calling it a great moment for him and his family and promising to keep winning games for India. Rohit praised the Indian government and everyone who had helped him along the way in his cricket career, calling the award a very meaningful moment. For my family and I, receiving the Padma Shri is a very significant occasion. I am grateful for this honor from the Indian government. I also want to express my gratitude to everyone who



has contributed significantly to my career. I will never stop trying to win games and trophies for my nation. Thank you. Jai Hind.” Rohit said in a video shared by Doordarshan Sports on X. Over the past 19 years, Rohit, who made his international debut in 2007, has

been one of India’s most reliable performers in all formats. As a skipper and a batsman, he has made a big impact on Indian cricket. India saw significant success on the international front under Rohit’s direction. After defeating South Africa in the final, the men in blue

won the T20 World Cup in 2024, ending a protracted wait for an ICC title in the shortest format. Rohit’s reputation as a great captain was further cemented in 2025 when India won the Champions Trophy a year later. Rohit has an outstanding batting record in international cricket in addition to his accomplishments as captain. He has amassed almost 4,300 runs in 67 Test matches, including 12 hundreds. In 282 games, Rohit has scored over 11,500 runs and earned 33 hundreds in One-Day Internationals. He has amassed over 4,231 runs in T20 Internationals, including five hundreds, making him one of the format’s most productive hitters. Although Rohit has retired from Test and T20I cricket, he continues to play ODIs and contribute runs to the team in preparation for the 2027 World Cup.

Anahat Singh Takes First Place in Washington’s PSA Bronze Level Championship



New Delhi: At the Squash On Fire Open in Washington, Indian teenage phenom Anahat Singh defeated top seed and world No. 10 Georgina Kennedy of England 12-10, 11-5, 11-7, and won her first PSA Bronze-level title. The victory, which came in just 26 tournaments, was the 15-year-old’s highest career

championship and her 15th overall on the PSA Tour. The Delhi player is presently rated No. 31 in the world. Anahat, the seventh seed, who had lost to Kennedy in their lone prior meeting, displayed incredible poise in the championship match, winning the first game af-

ter falling down 8–10 and then firmly controlling the match. “I’m overjoyed. After the victory, Anahat remarked, “I’m happy I was able to do that this time. I knew I wanted to do well in these events, improve my ranking, and put in strong performances.”

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Cristiano Ronaldo Missed a Saudi Pro League Match in Protest Due to Karim Benzema’s Transfer

New Delhi: Cristiano Ronaldo is not pleased because Al-Hilal’s Saudi Pro League expenditures are far higher than those of Al-Nassr. Cristiano Ronaldo chose to miss Al Nassr’s 1-0 victory over Al Riyadh on Monday, creating an unprecedented stand-off for the Saudi Pro League. The move of his former Real Madrid colleague, Karim Benzema, from Al Ittihad to Al Nassr was the reason for the world’s top scorer’s absence rather than an injury or workload. According to reports, Ronaldo purposefully skipped the game to express disapproval of the league’s management. The Public Investment Fund (PIF), the government wealth fund that owns majority shares in Saudi Arabia’s “Big Four” clubs, is said to be the target of Ronaldo’s annoyance. According to reports, the Portuguese star is furious over what he refers to as “lack of competitive parity,” particularly in relation to the opulent reinforcements given to Al Hilal. The



Saudi Pro League’s top team, Al-Hilal, was able to acquire Benzema on a free transfer to boost an already formidable team that included players like Darwin Nunez and Theo Hernandez, among others. This speaks volumes about the type of transfer activity that occurs in the league. However, Al Nassr ended their winter transfer window quietly, just bringing in 21-year-old Iraqi midfielder Hayder Abdulkareem. Ron-

aldo reportedly objected to the change, stating that the league has to retain “competitive balance.” Despite these efforts, Benzema’s PIF-backed transfer was completed right before the transfer window closed. Ronaldo chose not to be included in the matchday squad as a protest. Additionally, it has been claimed that the board of Al Nassr has “frozen” the authority of Portuguese CEO Jose Semedo

and sporting director Simao Coutinho. Following manager Jorge Jesus’ public acknowledgement that the team lacks Al Hilal’s “political power,” the power dynamics changed. It makes sense that Ronaldo, who is still as driven as ever, feels isolated in his pursuit of the league championship. Senegalese forward Sadio Mane scored the lone goal that gave Al-Nassr all three points in Ronaldo’s absence.