

National Textiles Ministers' Conference begins in Guwahati

Guwahati, Jan 08: The two-day National Textiles Ministers' Conference commenced today in Guwahati, bringing together Textile Ministers and senior officials from States and Union Territories across the nation, to deliberate on the future roadmap of India's textile sector.

Organised by the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, the Conference is being held under the theme "India's Textiles: Weaving Growth, Heritage & Innovation". The event aims to strengthen cooperative federalism and foster co-ordinated efforts between the Centre and States to position India as a global hub for textiles, apparel and technical textiles. The inaugural session was marked by the presence of the Union Minister of Textiles, Giriraj Singh, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Dr. Mohan Yadav, Minister of State for Textiles Pabitra Margherita along with other dignitaries.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Union Minister for Textiles Giriraj Singh said that the Union Government is working in a steady and balanced manner to harmonise production, exports, and sustainability in the textile sector. He said that the National Textiles Ministers' Conference aims to encourage brainstorming, innovation, and idea sharing to help build a strong roadmap for strengthening India's textile industry. The Union Minister urged the textile ministers of various states and UTs to formulate investor friendly policies and emphasized the need to attract greater in-



vestment in the textile sector at the state level. He expressed hope that the two-day deliberations at the conference would help pave the way forward. Speaking about the Northeastern region, Giriraj Singh said that the Prime Minister has given the highest priority to the growth and development of the regions and the Government is working tirelessly to strengthen basic infrastructure and accelerate overall development in the Northeast.

Addressing the conference, Minister of State for Textiles, Pabitra Margherita said that it is a moment of pride that the Na-

tional Textiles Ministers' Conference is being organised in Guwahati, bringing together the Centre and the States to jointly build a roadmap for the textile sector. He added that through dialogue and coordination among representatives of the Centre and State governments, the conference will enable the Indian textile industry to expand its presence in the global market. Margherita further asserted that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has set an ambitious target of building a USD 350 billion textile economy. Referring to the Handloom Census

• *The National Textiles Ministers' Conference began in Guwahati, with Textile Ministers and officials gathering to discuss the future of India's textile sector under the theme "India's Textiles: Weaving Growth, Heritage & Innovation."*
• *Organized by the Ministry of Textiles, the conference aims to enhance cooperative federalism and position India as a global textile hub.*
• *Union Minister Giriraj Singh emphasized the need for investor-friendly policies to boost investment at the state level, while Minister Pabitra Margherita highlighted the goal of achieving a USD 350 billion textile economy.*

2019-20, Margherita highlighted that the Northeastern region accounts for the highest handloom production in the country, contributing around 52 per cent of the total handloom output.

During the day, multiple sessions were held focusing on infrastructure, investments raw materials and fibres including cotton, silk, jute, wool, technical textiles and new age fibres

Ministers and officials from various States and UTs shared best practices, investment opportunities, challenges and policy suggestions to further strengthen the sector.

The Conference will continue tomorrow with further deliberations on various topics including exports, branding, handlooms and handicrafts.

Assam Rifles destroy ganja crop worth Rs 36 crore in Tripura

Agartala, Jan 08: The Assam Rifles has carried out a series of coordinated operations across the Northeast, leading to the destruction of a large illegal ganja plantation in Tripura and the seizure of narcotics and counterfeit goods in other states, officials said on Wednesday. Acting on specific intelligence inputs, Assam Rifles launched a joint operation on January 7 in the Dhanpur, Induria, Kacchakhala and Dhanmura areas of Tripura, located around 66 kilometres south of Agartala. The drive was conducted along with the Border Security Force, Tripura Police, Tripura State Rifles and the Forest Department. During the operation, security forces uprooted and destroyed nearly six lakh young ganja plants spread across about 200 acres of land. Officials estimated the market value of the destroyed crop at around Rs 36 crore. According to an official release, the action was taken to curb illegal cultivation and prevent the use of forest and rural land for drug-related activities. Officials said the operation highlighted the importance of close coordination among different agencies to deal with organised drug networks operating in remote and border areas. In a separate operation in Assam, the Assam Rifles, in coordination with the Customs Department, recovered counterfeit cigarettes worth approximately Rs 34 lakh from a godown in Silchar. Preliminary investigations suggest that the fake cigarettes were being routed through Silchar for distribution within the state. Authorities said further inquiry is underway to identify those involved in the racket. Earlier, another major success was reported from Mizoram, where the Assam Rifles, working jointly with the Mizoram Police, seized a large quantity of methamphetamine tablets near the Indo-Myanmar border. Acting on credible intelligence, the joint team conducted an operation in the Kaifang area of Saitual district and recovered 11.062 kilograms of the banned substance.

ED Attaches ₹3.30 Crore Industrial Property in Fake ITC Case

Itanagar, Jan 08: The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Itanagar Sub-Zonal Office, has provisionally attached immovable industrial assets worth ₹3.30 crore in connection with a fake Input Tax Credit (ITC) fraud case, officials said on Wednesday. The attached property, measuring approximately 1,195 square yards, is located at the Industrial Area, Khushkhhera, in Khairthal-Tijara district of Rajasthan.

The action has been taken under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, following an investigation into the alleged fraudulent availing and utilisation of ITC. According to the ED, the provisional attachment order was issued on January 7, 2026, under Section 5(1) of the PMLA in the case of M/s Prisha Exim and its controller, Anmol Jain. The investigation was initiated on the basis of an FIR registered for scheduled offences under the Indian Penal Code, 1860. During the probe, it was revealed that M/s Shree Ram Enterprises fraudulently generated fake ITC amounting to approximately ₹116 crore by issuing invoices without any actual supply of goods. Investigations also revealed that funds transferred by M/s Prisha Exim to fictitious suppliers were diverted to multiple shell entities across different parts of the country.

Mizoram issues advisory for precautionary measures amid cold wave

Aizawl, Jan 08: Amidst a cold wave gripping the state, Mizoram has issued a public advisory in regard to precautions to be taken with minimum temperatures in several districts dipping considerably to between 4 and 8 degrees Celsius.

According to the India Meteorological Department, Meteorological Centre in Aizawl, the cold wave has been prevailing across all districts of the state since January 4, 2026, with a noticeable drop in night temperatures. The Met depart-

ment has stated that the cold conditions are likely to persist for the next few days. In view of the situation, the Department of Disaster Management and Rehabilitation has directed all district Deputy Commissioners to take necessary precautionary measures to minimise hardships faced by the public. The advisory urges people to wear adequate warm clothing and avoid prolonged exposure to cold weather. Those experiencing cold-related health problems have been advised to seek immedi-

ate medical attention at the nearest Public Health Centre or hospital. Motorists have been cautioned to drive carefully as dense fog is likely during morning and evening hours, reducing visibility on roads. Livestock owners have also been advised to take necessary measures to protect animals from the adverse impact of the cold weather. Authorities have appealed to the people to remain vigilant and adhere to the advisories issued by the concerned departments during the ongoing cold wave.

Bangladesh to source diesel from Assam's Numaligarh Refinery

Guwahati, Jan 08: Bangladesh has decided to import a large volume of diesel from India to meet its fuel demand for the year. The neighbouring country will procure 1.8 lakh tonnes of diesel from Assam's state-owned Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) by December 2026, under an ongoing long-term fuel supply agreement between India and Bangladesh. The decision to go ahead with the import plan was taken at a meeting of the Government Purchase Advisory Committee held at the Dhaka Secretariat. The meeting

was chaired by Finance Adviser Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed. Officials said the move is aimed at ensuring a smooth and uninterrupted supply of fuel during the year. The total value of the diesel import has been estimated at Tk 1,462 crore (Bangladeshi Taka).

Under the existing agreement, the price has been calculated with a premium rate of USD 5.50 per barrel. Numaligarh Refinery Limited, which is a subsidiary of Oil India Limited, will be responsible for supplying the fuel.

Arunachal Congress accuses BJP of weakening rural employment law

Itanagar, Jan 08: The Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) has strongly criticised the BJP-led government at the Centre, saying the new VB-G-RAM-G Bill is weakening the legal right to rural employment that existed under MGNREGA. The party said the government is trying to show big reforms only through publicity instead of improving real

performance on the ground. APCC president Bosiram Siram said that under MGNREGA, rural workers had a legal and demand-based right to work. But under the proposed Bill, this right will depend on government approval and budget allocation. He said this removes the security that poor villagers earlier enjoyed. Siram was reacting to recent statements made by Chief Min-

ister Pema Khandu, Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, BJP MP Tapir Gao and state BJP president Kaling Moyong. These leaders had promoted the Bill as an important reform for rural employment. Siram said slogans like "Viksit Bharat" cannot hide the fact that the guarantee of work has been diluted. He added that rural employment should not depend on political deci-

sions or changing priorities of the ruling party. He also questioned the government's claim of increasing job availability from 100 to 125 days. Siram said that in many districts people do not even receive the present 100 days of work. He added that in several places, workers are able to find only 30 to 40 days of employment and wages are often delayed.

Gauhati High Court Bar Association begins hunger strike against proposed shift to North Guwahati

Guwahati, Jan 08: Members of the Gauhati High Court Bar Association (GHCBA) on Thursday began a hunger strike to protest the state government's decision to shift the principal seat of the Gauhati High Court to North Guwahati. The protest marks a fresh and serious escalation of opposition by the legal fraternity against the proposed judicial township at Rangmahal. The hunger strike, planned for three days, is being held from 10 am to 4 pm each day in front of the old High Court building at Uzan Bazar.

The agitation follows a resolution passed at an emergent extraordinary general meeting of the Bar Association earlier this week. GHCBA president K N Choudhury is leading the protest. The Assam government has proposed to construct a new High Court complex as part of a large judicial township spread across 129 bighas, or about 42.5 acres, at Rangmahal on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra. The first

phase of the project has received cabinet approval of Rs 479 crore. The foundation stone of the project is scheduled to be laid on January 11 by the Chief Justice of India, Justice Surya Kant, in the presence of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and other dignitaries. In a statement, the Bar Association described the hunger strike as a peaceful and democratic form of protest. It said its general body had repeatedly opposed shifting the principal seat from its present location in central Guwahati and had reaffirmed this stand through resolutions and a referendum among its members. The GHCBA has also decided to boycott the foundation stone-laying ceremony and has appealed to all advocates to respect the collective decision. The Association has said that relocating the court would cause serious inconvenience to lawyers, litigants and the general public, and has called for an immediate halt to the project and a reconsideration of the decision.

National conference on frontiers in modern physics begins at Assam RGU

Guwahati, Jan 08: The Department of Physics, The Assam Royal Global University (RGU), Guwahati, inaugurated the National Conference on Frontiers in Modern Physics, Astrophysics and Cosmology (NCMPAC-2026) on Thursday.

The three-day national conference is sponsored by the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), Government of India.

The inaugural session was presided over by the Vice Chancellor of RGU, Prof. Alak K. Buragohain, who delivered the presidential address.

Emphasising the transformative potential of quantum technologies, he highlighted the fundamental role of quantum phenomena, ranging from light-matter interaction to biological processes such as photosynthesis, in



shaping future scientific and technological advancements. Prof. Amarendra Rajput, Advisor, Department of Physics, revisited the historical evolution of quantum mechanics, drawing connections between early cosmo-

logical events following the Big Bang and fundamental questions concerning the origin and existence of humanity.

Prof. Anuradha Devi, Dean, Royal School of Applied and Pure Sciences, addressed the

gathering and emphasised the critical role of national conferences in fostering a vibrant research culture, promoting academic collaboration and encouraging young researchers to engage with frontier areas of science.

A key highlight of the inaugural ceremony was the release of the Abstract Book by the dignitaries, formally marking the commencement of the scientific deliberations of NCMPAC-2026.

The academic programme continued with a Keynote Lecture delivered by Prof. Saurabh Basu, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, on the topic "Non-Hermitian Models and their Topoelectric Circuit Realizations." The session was chaired by Prof. Bipin Kumar Gupta, National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi, and stimulated insightful dis-

cussions on emerging theoretical and experimental paradigms in condensed matter and applied physics.

Earlier, Dr. Maidul Islam, convener of NCMPAC-2026 and coordinator, Department of Physics, RGU, delivered the welcome address.

The objectives of the conference were outlined by Dr. Nitu Borgohain, who highlighted the importance of interdisciplinary dialogue in addressing contemporary scientific challenges across modern physics, astrophysics, and cosmology.

In addition to keynote and plenary lectures, the conference features invited talks, parallel technical sessions, and poster presentations over the next two days, offering a dynamic platform for scientific exchange, collaboration, and dissemination of recent research findings.

Study Finds One-Horned Rhinos Migrated to Northeast India from Western and Northern Regions

Guwahati, Jan 08: The Indian one-horned rhinoceros migrated to Northeast India from the western and northern parts of the country during the late Holocene period, driven by climate change and increasing human activity, according to a new study on Kaziranga National Park.

The research, which traces the palaeoecological and palaeoherbivory history of Kaziranga, indicates that environmental degradation in western and northern India forced large herbivores to move eastward in search of more suitable habitats. During this time, Northeast India offered relatively stable climatic conditions and abundant resources.

Scientists noted that the Holocene epoch represents the most recent geological period, covering roughly the past 4,000-5,000 years. The study suggests that one-horned rhinos were once widely distributed across northern India, particularly along the Himalayan foothills, with their range extending into present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Findings show that around 3,200-3,300 years ago, the Kaziranga region

evolved into a grassland-dominated ecosystem ideal for mega-herbivores such as rhinos. However, significant ecological changes occurred about 1,700 years ago, marked by shrinking grasslands and increasing deciduous forest cover.

The study was led by Dr Sadan Kumar Basumatary and involved researchers from multiple national and international institutions, including the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences, the University of Lucknow, Newcastle University in the UK, the University of Denver in the US, and the Botanical Survey of India. The findings have been published in the international journal CATENA.

Researchers also warned that present-day threats, such as the spread of invasive plant species like Mimosa, could disrupt Kaziranga's fragile ecosystem and pose risks to the long-term survival of the one-horned rhinoceros.

Experts said the study provides important insights into long-term ecological change and could help inform conservation strategies for Kaziranga National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Two women of banned Prepak arrested for abducting minors for recruitment



Agartala, Jan 08: Two women cadres of a proscribed outfit were arrested from Manipur's Thoubal district for allegedly abducting three minors with the intention of recruiting them into the organisation, police said on Wednesday. The accused, identified as members of the banned People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (Prepak), were apprehended from the Khangabok area on Monday, a senior police officer said. The arrests followed an investigation into the alleged abduction of three children from

Kakching Khunou Ngaikhong Leikai in Kakching district on Sunday. "The children have been rescued from Uchiwa Awang Leikai in Imphal West district and handed over to their parents," the officer said. A car allegedly used in the kidnapping was also recovered. Police said efforts are underway to trace and arrest other accomplices involved in the incident. Search operations have been intensified across Manipur since ethnic violence erupted in May 2023 between Meitei and Kuki-Zo groups, leaving more than

260 people dead and thousands displaced.

The Centre imposed President's Rule in the state following the resignation of Chief Minister N Biren Singh. The Manipur Assembly, which has a tenure till 2027, has since been placed under suspended animation.

Two women cadres of a proscribed outfit were arrested from Manipur's Thoubal district for allegedly abducting three minors with the intention of recruiting them into the organisation, police said on Wednesday, January 7.

Nagaland: Kikon stresses eco-friendly growth for Shamator

Dimapur, Jan 08: Chairperson of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Climate Change, Achumbemo Kikon MLA, held a detailed interaction with Deputy Commissioner Chubatemjen and district officers at Shamator on Monday, focusing on town management, environmental protection and sustainable development.

During the meeting, Kikon stressed the need to develop Shamator, a newly established district headquarters, into a model eco-friendly township. He emphasised planned growth through co-ordinated efforts between the administration, elected representatives and the public. Highlighting the importance of cleanliness, scientific waste disposal, reduced smoke and ash generation, and environmentally sustainable practices, Kikon said Shamator should be built better than older towns. He urged officers posted in the district to leave behind a positive legacy through good governance, transparency and public cooperation. He assured full support from elected representatives, particularly in maintaining law and order and ad-



addressing issues requiring political intervention. Kikon also reviewed concerns related to human-animal conflict, river management and fishing practices, calling for sustainable use of natural resources. He stressed the need to prevent river pollution and regulate fishing and hunting based on seasonal and community resolutions to protect biodiversity. Expressing concern over water scarcity, Kikon cautioned against indiscriminate boring of wells, which he said was causing traditional water sources

to dry up. He urged the administration to prioritise natural water sources, rainwater harvesting and planned water distribution, while sensitising the public on the long-term risks of over-extraction of groundwater. On climate change, the MLA noted that erratic rainfall patterns were now being felt locally and called for greater public awareness and administrative preparedness. He said environmental issues were no longer distant concerns but had reached people's doorsteps, requiring immediate

and collective action. Kikon asked district officials to formally submit their key requirements, particularly related to water and energy, to the concerned departments with a copy marked to him.

He assured that he would raise these issues at the government level and press for necessary support, while clarifying that he had no direct sanctioning authority. He further stated that essential services and resources should not be affected by the absence of local body elections, mentioning that districts must receive their due facilities regardless of electoral delays. Concluding the meeting, Kikon urged officers to renew their commitment in the New Year and work towards making Shamator a model district that others would aspire to emulate. Separately, the MLA also interacted with the president and colleagues of the Shamator Town Public Forum, and later held discussions with representatives of the 11 Wards and two Colonies. He highlighted the importance of public cooperation, civic responsibility and community participation in achieving sustainable development and good governance

Man killed in police firing after attacking personnel in Assam's Sivasagar

Sivasagar, Jan 07: A man was killed in police firing after he allegedly attempted to attack police personnel with a machete while they were responding to a family-related disturbance in Assam's Sivasagar district, an official said on Wednesday. The incident occurred on Tuesday night at Bar Diroi village under Demow Police Station. The deceased has been identified as 42-year-old Ranjit Pandav. According to the police, Pandav was creating a disturbance in an intoxicated state in the village.

A local resident, Martin Pandav, along with his wife, initially tried to pacify him but were allegedly attacked with a machete, leaving both seriously injured. When the police

arrived, the man chased the personnel and tried to attack them with the machete. In order to defend themselves, the police fired a single round," the officer said.

Pandav, along with the injured couple, was taken to a nearby hospital and later referred to the Assam Medical College and Hospital in Dibrugarh.

Doctors declared Pandav dead on arrival due to bullet injuries, while the couple remains in critical condition and is undergoing treatment. Police also said it is alleged that the deceased had a history of domestic abuse involving his wife and five children, who were staying at a relative's house at the time of the incident.

Mizoram cabinet sees no grounds to extend Governor's rule in Chakma council

Agartala, Jan 08: Police are probing the recovery of a half-burnt woman's body from a secluded rubber plantation at Kalitila on the outskirts of Agartala in Tripura,

with investigators suspecting an attempt to destroy evidence after the crime. The body was found when a local youth entered the plantation to collect firewood and noticed a dog behaving unusually. When he approached the spot, he discovered the animal feeding on human remains that appeared to have been partially burnt. He alerted nearby residents, who then informed the police.

A team from Srinagar Police Station, led by Sub-Inspector Narayan Sen, reached the site soon after. The police station is located about a kilometre from the plantation. A forensic unit, dog squad and an executive magistrate were also deployed to examine the scene. Inspector Arunadoy Das, Officer-in-Charge of Srinagar Police Station, said initial observations indicate that the deceased was a

married woman, estimated to be between 25 and 30 years old. He added that investigators believe the murder may not have taken place at the plantation. According to the po-



lice, preliminary evidence suggests the woman was killed elsewhere and her body was later dumped in the rubber plantation, where it was set on fire using oil, dry leaves and branches, apparently to erase traces of the crime. The victim's identity has not yet been established. Police officials said no missing person complaint

matching the woman's age has been registered at Srinagar Police Station or neighbouring police stations so far, but details have been shared across all police stations to aid identification.

The police said the investigation is ongoing and that a clearer picture will emerge only after the post-mortem examination is completed.

Minister Pasang Dorjee Sona launches Arunachal Pradesh tourism's new brand campaign

New tourism brand campaign titled

Itanagar, Jan 08: Arunachal Pradesh's Department of Tourism has launched a new tourism brand campaign titled 'Take a New Turn in Arunachal', marking a significant shift in the state's approach to positioning itself on India's tourism map.

The campaign aims to redefine Arunachal Pradesh's image, moving beyond its reputation as a scenic destination. It focuses on showcasing the state's rich cultural narratives and authentic human experiences, inviting visitors to immerse themselves in the unique lifestyles and traditions of the region. The campaign was unveiled at Arunachal House in New Delhi in the presence of State Tourism Minister Pasang Dorjee Sona. Built on the state's refreshed brand identity, "Beyond Myths and Mountains", it encourages travellers to move beyond postcard images of valleys and monasteries. Instead, it invites them to explore stories, traditions, and local interactions that define Arunachal's diverse landscapes. Through the new campaign, the department reimagines travel as a journey into stories rather than just sights, with each featured destination presenting a distinct theme. The policy further promotes diverse tourism segments. These include eco-tourism, tribal tourism, spiritual tourism, adventure tourism, farm tourism, and border tourism.

Tawang represents spiritual heritage, Ziro reflects indigenous rhythms, Anini highlights pristine lakes, Namsai show-



cases riverine spirituality, Dong offers the experience of the country's first sunrise, and Mechukha blends adventure with tranquillity. At the same time, the state's new tourism policy focuses on infrastructure expansion. It prioritises better road and air connectivity. It also targets upgraded visitor facilities and a planned 50 per cent increase in accommodation capacity. Destinations such as Tawang, Ziro, Anini, Namsai, Dong and Mechukha form the narrative backbone of the campaign, each representing a distinct cultural and experiential identity.

Addressing the gathering, Minister Sona highlighted the state's vast tourism potential. He cited Arunachal's ancient heritage, Himalayan terrain, rich biodiversity, Buddhist legacy, and vibrant tribal cultures. Arunachal Pradesh is steadily emerging as one of India's most sought-after and meaningful travel destinations, he said. He stated that the state offers a complete tourism ecosystem. This includes heritage tourism, wildlife experiences, adventure travel, nature-based tourism, indigenous festivals, and unique cultural practices

Boost to MSMEs: Sikkim partners with IIFT to drive exports and entrepreneurial growth

Sikkim, Jan 08: Sikkim has taken a decisive step to plug its local entrepreneurs into global trade networks by signing a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), Kolkata, and launching a dedicated Export Facilitation Cell aimed at boosting exports and strengthening MSMEs. The initiative marks a significant policy push to transform Sikkim into an export-ready state with structured institutional support for businesses. The MoU was signed by the Commerce and Industries Department of Sikkim and IIFT Kolkata at a programme held at the department's conference hall on Wednesday, January 7 coinciding with the formal inauguration of the Export Facilitation Cell. Addressing the gathering, Commerce and Industries Secretary Karma D. Youtso said the partnership would provide critical policy guidance, technical expertise and export-related hand-holding to entrepreneurs seeking to scale beyond local markets. She described the Export Facilitation Cell as a

one-stop support mechanism for business owners looking to access national and international trade opportunities. Highlighting the state's evolving entrepreneurial ecosystem, Youtso said Sikkim has fostered a pro-business environment under the leadership of Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang. She noted that the flagship One Family-One Entrepreneur scheme has significantly expanded the state's MSME base, with the number of registered entrepreneurs rising sharply from around 1,000 in 2020 to nearly 30,000 at present. Under the MoU, IIFT Kolkata will assist the department in policy planning, capacity building, export-oriented training programmes for entrepreneurs and skill development of departmental officials. The agreement has been signed for an initial period of three years, with annual reviews built into the framework. An Export Coordinator, Subarna Mukhia, has been appointed to oversee the day-to-day functioning of the Export Facilitation Cell.

Si-Donyi Hilo 2026 celebrated with grandeur as Arunachal Home Minister calls

Agartala, Jan 08: Reaffirming the importance of safeguarding indigenous heritage, Arunachal Pradesh Home Minister Mama Natung on January 6 asserted that culture and traditions are the pride of the people and must never be forgotten. He made the remarks while attending the Si-Donyi Hilo-2026 celebrations of the Tagin community, held with great enthusiasm at Lumro Village, Naharlagun.

Gracing the event as the Chief Guest, the Home Minister lauded the Tagin community for preserving their age-old customs and passing them on to younger generations. He emphasised that festivals like Si-Donyi not only strengthen cultural identity but also promote unity and harmony among indigenous communities.

The grand cultural programme was attended by Itanagar Municipal Corporation (IMC) Commissioner Kego Jilen as the Guest of Honour, former Itanagar MLA Kipa Babu as Special Guest, Organising Chairman Tadam Haging Cherom, and Chief Advisor of Si-Donyi Hilo Paknga Bage, along with heads of departments, community leaders and other dignitaries.

This year's celebration marked the Golden Jubilee of the Si-Donyi Festival, which was observed simultaneously at Si-Donyi Ground, Naharlagun, and Daporijo, the headquarters of Upper Subansiri district bordering China. The occasion witnessed massive participation from the Tagin community, showcasing their vibrant cultural legacy. Colourful traditional attire, mega cultural dances, Ponung, local war dances, and cultural competitions added splendour to the festivities, reflecting the deep-rooted spiri-



tual and cultural ethos of the Tagins. The festival was celebrated across Arunachal Pradesh with religious fervour and traditional gaiety.

Si-Donyi, the most significant festival of the Tagin tribe, involves the veneration of 'Si' (Earth) and 'Donyi' (Sun). The Earth is accorded the highest reverence and is considered the mother, symbolising life, fertility and sustenance. Due to the elaborate rituals and high expenditure involved, the festival is celebrated collectively, reinforcing community bonding.

The Tagins, one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and part of the larger Tani group, are primarily concentrated in Upper Subansiri district, with populations also residing in West Siang and Shi Yomi districts.

Traditionally followers of Donyi-Polo, the community reflects a unique blend of spiritual practices shaped by historical interactions, including limited cultural influences of Tibetan Buddhism among certain sub-groups.

Preparations for Si-Donyi begin nearly a month in advance, with local youths playing a pivotal role in organising events, while elderly community members form the festival committee and guide priests in conducting the sacred rituals. Festivals such as Si-Donyi, Bori Boot, Boori-Yulow and Mopin form the cultural backbone of Upper Subansiri district, collectively showcasing the region's rich indigenous traditions and reinforcing the identity of Arunachal Pradesh's tribal communities.

Assam BJP hits back at Akhil Gogoi, dismisses allegations as ‘imaginary stories’

Guwahati, Jan 08: The Assam unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party has criticised Rajior Dal leader Akhil Gogoi, rejecting his recent allegations and describing them as imaginary stories with no basis in facts. The Assam BJP said that Gogoi has, for nearly two decades, been creating narratives in his own imagination and presenting them before the public as facts. The party claimed that while such statements may attract attention for a short time, they are eventually exposed as false. The BJP alleged that most of the accusations levelled by Gogoi over the years have failed to stand the test of time. As a result, the party said, people in Assam no longer take his statements seriously. According to the BJP, Gogoi’s remarks are now seen more as political drama than meaningful discussion.

Assam BJP spokesperson Kamal Kumar Medhi, quoted in the release, said that the allegations raised by Gogoi over the past three days regarding an alleged BJP virtual meeting were “newly scripted imaginary tales.” Medhi said these claims were being circulated without any proof and were presented before the media only to create confusion. The BJP further claimed that by repeatedly raising such unverified issues, Gogoi has reduced his political standing and turned himself into a subject of media curiosity rather than a serious political leader. The party also took aim at the Indian National Congress and other opposition parties, accusing them of supporting Gogoi’s claims without checking facts. The BJP said opposition leaders rushed to back allegations related to voter deletion with-



out verifying whether they were true. Medhi said the opposition, lacking clear direction and credible issues, is acting out of frustration. He claimed that none of the allegations raised against the BJP-led government under Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma have found public support. The BJP said that people in Assam trust the party to protect indigenous communities and citizens of Indian origin. It further alleged that opposition parties are relying on divisive politics after failing to connect with voters.

MLA fund used to upgrade local sports facilities in Aizawl East-II

Aizawl, Jan 08: B. Lalchhanzova, Minister and MLA of Aizawl East-II Tuesday disbursed financial assistance from his MLA Fund to support the improvement of community sports facilities in his constituency. The funds were handed over at his office chamber at MINECO in Aizawl. As part of the assistance, an amount of Rs. 7 lakh was given to the office bearers of the Chhinga Veng Branch of the Young Mizo Association (YMA) for upgrading the Chhinga Veng Branch YMA Gym.



Another sum of Rs. 2.68 lakh was handed over to the Dawrpui Badminton Club for renovation work at the Dawrpui Badminton Hall. The funds are expected to help improve basic infrastructure and create better facilities for local players and residents who regularly use these centres. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Lalchhanzova highlighted the growing importance of sports in the lives of young people. He said it was encouraging to see Mizo youth steadily moving forward in different sports disciplines. He also noted that many Mizo sportspersons have brought recognition and pride to the community by performing well at national and international levels. According to him, proper facilities at the local level play a key role in shaping young talent and keeping youth engaged in healthy activities. The minister further assured that he would continue to make efforts to support sports, recreation, and youth-oriented activities in his constituency. He said such initiatives not only promote physical fitness but also help build discipline and unity among young people.

Nagaland BJP explains new rural jobs law, urges villagers to use benefits

Kohima, Jan 08: The Nagaland unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday explained the key points of the newly introduced Viksit Bharat—Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin), also known as VB-G RAM G, during a press conference held in Dimapur. The party said the new law is meant to improve rural jobs and livelihoods and has replaced the earlier Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The awareness drive is part of a nationwide campaign called VB-G RAM G Janjagaran Abhiyan. The programme was launched following directions from BJP national general secretary Arun Singh, who issued a formal instruction for the outreach on January 4. Addressing reporters, BJP Nagaland general secretary Manai Konyak said the new Act, passed in 2025, brings major changes to how rural employment schemes will function. He appealed to eligible villagers to come forward and make full use of the scheme, saying it was designed to suit present-day rural needs. Konyak explained that under VB-G RAM G, the number of guaranteed workdays has been increased from 100 to 125 days per rural household in a financial year. He said this step was taken to provide better income support to rural families. He also said the scheme follows the broader national goal of Viksit Bharat 2047, which aims at long-term development of the country. Another important change, he said, is in the funding pattern. Under the new system, if costs

go beyond the approved limit, the state government will be responsible for meeting the extra expenses. This, he added, would help fix responsibility and improve monitoring at the state level. He also said work under the scheme would be stopped during peak farming seasons so that agricultural activities are not disturbed. Providing more background, BJP Nagaland general secretary Sunep C Jamir said the new law was framed after reviewing the changing social and economic conditions in rural India. He said MGNREGA was introduced in 2005 and much has changed since then. According to him, official figures show a sharp drop in poverty levels and major improvements in roads, banking access, digital services, and rural infrastructure over the past two decades. Jamir said VB-G RAM G is not just about daily wages but is aimed at building long-term assets and self-reliance in villages. Unlike the old demand-based system, the new scheme follows a planned, budget-based approach. He said works under the programme will focus on four main areas — water security, rural infrastructure, livelihood infrastructure, and climate resilience. When asked about delays in funds, Jamir said the state government would be accountable. He added that pending wages from earlier periods would also be the responsibility of the state. He clarified that the scheme remains centrally sponsored, with a 90:10 funding ratio for northeastern states like Nagaland, while the Centre continues to cover administrative and material costs.

Mizoram govt calls for ending Governor’s rule in Chakma Autonomous District Council

Aizawl, Jan 08: The Mizoram government has advocated restoration democratic governance in the Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) by ending Governor’s Rule. Governor’s Rule was imposed on July 7 last year, despite the ZPM legislature party staking claim to form the executive committee with 16 members in the 20-member council. A meeting of the Council of Ministers held on Wednesday noted that in the CADC, out of 20 MDC members, there are 16 members belonging to a party capable of forming the government. And in accordance with the directions earlier issued by the High Court to explore all possible means for formation of a government, the Council of Ministers had recommended that a government be allowed to be formed instead of continuing

Governor’s Rule. However, Governor’s Rule was imposed. The Council of Ministers further observed that even after the expiry of the present term of Governor’s Rule, the party capable of forming the government continues to be in a position to do so without any change in its strength. Therefore, the Council of Ministers found no justification, on grounds of political instability or otherwise, for extending Governor’s Rule for another six months. The Council of Ministers is of the view that a stable government can be formed in the Chakma Autonomous District Council. The CADC has a total of 24 Members of District Council (MDCs), out of which 20 are elected from the 20 MDC constituencies of the CADC area and the rest 4 are nominated by the Governor.

Ripun Bora, Rakibul Hussain flag ‘serious irregularities’ in Assam voter list revision

Guwahati, Jan 08: Senior Congress leaders Ripun Bora and Rakibul Hussain today addressed a joint press conference in Guwahati, making serious allegations against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and questioning the silence of the Election Commission over what they described as attempts to manipulate the voter list ahead of the upcoming elections. Addressing mediapersons in Guwahati, Ripun Bora alleged that BJP Assam state president Dilip Saikia had, during a video conference held on January 4, instructed party MLAs and district-level leaders to identify “anti-BJP voters” in every constituency. Bora claimed that these voters were mainly supporters of the Congress party and that leaders were asked to prepare and submit such lists by January 12. Bora further alleged that Assam minister Ashok Singhal was directed to visit around 60 constituencies and that instructions were given to delete the names of nearly 5,000 to 10,000 voters per constituency from the electoral rolls. Calling the matter “very serious,” Bora said such actions, if true, amount to direct interference in the democratic process. “Our biggest concern is why the Election Commission is silent,” Bora said. “This is not a small issue. The Election Commission is a constitutional and autonomous body. If it does not act now, then its independence itself will come under question.”

Bora demanded a high-level inquiry into the alleged video conference. He said that video conferencing platforms automatically store conversations in cloud archives and insisted that these records should be handed over to the Election Commission for forensic examination. He said both the government and the Election Commission should ensure that these records are preserved and examined without delay. The Congress leader also raised questions about the functioning of Booth Level Officers (BLOs) during the ongoing revision of electoral rolls. He alleged that in several places, BLOs were changed abruptly in the middle of the revision process, which he described as illegal and against established procedure. According to him, BLOs should not be replaced unless there is a clear and valid reason. Bora also alleged that the voter list revision process had become “highly communalised” in certain areas. He claimed that BLOs and supervisors belonging to particular communities were being removed under pressure. He said he had already submitted a memorandum highlighting these issues and had provided specific, pinpointed examples to the authorities. Dhubri MP Rakibul Hussain said concerns over voter list revisions were not limited to Assam



alone. Referring to discussions in the Indian Parliament, Hussain said similar fears had been raised in several states, including Haryana, Bihar and Maharashtra. He said the issue had created anxiety among opposition parties across the country. Hussain spoke about the debate around Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and said the Election Commission had earlier indicated that no new SIR would be undertaken. He claimed that despite this, steps resembling a special revision were now being carried out under different names. He said that summary revision of electoral rolls is a regular and continuous process and should normally be sufficient. According to him, there was no justification for what appeared to be a special revision exercise, especially when the NRC process itself had faced challenges and criticism.

Gaurav Gogoi blames Police

Guwahati, Oct 16: The President of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC), Gaurav Gogoi, has condemned violent incidents outside Baksa District Jail, stating that lapses by the police and Home Department were the main reasons behind the unrest. Gogoi expressed disappointment that the police failed to anticipate the situation and prevent violence, and urged the authorities to conduct a fair and transparent investigation into Zubeen Garg’s death. He also expressed concern over the injuries suffered by journalists who were present at the site to report the incident, stating that violence against the press is unacceptable under any circumstances.

Cricketer K. Lalremruata Succumbs to Suspected Stroke During Official Game

Aizawl, Jan 08: In a tragic incident that has shaken the Mizoram cricket community, veteran cricketer Khawlhing Lalremruata, aged 38, collapsed and died during an official match at Suaka Cricket Ground in Sihhmui. The incident occurred during the Khaled Memorial 2nd Division Screening Tournament, organized by the Cricket Association of Mizoram (CAM), where Lalremruata was representing VRCC against Chawnpui ILMOV Cricket Club. Eyewitnesses reported that Lalremruata had completed his batting spell and was walking off the field when he complained of severe chest discomfort. Moments later, he



collapsed and lost consciousness. Despite immediate medical attention, he could not be revived. While the exact cause of death is yet to be confirmed, preliminary reports suggest a possible stroke. Born on 9 March 1987,

Lalremruata was a respected figure in Mizoram’s cricketing circles. He made his first-class debut for Mizoram in the 2018–19 Ranji Trophy and later played in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, marking his Twenty20 debut in February 2019. Known for his discipline, dedication, and passion for the sport, Lalremruata was admired by teammates and officials alike. The Cricket Association of Mizoram has expressed deep sorrow over the loss, extending heartfelt condolences to his family. Tributes continue to pour in from across the state, remembering him as a committed sportsman whose legacy will endure.

Assam co-produced Indo–Israel film selected for screening at Pune International Film Festival 2026

Guwahati, Jan 08: An Indo–Israel international feature film co-produced from Assam has been officially selected for screening at the Pune International Film Festival (PIFF) 2026, marking a significant moment for the Assamese film industry. The film, titled Murders Too Close – Love Too Far, will be showcased under the Global Cinema section of the festival. According to the organisers, the film will be screened twice during the festival—on Saturday, January 17, and again on Monday, January 19. The selection has been confirmed by the film’s co-director, Dan Wolman, who expressed happiness over the film’s inclusion at the prestigious event. The film is co-directed by noted Assamese filmmaker Manju Borah and Dan Wolman. It is the first-ever international



co-production involving an Assamese production house and a foreign production company. The project received support from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting through the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC). Notably, the entire film was shot in Assam using a local Assamese film crew, highlighting the growing technical strength and creative capability of the region. Murders Too Close – Love

Too Far is a 108-minute crime drama co-produced by Manju Borah, Amir Gedalia and Dan Wolman. The film features a strong cast including Siddharth Nipon Goswami, Shaminn Mannan, Seema Biswas, Bhagirathi Bai Kadam and Adil Hussain. The screenplay has been jointly written by Borah and Wolman, while cinematography is by Partha Borgohain. Editing was handled by Eyal Amir, sound design

by Debajit Gayan, and music composed by Sanket Joshi. Set largely around a rural police station, the story follows senior CBI officer Ram Chaudhary, who is tasked with investigating the brutal murder of two policemen. During the probe, he meets Gita, a talented artist whose work focuses on mob psychology and collective behaviour. As the investigation progresses and their personal bond deepens, new murders emerge, complicating the case and leading to an unexpected conclusion. Speaking on the achievement, Manju Borah said the film’s selection at PIFF is a proud moment for Assamese cinema. She noted that the project shows how local stories from Assam can reach international audiences when supported by strong storytelling and teamwork.

EDITORIAL

Make Dayaganj–Jurain Road better

The condition of the Dayaganj–Jurain road has significantly deteriorated, transforming from a crucial urban artery that linked Old Dhaka to the southern gateways of the city into a narrow and damaged passage. This road, which was bustling just four to five years ago with a two-way traffic system complemented by a divider to enhance traffic movement, has seen a dramatic decline.

The introduction of a boundary wall by Bangladesh Railway (BR) has exacerbated the situation, effectively constraining the road’s width and functionality. This alteration has resulted in a corridor that is not only inadequate for current traffic demands but also presents ongoing hazards for commuters navigating this impaired infrastructure. The ill-planned decision affecting the route from Dayaganj Crossing to Jurain Railgate has led to significant negative consequences. The western section of the road has been abandoned for years, transforming it into a dumping ground filled with garbage, a makeshift parking area for trucks and rickshaws, and a location for informal shanties.

In contrast, the remaining usable portion of the road is severely compromised, characterized by numerous potholes, frequent waterlogging during rainfall, and inadequately accommodating two-way traffic despite its narrowness. As a result, accidents, particularly involving rickshaws and auto-rickshaws, have become a common occurrence along this route.

According to local residents, the restoration of the road in question could significantly alleviate traffic congestion in the area. However, ongoing issues such as poor coordination and a lack of accountability among the authorities responsible for the road’s maintenance have led to its regrettable condition. The Dhaka South City Corporation has cited jurisdictional constraints and financial limitations as key factors, highlighting that the land is owned by the railway.

There was an initial plan for a rail project



intended to renovate the entire road; however, the project has only been partially completed before work was halted. As it stands, the Bangladesh Railway (BR) has not issued any statements regarding the current state of affairs. Our road transport sector has faced persistent issues, including corruption, mismanagement, poor planning, and weak oversight. The problem is exemplified by the Dayaganj–Jurain Road, which reflects a broader national pattern where roads are constructed or renovated at significant costs, only to suffer damage within a few years due to the utilization of inferior materials and insufficient supervision. This pattern of failure is frequent, and there is a notable lack of accountability for the involved parties. A fundamental shift in approach is necessary to address these systemic weaknesses in the road transport sector. We strongly call upon the government, especially the Bangladesh Railway and the Dhaka South City Corporation, to act swiftly and in a coordinated manner concerning the Dayaganj–Jurain Road.

It is imperative that a definitive decision is reached regarding the road’s future. This can involve either proper redevelopment, a redesign that prioritizes safety, or the implementation of an alternative traffic solution. The Dayaganj–Jurain Road is crucial as it serves a large segment of the city’s population and holds significant strategic importance. Its current condition, characterized by chaos and neglect, is unacceptable and requires immediate attention.

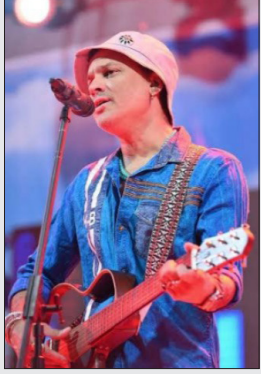
Assamese cinema at a crossroads

Screenings of Jahnu Baruah’s Assamese film, Herowa Chanda, were canceled in various cinema halls due to poor audience turnout, highlighting a troubling trend for the Assamese film industry. This situation raises concerns as regional cinemas elsewhere thrive, suggesting a regression in Assamese cinema.

Without adequate audience support, producers may hesitate to invest, leading to a decline in creativity and risking the industry’s survival. The industry’s precarious state is reminiscent of a time when Zubeen Garg valiantly attempted to revitalize it by urging locals to support their films, a plea now seemingly ignored. Garg’s absence amplifies the urgency for communal action to revitalize Assamese cinema, or it risks irreparable damage to a historical tradition that has roots in the groundbreaking work of Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, who pioneered Assamese filmmaking.

Additionally, the urbanization of Guwahati poses another significant challenge. Unregulated street vendors increasingly occupy footpaths, transforming them into makeshift markets and severely inconveniencing pedestrians, who are forced onto roads and endanger themselves. Despite the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC)’s eviction efforts, vendors quickly return due to inadequate staffing for effective enforcement and monitoring.

The GMC has denied requests for vendor space in certain areas, and while legal vending zones exist, they are insufficient in an unplanned city. A decisive response from city leadership and the state government is crucial to ensure clear footpaths and restore civic order, which is becoming a critical issue across the state’s urban centers.



Woman in Minnesota fatally shot by ICE agent during raid

Woman in Minnesota fatally shot by ICE agent during raid, video shows

Mayor says ICE claims incident was self-defense are not true, and tells agency to ‘get the fuck out of Minneapolis’ Minnesota Democrats voice outrage after fatal ICE shooting: ‘Leave our state immediately’ Richard Luscombe, Rachel Leingang in Minneapolis and Anna BettsFederal agents shot and killed a woman during a large-scale immigration enforcement operation in Minneapolis on Wednesday.Ilhan Omar, the Democratic Minnesota congresswoman, said the victim was “a legal observer” of action by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which had sent a surge of agents into the city in recent days tied in part to allegations of fraud involving Somali residents.A witness to the incident, Emily Heller, told local media that the victim was shot in the face multiple times. Heller said she saw a car blocking traffic that appeared to be part of a protest against the ICE operation, and heard an agent telling the driver, a woman, to “get out of here”. “She was trying to turn around, and the ICE agent was in front of her car, and he pulled out a gun and put it right in – like his midriff was on her bumper – and he reached across the hood of the car and shot her in the face like three, four times,” Heller told MPR News, a Minneapolis public radio station. The woman has been identified as 37-year-old Renee Nicole Macklin Good, a US citizen and mother of three who had recently moved to Minnesota.In social media accounts, Macklin Good described herself as a “poet and writer and wife and mom”. Speaking to the Minnesota Star Tribune, Good’s mother, Donna Ganger, said her daughter had been living in the Twin Cities with her partner. She said that her daughter was “not part of anything like that at all”, referring to protesters who have challenged ICE’s presence in Minnesota.“Renee was one of the kindest people I’ve ever known ... She was extremely compassionate. She’s taken care of people all her life. She was loving, forgiving and affectionate. She was an amazing human being.”Good’s ex-husband, who asked not to be named out of concern for the safety of their children, said Macklin Good had just dropped off her 6-year-old son at school on Wednesday and was driving home with her current partner when they encountered a group of ICE agents on a snowy street in Minneapolis.

A video posted online by the Minnesota Reformer and another video obtained by the Guardian appeared to capture the moment of the shooting as a dark red SUV drove away from agents moving toward it, although the front of the vehicle is obscured.The fatal shooting by a federal officer on Wednesday took place less than a mile from where George Floyd was murdered by a Minneapolis police officer in 2020, prompting mass protests.In a post on X, the homeland security department (DHS) said the person was a “domestic terrorist” who “weaponized her vehicle” and attempted “to

run over our law enforcement officers in an attempt to kill them”.The department claimed several ICE officers were hurt, but said that they were expected to make “full recoveries”.“An ICE officer, fearing for his life, the lives of his fellow law enforcement and the safety of the public, fired defensive shots. He used his training and saved his own life and that of his fellow officers,” the DHS post said. The videos appeared to contradict that statement, showing the SUV clearly backing up away from ICE officers as they approach. One ICE officer can be seen partially in front of the car as it moves forward and then away from the officers. That same ICE officer is seen firing his gun as the car appears to drive by him. Three gunshots can be heard ringing out.There is no visible sign in the videos of ICE officers being injured.

The agent who appeared to have fired the fatal shots is seen returning to a silver SUV that was driven away from the scene shortly after – through a red traffic light.In a press conference, Jacob Frey, the mayor of Minneapolis, emphasized that the priority of local law enforcement was to get the victim to the hospital, and then to remove ICE from the scene because they were “making a difficult situation more problematic”.He also noted that the video footage does not appear to show that a vehicle was being weaponized against the ICE officer. Frey even issued an emphatic statement to ICE directly: “I do have a message for our community for our city and I do have a message for ICE. To ICE, get the fuck out of Minneapolis. We do not want you here. Your stated reason for being in this city is to create some kind of safety and you are doing exactly the opposite.”People are being hurt. Families are being ripped apart. Long-term Minneapolis residents that have contributed so greatly to our city, to our culture, to our economy are being terrorized, and now, somebody is dead.Continuing to address ICE, Frey said: “That’s on you. It’s also on you to leave. It’s on you to make sure that further damage, further loss of life and injury, is not done.”The mayor also said that DHS was “trying to spin this as an action of self-defense. Having seen the video myself, I want to tell everybody directly, that is bullshit.”The Minneapolis chief of police, Brian O’Hara, said: “This woman was in her car and it appears then blocking the street because of the presence of federal law enforcement, which is obviously something that has been happening not just in Minneapolis but around the country.”The woman was no longer in the car when he arrived on the scene, O’Hara said, adding that “a spouse” had since arrived at the hospital. The police chief said the FBI would conduct a joint investigation with the Minnesota bureau of criminal apprehension.Tim Walz, the Democratic governor who announced this week he would not run for a third term, posted on X that he had “seen the video. Don’t believe this propaganda machine. The state will ensure there is a full, fair, and expeditious

investigation to ensure accountability and justice.”Walz later said he had activated the state’s emergency operations center and “issued a warning order to prepare the Minnesota national guard”. “We’ve been warning for weeks that the Trump administration’s dangerous, sensationalized operations are a threat to our public safety, that someone was going to get hurt,” Walz said.To Minnesotans, Walz said: “I feel your anger, I’m angry.” He urged residents who plan on protesting to “please do so peacefully”.Walz also said that the state did not “need any further help from the federal government”, adding: “To Donald Trump and Kristi Noem, you’ve done enough.”Omar also rejected claims made by DHS on X in a Wednesday afternoon post: “You’re lying. There was no attempt to run the officer over and no ICE agents appear to be hurt.

Get out of our city.”In a statement on Truth Social, Donald Trump defended the ICE officers, saying he had watched a video clip of the incident and called it a “horrible thing to watch”. Trump called one of the witnesses a “professional agitator” and described the woman driving the car as “very disorderly, obstructing and resisting” and said she “violently, willfully, and viciously ran over the ICE Officer, who seems to have shot her in self defense”.“Based on the attached clip, it is hard to believe he is alive, but is now recovering in the hospital,” Trump said. “The situation is being studied, in its entirety, but the reason these incidents are happening is because the Radical Left is threatening, assaulting, and targeting our Law Enforcement Officers and ICE Agents on a daily basis.”Protesters gathered close to the scene in the south of the city shortly after the shooting, with law enforcement officers firing chemical irritants in an attempt to disperse them.In video footage, bystanders can be seen and heard blowing whistles and taunting the agents, telling them to go home. A woman said she had spoken to an eyewitness who told her the person shot was a woman who “took off” from federal agents.“They shot her through the windshield.

They shot her in the face,” the woman said. Jon Collins, a reporter for MPR News, posted to Bluesky that protesters stopped ICE agents after the shooting and were pepper-sprayed.“ICE teargassed a lot of people as they drove down the alley. People were stuck in the alley and hit hard. Some people are still getting medical treatment,” he wrote.The Department of Homeland Security said on Tuesday it had launched an extraordinary immigration enforcement operation, with 2,000 agents and officers expected in the Minneapolis and St Paul area for a crackdown tied in part to allegations of fraud involving Somali residents.The Immigration Defense Network, a coalition of groups serving immigrants in Minnesota, held a training session Tuesday night for about 100 people who are willing to hit the streets to monitor the federal enforcement.

Afghan foreign minister in Delhi: A strategic improvement in ties between India and the Taliban

Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi’s eightday visit to New Delhi (October 9–16) is more than a diplomatic formality—it’s a calculated geopolitical message. This is the first high-level Taliban engagement with India since the group’s return to power in 2021, made possible only after the United Nations granted a temporary waiver to the travel ban that otherwise restricts Taliban officials. The timing is as significant as the visit itself. The global order is in flux, and India’s foreign policy establishment is recalibrating its regional posture with quiet precision. In that larger backdrop, Muttaqi’s visit represents a moment of tactical re-engagement between two old partners separated by history, ideology, and circumstance. India’s Tactical Reengagement India has always sought a stable and friendly Afghanistan. Yet after the US withdrawal in August 2021, maintaining an embassy in Kabul became untenable. Pakistan’s intelligence agency ISI would have targeted Indian diplomats and sabotaged New Delhi’s presence. Prudence dictated withdrawal—but not disengagement. Now, India is returning to the Afghan equation in measured steps. This outreach is neither recognition nor endorsement; it is careful calibration. New Delhi’s approach is to preserve influence while not unsettling its partnerships with the US and Europe, which also have transactional relationships. The visit by Muttaqi fits perfectly into that playbook—a slow thaw rather than a bold reset. The Tali-

ban’s Motives: Breaking Isolation For the Taliban, this trip is about more than diplomacy. Afghanistan cannot afford isolation—it lacks both resources and recognition. The regime survives on nearly \$8 billion in external support channelled annually through the United Nations, mostly funded by the US and other Western donors.

That dependence provides them considerable leverage. But Kabul also knows that overreliance on Western aid and Pakistan’s goodwill is unsustainable. Engaging India allows the Taliban to diversify its options, gain some international legitimacy, and signal autonomy from Islamabad’s influence. In many ways, Muttaqi’s visit is Afghanistan’s attempt to escape the strategic cul-de-sac it finds itself in. Engaging the Taliban need not mean endorsing them—it means recognising the geography and history of Afghanistan, both being crucial. India’s Soft Power Advantage India’s real strength in Afghanistan has always been emotional, not military. From Bollywood to cricket, from the Salma Dam to hospitals built with Indian aid, New Delhi earned a reputation for generosity and friendship. The “Kabuliwallah” image still resonates deeply in Afghan hearts, although the abrupt stoppage of visas did set back many Afghan citizens midway in their education and careers. That goodwill must now be revived. Instead of ideological sermons on governance or gender, India should rely on human connections. Expanding medical, study,

and academic visas, completing pending educational commitments, and restarting small development projects are practical and persuasive tools of engagement. Welcoming a few Afghan military cadets back to India’s military academies—where they trained for decades—would be another quiet but symbolic gesture. Such steps reinforce trust without implying political recognition. Influence grows best when it is built through people. The American Variable: The Bagram Factor No Afghan conversation is complete without the American angle. While US troops may have left, its strategic interests in the region persist. If President Trump’s Gaza Plan shows early success—as he will surely claim—he may feel emboldened to reassert a physical foothold in Central Asia, beginning with Bagram Air Base. Bagram is no ordinary facility. It offers surveillance reach over the Pamirs, Xinjiang, and even parts of Iran. For a global power, that kind of real estate is tempting. But operating it would be logistically complex and costly, requiring Taliban assurances for security and ground access. India’s position should remain carefully nuanced.

We historically welcomed limited US presence as a counterweight to Pakistan’s wayward impulses. But for now, it may be prudent for the US to remain away from Afghan soil—not through loud objection, but through subtle restraint. Overenthusiastic support could antagonise the Taliban and complicate India’s own diplomatic opening. Quiet caution is the wiser

choice. We do not want the current equilibrium in the Pamirs region being upset at a time when the geopolitical environment of the entire world is in turmoil. Regional Optics: The China–Pakistan Gaze China and Pakistan will both view Muttaqi’s India trip through the prism of their strategic anxieties. Beijing wants Afghanistan to fit neatly into its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) grid while keeping Uighur militancy in check. Pakistan wants to retain influence in Kabul but finds itself at odds with a Taliban that no longer dances entirely to its tune.

Muttaqi’s presence in Delhi sends an unmistakable message: the Taliban want alternatives. For India, that’s an opportunity. Every inch of diplomatic space Kabul claims outside Islamabad’s shadow is a gain for India. Even symbolic engagement subtly shifts the regional balance. Think Tanks, Trust, and Quiet Persuasion During his stay, Muttaqi will likely meet not just government officials but also India’s think tanks and scholars—long seen as Afghan-friendly and open-minded. These informal networks play a quiet but powerful role in shaping perceptions and policy narratives. Reports suggest that Muttaqi may also undergo medical treatment while in India — another understated but humanising moment. It demonstrates the trust Afghans continue to place in Indian institutions. India, meanwhile, can use such engagements to encourage gradual moderation within the Taliban’s ideological framework, especially on education and wom-

en’s rights — but always through dialogue. A Visit Under Many Eyes This visit unfolds under the watchful gaze of multiple powers—China, Pakistan, Iran, Russia, and the United States will all be reading between the lines. Yet beyond the geopolitics lies a simple truth: India and Afghanistan share a historical and civilisational intimacy that neither ideology nor occupation could erase. The channels of empathy that once linked Delhi and Kabul are slowly reopening. The symbolism alone makes the exercise worthwhile. Tactical Patience, Strategic Payoff Muttaqi’s week-long Delhi trip is unlikely to produce dramatic announcements or signed agreements. But it marks a subtle and significant step in a long-term diplomatic recalibration. This is the art of quiet diplomacy—the kind that allows two wary actors to explore convergence without commitment. India’s approach must remain one of tactical patience and strategic foresight: rebuild people-to-people bridges, strengthen educational and medical ties, and maintain steady communication. The goal is to quietly reclaim India’s traditional goodwill— and with it, influence that outlasts governments and regimes. If handled with restraint and wisdom, this visit could begin the process of restoring India’s “Kabuliwallah” image—the trusted friend that Afghans have always turned to in times of uncertainty. In the shifting chessboard of South and Central Asia, patience may once again prove India’s greatest strength.

Stock market: Pre-Budget rally ahead Chances have diminished, says Amit Goel of Pace 360

New Delhi: Investors hoping for a pre-Budget rally are in for a disappointment, with the benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty falling for the four straight sessions on Thursday. Analysts stayed optimistic on the domestic stock market but believed a pre-Budget rally looked unlikely. Amit Goel Co-founder & Chief Global Strategist at Pace 360 said chances of a pre-Budget rally have somewhat diminished, but expects the forthcoming Budget to be relatively better than the recent ones. Markets should look up before they go down more. I remain optimist. I do think that there could be a rally, post Budget. but chances of a pre-Budget rally have gone down significantly in the last few days, in my opinion, because the Indian markets have flattered to deceive,” he said in an interview to Business Today.Goel said the Indian governments have an old reputation of acting when they are in a corner. He assumption is that with foreign outflows and with US-India trade deal not happening, the government may want to do something to halt the FII exodus, to protect the rupee and to improve the sentiment in the absence of a US-India trade deal.“So, probably pre-budget rally, I am not expecting one significantly, but post-Budget rally, I still think that there could be one,” Goel said. Ahead of Budget, NSO’s first estimate of FY26 GDP growth at 7.4 per cent implies that growth will moderate to 6.9 per cent in 2HFY26 against 8 per cent in H1, Emkay Global noted. “Nominal GDP growth at 8 per cent, while among the lowest in the series history (ex-Covid), has mildly surpassed budget estimates in value terms, thus allaying fears of



fiscal slippage due to slower nominal growth. Importantly, these advance estimates are largely a pre-Budget exercise, based on extrapolated data and are thus prone to revisions,” Emkay noted. Gaurav Garg, Research Analyst at Lemonn said with tax revenues under pressure due to income-tax relief, the government’s major focus will be to fund rising needs, especially defence, renewable energy, and semiconductors, without breaking fiscal discipline. ”Instead of

aggressive public spending, this year’s Budget will likely rely on a recovery in consumption and private investment to drive growth, while keeping overall capex growth moderate. Defence, green energy, urban infrastructure, and manufacturing will see clear preference, while health, education, and traditional infrastructure get only incremental increases. Overall, Budget 2026 will emphasise disciplined spending, targeted capital allocation, and private-sector crowding,” he said.

Marwadi University to host Vibrant Gujarat Regional Conference, proposes Rs 1,000 cr education investment

Kohima/Aizawl: Marwadi University will host the upcoming Vibrant Gujarat Regional Conferences (VGRC) from January 11–12, 2026, strengthening Gujarat’s position as a global investment hub. Organised by the Government of Gujarat, the conference aims to promote innovation, industry collaboration, and economic growth across the state.



In a major move for the education sector, the university has proposed a ₹1,000 crore investment MoU to the state Education Department. The proposal includes state-of-the-art academic blocks, advanced laboratories, modern sports facilities, next-generation hostels, and a 10,000 sq ft innovation and start-up centre. A dedicated academic

block will also support continuing education for professionals and entrepreneurs. VGRC will follow the theme “Vocal for Local” and will be organised across four zones of Gujarat. The event is expected to see participation from Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, the Netherlands, and organisations including JETRO, ICBC, USISPF, World Bank, and the Russian Federation. Trustee Dhruv Marwadi said the conference will help connect local enterprises and start-ups with global investors. Provost R.B. Jadeja added that the initiative aligns with the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047. Over two days, the event will feature seminars, exhibitions, MoU signings, buyer-seller meets, and discussions on AI, sustainability, digital marketing, circular economy, and precision engineering supporting sectors such as MSMEs, start-ups, tourism, culture, and food processing.

Duty hike on petrol, diesel before Budget 2026 JM says on HPCL, BPCL, IOC



New Delhi: JM Financial said on Thursday that an excise duty hike of Rs 3 to Rs 4 per litre on auto fuels such as petrol and diesel was “quite likely” ahead of the Union Budget on February 1, as oil marketing companies were earning elevated marketing margins and the central government faced pressure on its fiscal position. JM Financial said oil marketing companies (OMCs) were earning normalised auto fuel gross marketing margins (GMM) of around Rs 3.50 per litre at a Brent price of about \$72 a barrel. At the prevailing spot Brent price of around \$61 a barrel, the brokerage said GMMs and integrated margins were significantly higher than normalised levels. It pegged current GMM at about Rs 10.60 per litre versus a historical average of Rs 3.50 per litre, while integrated gross margin was estimated at about Rs 19.20 per litre compared with a historical level of about Rs 12.20 per litre.On the fiscal side, JM Financial’s economist team said the central government’s FY26 revenue run rate was lagging budgeted estimates. It said revenue receipts during April to November 2025 stood at about 56 per cent of the FY26 budget estimate, compared with 60 per cent in the same period last year, with underlying data indicating a slowdown in tax collections. At the same time, capital expenditure remained strong at Rs 6.58 lakh crore during April to November 2025, or 58.7 per cent of the FY26 budget estimate, versus 46.2 per cent a year ear-

lier. JM Financial said deflation led lower nominal GDP growth of about 8 per cent for FY26, as per first advance estimates, was likely to exert pressure on meeting the central government’s 4.4 per cent fiscal deficit target for the year. The brokerage added that it expected the government to reduce the fiscal deficit target further to 4 per cent to 4.2 per cent of GDP in FY27. Against this backdrop, JM Financial said the government had already raised excise duty on cigarettes with effect from February 1, 2026, to boost revenue by about Rs 5,000 crore annually. It said the government could explore multiple avenues to raise revenue ahead of the Budget, including higher dividends from the Reserve Bank of India, higher payouts from public sector undertakings and disinvestment proceeds. JM Financial said an excise duty hike on auto fuels could be a significant revenue lever.The brokerage said it believed Brent prices were likely to remain subdued at around \$65 a barrel until the November 2026 mid term elections in the US, as Saudi Arabia led OPEC plus continued to maintain a large oversupply of 2 to 3 million barrels per day. It said the government may have deferred an excise duty hike decision earlier while awaiting clarity on where Brent prices stabilised, as Brent near \$70 a barrel limited the scope for such a hike.JM Financial also highlighted the sensitivity of OMC earnings to changes in auto fuel margins.

New Delhi: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty fell for the fourth straight session on Thursday, while midcap and smallcap indices took a severe hit amid concerns over possible fresh US tariffs and a weak global setup. Today’s fall came amid a weakness across Japan, Hong Kong and China, tracking nearly 1 per cent slide in US stocks overnight. Investors were cautious of US jobs data today, ahead of the kick start of domestic earnings season next week. Persistent foreign outflows ahead of the Union Budget 2026 and geopolitical concerns also weighed on investor sentiment.At 12.55 pm, the BSE Sensex was trading at at 84,292.06, down 669.08 points or 0.79 per cent. Nifty slipped below the 26,000 level and was quoting 221 points, or 0.85 per cent, lower at 25,920.05. Investor wealth, as suggested by the BSE market capitalisation, fell Rs 6.39 lakh crore to 4,73,54,936 crore compared with Rs 4,79,94,180 crore in the previous session. Analysts said advanced GDP estimates for FY26 were largely in line with Street expectations.US tariffs on India and China are likely to rise by as much as 500 per cent as early as next week. US Senator Lindsey Graham said on Thursday that the



US President Donald Trump had greenlit a bill to “punish” countries such as India, China and Brazil for continuing to purchase Russian oil despite sanctions. He said Trump had cleared the legislation, dubbed the Russia Sanctions Bill, after a

“productive” meeting on Wednesday, and added that it could be put to a vote next week.Japan’s Nikkei 225 settled 1.59 per cent lower at 51,136, while Hong Kong’s Hang Seng was trading down 1.62 per cent at 26,028.50.

The Indian launch date of the CMF Headphone Pro has been announced: What to anticipate

New Delhi: CMF, which has now become an independent brand in India, is launching its first over-ear headphones, the CMF Headphone Pro, in the country. The company started teasing the product this week, and now it has officially revealed the India launch date. With the headphones, CMF plans to expand its audio portfolio, positioning itself as a major player in the “affordable premium” segment. Here’s what the CMF Headphone Pro is expected to offer,

reportedly at an affordable price. The CMF Headphone Pro will be unveiled on January 13, 2026, in India. The headphone is teased in three colour variants: Grey, Black, and Green, in India. However, the company has yet to reveal its specifications and features. It should be noted that the CMF Headphone Pro was launched in the global market in September 2025. Now, we expect the feature to remain the same, without any major changes.

CMF Headphone Pro: What to expectBased on the CMF Headphone Pro global variant, it features 40mm drivers for crisp and immersive sound qualityark Grey. It also features interchangeable cushions, which are available in Light Green and Orange finishes. What also sets it apart is the control scheme, which is a combination of a roller dial, energy slider and a customisable button, all of which can be remapped from the companion app.

Can FY26 Advance GDP estimate scale past 7.5%



New Delhi: The first advance estimate of India’s FY26 gross domestic product (GDP) is due today. This number is crucial as it forms the base for all Budget 2026 calculations.The data will be released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).FY26 real GDP expected at 7.5%The Reserve Bank of India, in its latest Monetary Policy

Committee (MPC) meeting held in December, forecasted FY26 GDP growth at 7.3%.In last year’s Budget, nominal GDP growth was assumed at 10.1%. The Union Budget is scheduled to be presented on Sunday, February 1.Once the GDP estimate is released, the government assumes a certain level of nominal GDP growth for the next year. ministers from various sec-

tors. This will be followed by the Halwa ceremony, which marks the start of the final and confidential phase of Union Budget preparation India’s first advance estimate of FY26 GDP will serve as the base for Budget 2026 calculations. The estimate guides assumptions on nominal GDP growth, which in turn determines the fiscal deficit room and expected tax collections. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is set to release the first advance estimate of India’s FY26 GDP today. We will bring you all the updates, expectations, and analysts’ views on this crucial GDP data, which will form the basis for the upcoming Union Budget 2026.

Can FY26 Advance GDP estimate scale past 7.5% Check what the data means ahead of Budget

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also important to note that MoSPI is expected to announce a new GDP series with a revised base year. The Union Budget 2026 is set to be tabled in Parliament on February 1. This year, February Budget will follow tradition, with preparations underway for a February 1 presentation. Budget preparations are in progress, with the finance ministry holding consultations with key industry bodies and ministers from various sectors. This will be followed by the Halwa ceremony, which marks the start of the final and confidential phase of Union Budget preparation India’s first advance estimate of FY26 GDP will serve as the base for Budget 2026 calculations. The estimate guides assumptions on nominal GDP growth, which in turn determines the fiscal deficit room and expected tax collections. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is set to release the first advance estimate of India’s FY26 GDP today. We will bring you



all the updates, expectations, and analysts’ views on this crucial GDP data, which will form the basis for the upcoming Union Budget 2026.

European nations commit to troops in Ukraine as part of ‘milestone’ peace talks in Paris

Seoul: U.S., European and Ukrainian representatives are gathering in Paris again on Wednesday for further talks regarding a potential peace deal to end Russia’s full-scale invasion of the country. Participants were positive on the outcome of the first day of talks, with Jared Kushner -- U.S. President Donald Trump’s son-in-law and a key member of the American delegation -- describing Tuesday as a “real milestone,” though warning that a peace agreement is not imminent. Notably, the U.K. and France signed a “Declaration of Intent” to send troops to Ukraine to safeguard any future deal, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said on Tuesday. The two nations said they would establish “military hubs” across Ukraine and protective facilities to be used by Ukraine’s armed forces to support the country’s defensive needs, Starmer said. The British leader, though, said that “the hardest yards are still ahead” in terms of reaching a deal. U.S., European and Ukrainian representatives are gathering in Paris again on Wednesday for further talks regarding a potential peace deal to end Russia’s full-scale invasion of the country. Participants were positive on the outcome of the first day of talks, with Jared Kushner -- U.S. President Donald Trump’s son-in-law and a key member of the American delegation -- describing Tuesday as a “real milestone,” though warning that a peace agreement is not imminent. Notably, the U.K. and France signed a “Declaration of Intent” to send troops to Ukraine to safeguard any future deal, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said on Tuesday. The two nations said they would establish “military hubs” across Ukraine and protective facilities to be used by Ukraine’s armed forces to support the country’s defensive needs, Starmer said. The British leader, though, said that “the hardest yards are still ahead” in terms of reaching a deal. Ukrainian Pres-



ident Volodymyr Zelenskyy, French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer are pictured at the Elysee Palace in Paris, France, on Jan. 6, 2026. Ludovic Marin/via ReutersRussia downs 4,300 Ukrainian drones in December, setting new record, Moscow claims German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, meanwhile, said at a joint press conference that Berlin is “not fundamentally ruling anything out” regarding its future involvement. “Germany will continue to engage politically, financially, and also militarily,” Scholz said. “This could include, for example, deploying forces for Ukraine on neighboring NATO territory after a ceasefire. Kyiv has long said it cannot accept any peace deal with Russia without binding security guarantees from its Western partners to protect against future aggression from Moscow. The largely-European “Coalition of the Willing” group of nations has been pushing for such guarantees. The Coalition of the Willing said in a joint statement on Tuesday that its proposed guarantees will include a “U.S.-led ceasefire monitoring and verification mechanism” overseen by a “Special Commission”

to address any “breaches, attribute responsibility and determine remedies.”The Coalition also said it would continue “critical long-term military assistance and armament” to Ukraine alongside intelligence and military industrial cooperation and deploy a multinational force to “support the rebuilding of Ukraine’s armed forces and support deterrence. “It’s determined which countries are ready to take leadership in elements of ensuring security on land, in the sky, at sea and in reconstruction.”We had very substantive discussions with the American side on monitoring -- to ensure there are no violations of peace. The United States is ready to work on this. One of the most critical elements is deterrence -” Thank you, America, for your willingness to provide backstop on all fronts: security guarantees, ceasefire monitoring and reconstruction,” Zelenskyy wrote.- the tools that will prevent any new Russian aggression,” he added. It’s determined what forces are needed. It’s determined how the forces will be managed and at what levels the command will be located,” he wrote. The Coalition will offer “military

capabilities, intelligence and logistical support, diplomatic initiatives, adoption of additional sanctions” in the event of any future Russian aggression, it said.The extent of any U.S. involvement remains unclear, Trump having already ruled out deploying American forces to Ukraine. Presidential envoy Steve Witkoff said in a post to X that Tuesday’s talks made “significant progress” on several critical issues related to the proposed 20-point peace plan, including on security guarantees. ” We agree with the Coalition that durable security guarantees and robust prosperity commitments are essential to a lasting peace in the Ukraine and we will continue to work together on this effort,” Witkoff said in a post on X Kushner, meanwhile, warned that there is still significant work to be done before any peace deal is finalized. “This does not mean we will make peace,” he said after Tuesday’s talks. “But peace would not be possible without the progress we made today.”Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in posts to social media that significant progress was made on the practicalities of future security guarantees.

South Korean leader says he asked China’s Xi to act as mediator

Paris: South Korean President Lee Jae Myung said Wednesday he asked Chinese President Xi Jinping to serve as a mediator to help resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis and ease animosities between the two Koreas.ty commitments are essential to a lasting peace in the Ukraine and we will continue to work together on this effort.” Witkoff said in a post on X Kushner, meanwhile, warned that there is still significant work to be done before any peace deal is finalized. “This does not mean we will make peace,” he said after Tuesday’s talks. “But peace would not be possible without the progress we made today.”Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in posts to social media that significant progress was made on the practicalities of future security guarantees. Speaking with reporters traveling with him on the Shanghai leg of his China trip, Lee said he made the request when he met Xi for a summit in Beijing on Monday. Lee cited the Chinese president as replying that patience was needed on North Korean issues. “We’re making efforts but all our channels (with North Korea) are completely blocked so we can’t communicate at all. I told him it

banned under U.N. resolutions North Korea has refused to engage in dialogue with South Korea and the U.S. and has taken steps to expand its nuclear arsenal since its leader Kim Jong Un’s high-stakes nuclear diplomacy with President Donald Trump collapsed in 2019 Since taking office last June, Lee’s liberal government has been pushing hard to reopen talks with North Korea, but Pyongyang has largely ignored Lee’s overture. In July, Kim’s sister and senior official, Kim Yo Jong, said the Lee government’s “blind trust” in South Korea’s alliance with the U.S. and hostility toward North Korea made it no different from its conservative predecessor.Lee said Chinese Premier Li Qiang told him about the need to have patience as well during their separate meeting Tuesday. “Roles of neighbors are necessary. We requested China to play such a role, and China said it will anyway make such efforts,” Lee said. Lee said he told Chinese officials about his stated push to seek phased, gradual denuclearization steps by North Korea in return for giving it corresponding benefits. He said it’s important to freeze North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs first to



would be good for China to play the role of a mediator for peace,” Lee said in televised comments. “President Xi appraised our efforts and said we need to be patient. China is North Korea’s biggest trading partner and major diplomatic backer. South Korea and the U.S. have repeatedly asked China to use its unique influence to persuade North Korea to resume long-dormant diplomacy or denuclearize. China has urged all parties involved in North Korean issues to exercise restraint, and in recent years repeatedly blocked the U.S. and others’ attempts to toughen sanctions on North Korea despite its weapons tests

prevent a further expansion of its nuclear arsenal and a potential proliferation of its nuclear weapons. He said China shared his view. “Leaving the current status would be a loss for Northeast Asia and the entire world, because (North Korea’s) nuclear weapons are being produced continuously,” Lee said. North Korea has said it won’t put denuclearization on the negotiating table again. Many experts also worry that rewarding North Korea for limited denuclearization steps could allow it to pull out of diplomacy while retaining much of its nuclear program after it wins some level of badly needed sanctions relief.

US seizes two ‘shadow fleet’ tankers linked Venezuelan



Dubai: The United States says it has seized two tankers linked to Venezuelan oil exports in “back-to-back” operations in the North Atlantic and the Caribbean.US forces boarded the Russian-flagged Marinera after a pursuit lasting almost two weeks as it travelled through the waters between Iceland and Scotland. The UK Royal Navy gave logistical support by air and sea.A second tanker - the M/T Sophia - was accused by the US of “conducting illicit activities” and boarded in the Caribbean.The moves come as the US seeks to choke off most exports of Venezuelan crude oil, and just days after its special forces seized Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in a lightning raid on his residence in Caracas. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth wrote on X: “The blockade of sanctioned and illicit Venezuelan oil remains in FULL EFFECT - anywhere in the world.Moscow has denounced the seizure of the tanker sailing under its flag, and demanded that the US treat Russians aboard properly and permits them to return to Russia quickly.The transport ministry said it had giv-

en the vessel “temporary permission” to use the Russian flag, adding that no state had the right to use force against vessels properly registered in other states’ jurisdictions. Reports suggested that Russia dispatched a submarine to safeguard the vessel, but it appears that US forces were able to board the tanker without facing any resistance. The White House described the ship as a “Venezuelan shadow fleet vessel deemed stateless after fleeing a false flag and had a judicial order” against it. Venezuela’s leadership is co-operating with the US on the second tanker seized in the Caribbean, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said.“They understand that the only way they can move oil and generate revenue and not have economic collapse is if they co-operate and work with the United States, oil reserves - “will be turning over” up to 50 million barrels of oil worth some \$2.8bn (£2.1bn) to the USRubio, who briefed US lawmakers on the ongoing operation in Venezuela on Wednesday, said that the US would sell oil that is in Venezuela “in the marketplace at

market rates” and that the US would control how the proceeds were dispersed “in a way that benefits the Venezuelan people”.He said the US had a considered plan for the future of Venezuela, and that the administration was “not just winging it”.Rubio said the Trump administration’s plan in Venezuela was stabilisation, recovery and then transition.But the discussions surrounding oil were only one component of concern US lawmakers had over the escalating conflict.Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said lawmakers needed answers to lingering questions of how many US troops could be involved and how much money the US involvement in Venezuela will cost.Republicans largely appeared to back the administration’s moves in the region, though some expressed concern about what kind of say Congress had.The Senate is expected to vote next week on a bipartisan war powers resolution - an attempt to block continued military action in Venezuela.“ment, even one we don’t recognise officially, that’s a very different situation”.

Protest-hit Iran warily watches the US after its raid on Venezuela

Dubai: United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran faces a new round of protests challenging the country’s theocracy, but it seems like the only thing people there want to talk about is half a world away: Venezuela. Since the U.S. military seized Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, a longtime ally of Tehran, over the weekend, Iranian state media headlines and officials have condemned the operation. In the streets and even in some official conversations, however, there’s a growing question over whether a similar mission could target the Islamic Republic’s top officials including the supreme leader, 86-year-old Ayatollah Ali Khamenei The paranoia feeds into wider worries among Iranians. Many fear that close U.S. ally Israel will target Iran again as it did during the 12-day war it launched against Tehran in June. Israel killed a slew of top military officials and nuclear scientists, and the U.S. bombed Iranian nuclear enrichment sites. Khamenei is believed to have gone into hiding for his protection. “God bless our leader, we should be careful too,” said Saeed Seyyedi, a 57-year-old teacher in Tehran, worried the U.S. could act as it did in Venezuela. “The U.S. has always been after plots against Iran, especially when issues like oil, Israel are part of the case. In addition, it can be complicated when it is mixed with the Russia-Ukraine war, the Lebanese (group) Hezbollah and drug accusations. The U.S. long has accused the Iranian-backed Hezbollah of running drug-smuggling operations to fund its operations, including in Latin America, which the group denies Immediately after Maduro’s seizure, an analyst on Iranian state television claimed, without offering evidence, that the U.S. and Israel had plans during the war last year to kidnap Iranian officials with a team of dual-national Iranians. Even for conspiracy-minded Iranian television, airing such a claim is unusual. Then on Sunday night, the prominent Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Javedan warned an audience at prayers in Tehran University that Khamenei’s

life was in danger. “Someone said he had a bad dream that the leader’s life is in danger,” Javedan said, without elaborating. “Please pray.” However, Iran is roughly twice the size of Venezuela and has what analysts consider to be a much stronger military and robust security forces. The memory of Operation Eagle Claw, a failed U.S. special forces mission to rescue hostages held after the 1979 U.S. Embassy takeover in Tehran, also haunts Washington Then there’s the political situation in Iran, with its theocracy protected by hard-liners within the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, who answer only to Khamenei. They could launch assassinations, cyber-attacks and assaults on shipping in the Mideast, warned Farzin Nadimi, senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy who studies Iran’s military. “In the grand-strategy scheme of things, they need to think about the day after,” Nadimi said of anyone considering a Venezuela-style raid. “Iran is a much more complex political situation. They have to calculate the costs and benefits.”Protest-hit Iran warily watches the US after its raid on Venezuela As Iran is gripped by new protests, many people there are focused on the U.S. raid in Venezuela and wonder whether the same could occur in Tehran Since the U.S. military seized Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, a longtime ally of Tehran, over the weekend, Iranian state media headlines and officials have condemned the operation. In the streets and even in some official conversations, however, there’s a growing question over whether a similar mission could target the Islamic Republic’s top officials including the supreme leader, 86-year-old Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The paranoia feeds into wider worries among Iranians. Many fear that close U.S. ally Israel will target Iran again as it did during the 12-day war it launched against Tehran in June. Israel killed a slew of top military officials and nuclear scientists, and the U.S. bombed Iranian nuclear enrichment



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How New-Generation Eye Treatments Are Redefining Relief For Chronic Dry Eyes

In today’s fast-paced, screen-driven world, eye health is under constant pressure. Prolonged exposure to digital screens, excessive use of mobile phones and laptops, rising pollution levels, air-conditioned environments, hormonal changes, stress, and certain medications have all contributed to dry eye disease becoming one of the most common eye conditions of our time. What was once dismissed as a minor irritation has now evolved into a chronic lifestyle disorder that can significantly affect visual comfort, work productivity, and overall quality of life. “Dry eye is no longer just about occasional discomfort, it’s a condition that can interfere with how people function every single day,” says Dr Parul Sony, Founder and Director, Complete Eye Care, Gurugram. Recognising the growing burden of dry eye disease, advanced technologies such as Lumecca IPL and Forma-I are reshaping how the condition is managed. These first-of-their-kind treatments in Delhi-NCR, introduced by Complete Eye Care, mark a significant shift in eye care. “Unlike traditional approaches that only provide temporary relief, these technologies focus on correcting the underlying cause of dry eye,” explains Dr Sony. “That’s where long-term improvement truly begins.” Dry eye disease commonly stems from dysfunction of the meibomian glands, which produce the oily layer of the tear film. When these glands become blocked or underperform, tears evaporate too quickly, leading to symptoms such as dryness, burning, redness, foreign-body sensation, blurred vision, eye fatigue, and even frequent headaches. “Most patients rely heavily on lubricating eye drops, but these don’t restore gland function,” Dr Sony notes. “They manage symptoms, not the disease.” Lumecca IPL (Intense Pulsed Light) addresses this gap by delivering targeted light energy to the eyelids and surrounding pericocular area. This therapy reduces inflammation, improves blood circulation, and treats abnormal blood vessels that contribute to chronic dry eye. It also lowers bacterial load along the eyelid margins, creating a healthier environment for gland function. “Lumecca IPL is USFDA-approved and particularly effective for moderate to severe dry eye linked to meibomian gland dysfunction,” says Dr Sony. Forma-I complements this approach using controlled radiofrequency-based heat therapy. The gentle warmth softens thickened oils trapped inside the glands, allowing them to flow freely again. “By restoring natural oil secretion, Forma-I stabilises the tear film and reduces



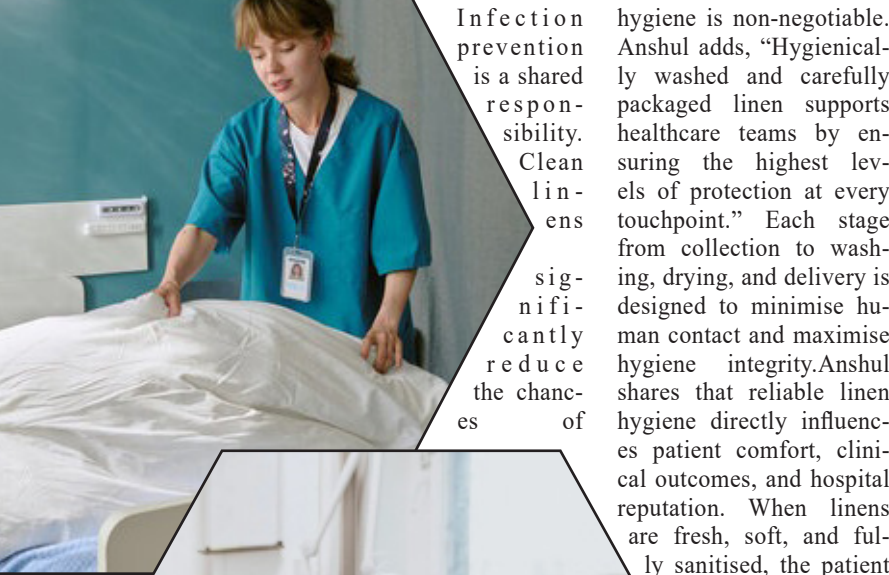
tear evaporation,” Dr Sony explains. “Patients experience sustained relief rather than short-lived comfort.” One of the most reassuring aspects of both treatments is their ease and safety. “These procedures are non-invasive, painless, and require no downtime,” Dr Sony emphasises. “Patients can return to their normal routine immediately after the session.” Over a series of treatments, many notice improved eye comfort, clearer vision, and a reduced dependence on eye drops. To support a comprehensive approach, these technologies are paired with a dedicated EyeSpa concept focused on eyelid hygiene and overall eye wellness. Services such

as deep eyelid cleaning, removal of debris and bacteria, and tear-retention therapies help stabilise the tear film and slow disease progression. “An added benefit is visible improvement in eyelid health,” Dr Sony adds, “including reduced under-eye puffiness, dark circles, and fine lines.” Dry eye disease deserves timely, scientific intervention. “Patients don’t need to accept dryness and discomfort as a side effect of modern life anymore,” concludes Dr Parul Sony. “With innovations like Lumecca IPL and Forma-I, we’re moving toward long-term, evidence-based, and holistic eye care helping people see clearly, comfortably, and confidently again.”

How Hygienic Linens In The Hospital Make For The Invisible Backbone Of Patient Safety

In the fast-paced world of healthcare, patient safety is not just a priority; it is a responsibility that demands precision, consistency, and uncompromising hygiene. While advanced technology, skilled staff, and modern infrastructure often take the spotlight, one element quietly supports the entire ecosystem: linen hygiene. Clean, sanitised linen forms the invisible backbone of infection control, safeguarding patients, carers, and healthcare institutions every single day. Anshul Gupta, Founder & CEO, Quick Clean, says, “Healthcare facilities rely on linens, from patient gowns and bedsheets to surgical drapes and staff uniforms that come in direct contact with vulnerable individuals. Any lapse in cleanliness can expose patients to harmful contaminants, posing serious risks of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs). This is where professional, scientific, and high-precision laundry solutions become essential. High-quality linen care ensures that every piece of fabric goes through a rigorous, standardised, and fully traceable hygiene process that eliminates pathogens and maintains fabric integrity, cycle after cycle.

The Hidden Carrier of Infections
Linen can harbour bacteria, viruses, fungi, and bodily fluids long after it leaves the patient’s room. Research indicates that improper handling or damp storage can cause bacterial growth to increase up to 200 times within 12 hours. “When linens aren’t processed carefully, these contaminants can easily spread across wards, ICUs, and surgical units, contributing to the nearly 100 million



global HAI cases annually,” says Anshul. Advanced laundry protocols, including calibrated wash temperatures, medical-grade detergents, and thermal disinfection, are essential to eradicate microorganisms and significantly reduce the infection footprint. **A System That Protects Both Patients and Staff**

Infection prevention is a shared responsibility. Clean linens significantly reduce the chances of hygiene being non-negotiable. Anshul adds, “Hygienically washed and carefully packaged linen supports healthcare teams by ensuring the highest levels of protection at every touchpoint.” Each stage from collection to washing, drying, and delivery is designed to minimise human contact and maximise hygiene integrity. Anshul shares that reliable linen hygiene directly influences patient comfort, clinical outcomes, and hospital reputation. When linens are fresh, soft, and fully sanitised, the patient experience improves, and so does trust in the facility. “In fact, barrier-based laundry systems have shown up to a 95% reduction in infection risk, proving how powerful textile hygiene can be in supporting healthcare excellence,” he adds. In today’s healthcare landscape, true excellence lies in the details. And often, the most critical detail is the one we don’t see. Linen hygiene remains the silent guardian, an invisible but powerful shield protecting patients and reinforcing a culture of uncompromised safety.

The Simple Guide To Making Your Fragrance Last Longer

Almost everyone who wears perfume has experienced this: you apply your favourite scent in the morning, feel instantly put together, and by midday, it feels like it’s completely disappeared. According to Abdulla Ajmal, CEO, Ajmal Perfumes, this is one of the most common concerns he hears and surprisingly, it has very little to do with the perfume itself. “Over the years, I’ve had countless conversations with customers who feel their perfume just disappears too quickly,” he says. “And honestly, it’s rarely about the fragrance itself. Most of the time, it’s about a few simple habits that people either don’t know about or just overlook.”

It Starts With Your Skin
One of the biggest factors affecting how long a fragrance lasts is skin hydration. Perfume clings far better to moisturised skin than dry skin, which tends to absorb scent oils quickly. “The biggest one is dry skin,” explains Abdulla Ajmal. “If your skin isn’t hydrated, it’s going to soak up the fragrance like a sponge. That’s why I always tell people to moisturise first. Just a simple unscented lotion makes a world of difference in how long your scent stays with you.” Using an unscented moisturiser before applying perfume creates a smooth base, allowing the fragrance to sit on the skin and evolve gradually throughout the day.

The Right Way to Apply Perfume

Another widely overlooked habit is how perfume is applied. Many people instinctively rub their wrists together after spraying, a small gesture that can actually shorten the life of a fragrance. “People spray and immediately rub their wrists together. While it feels natural, you’re actually crushing the fragrance molecules before they’ve had a chance to settle,” he says. The better approach is to spray and let the fragrance dry naturally. While wrists and the neck remain classic pulse points, Abdulla suggests experimenting beyond the usual. Areas like behind the knees or the inside of the elbows generate warmth that helps diffuse scent more gently and last longer.

Where You Keep Your Perfume Matters
Longevity doesn’t just depend on how you wear fragrance, it also depends on how you store it. One of the most common mistakes is keeping perfume bottles in the bathroom. “I see people keeping their bottles on bathroom counters, right next to the shower steam and sunlight coming through the window that’s the worst possible spot,” notes Abdulla Ajmal. Heat, humidity and light can break down fragrance molecules, altering the scent and reducing its lifespan. A cool, dark drawer or closet shelf away from direct sunlight helps preserve the perfume’s original character for much longer.

Layering and Choosing the



Right Concentration
Layering is another simple yet effective way to make fragrance last. Using a body lotion or oil from the same scent family helps build depth and gives the perfume more to cling to, resulting in a richer and longer-lasting effect. Concentration also plays a role. An Eau de Parfum generally outlasts an Eau de Toilette because of its higher oil content, a detail worth keeping in mind when choosing a scent for longer wear.

Understanding Your Personal Chemistry
For Abdulla Ajmal, years of working with fragrance across different climates and cultures have reinforced one key idea: scent is deeply personal and rarely behaves the same way on two people. “I always tell people that fragrance is really about personal chemistry,” he says. “The same perfume behaves completely differently on different people, and that’s what makes it beautiful. When you understand your skin,

your daily habits, and even the weather you live in, the fragrance starts working with you instead of fading away.” It’s a sentiment that echoes a much older understanding of scent. As Coco Chanel famously said, “A woman’s perfume tells more about her than her handwriting.” Fragrance, in that sense, isn’t just something you wear, it’s something that lives on the skin, shaped by how you care for it and how you move through the world. Which is why making a fragrance last



isn’t about spraying more or choosing something overpowering. As Abdulla Ajmal points out, these aren’t secrets just small, often overlooked

habits learned from working with people across so many environments. Once you understand them, the entire fragrance experience changes.

Rakeysh Mehra, discusses the Delhi-6 conclusion that was never shown in Indian theaters



Mumbai: The 2009 film Delhi-6, which starred Abhishek Bachchan and Sonam Kapoor, started with the protagonist’s death, according to director Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra. Mehra said in a recent interview that the version that was released in India was very different from this leaked cut that was shown at the Venice Film Festival. He credited outside criticism and his own doubts about the Indian audience’s willingness to embrace the original story for his choice to change the conclusion. ”The original film opens with

the ashes immersion of Abhishek’s character in the Ganges,” Mehra said in an interview with Screen, outlining the main narrative change. “These are my ashes,” Abhishek’s voiceover declares over that. That’s how the story starts, and you learn that your hero has died in the first frame. That was the first iteration. It’s still with me. The one that attended the Venice Film Festival was that one. They gave the movie a wonderful reception once they viewed it, freaked out, and exclaimed, “Wow.” The director acknowledged that he altered the

movie for its release in India, expressing his personal reservations about the choice.”Out of stupidity. Absolute stupidity. As filmmakers, we are insane, stupid, and foolish. I felt that the movie had a lot of dark humor. Everyone who viewed the edit said things like, “Leave it with some hope,” because there was so much going on. And I was duped by it. “I shouldn’t have,” he continued. Mehra claims that the idea that Indian viewers could favor a happier conclusion had an impact on the choice to change the movie’s conclusion. He admitted that the opinions of others greatly influenced his decision, which finally led to a Delhi-6 that was different from what he had originally envisioned.Waheeda Rehman, Aditi Rao Hydari, Rishi Kapoor, Supriya Pathak, Atul Kulkarni, Pavan Malhotra, Deepak Dobriyal, Divya Dutta, Vijay Raaz, and Om Puri were among the ensemble cast members of Delhi-6. Even though the movie didn’t do well at the box office and got mixed reviews from critics, Mehra’s observations show how difficult it is for filmmakers to strike a balance between their artistic vision and the expectations of the public.

Teagan Croft and Milo Manheim are the magic duo of Disney’s Tangled

Mumbai: Teagan Croft and Milo Manheim have been cast as the leads in Walt Disney Pictures’ upcoming live-action version of the animation movie Tangled. Both performers were chosen following a thorough search that included screen testing finalists in London. Manheim, who is well-known for his work in the Disney Channel’s Zombies franchise, will play Flynn Rider, while Croft, who is most known for her role in the DC series Titans, will play Rapunzel. The announcement represents a new phase in Disney’s live-action adaptation franchise and comes after much anticipation for the project. After a rigorous vetting procedure by the studio, Croft and Manheim took over the voices of Mandy Moore and Zachary Levi in the 2010 animated film, which has since become a modern classic with a devoted fan base. Disney’s social media accounts verified the casting, demonstrating the studio’s dedication to selecting the best actors to star in its newest live-action movie.”



Raqesh Bapat from Bigg Boss 15 will compete in Bigg Boss 6 Marathi



Mumbai: According to reports, actor Raqesh Bapat is getting ready to compete in Bigg Boss Marathi 6, which would be his comeback to the well-liked reality show series. According to industry sources, Bapat has been selected for the next season and will shortly move into the Bigg Boss house with other competitors.Due to a medical emergency, Bapat, who had previously appeared on Bigg Boss OTT in 2021 and as a wild card on Bigg Boss 15, had to leave his previous season midway. It is said that his re-entry was an attempt to finish his trip on the show.

Raqesh Bapat is now featured in the Marathi TV show Navri Mile Hitlerla. He is reportedly going to be among a diverse group of candidates on the reality show once more.”Raqesh Bapat of fame Navri Mile Hitlerla has been zeroed down to be in the house,” a source close to the show stated. Along with other announced candidates, Instagram phenomenon Karan Sonawane, also known as Focused Indian, is scheduled to enter the house and amuse the audience with his own content. Sagar Karande, Sonali Raut, Prajakta Shukre, Sanket Pathak, Anushree Mane,

Deepali Sayyed, Radha Mumbaikar, and Rasika Jamsudkar are reportedly among the other contenders for Bigg Boss Marathi 6.As of the time of publishing, attempts to contact Raqesh Bapat for confirmation had not yielded a response. Industry insiders acquainted with the show’s casting have stated that he is officially involved.Riteish Deshmukh, who previously discussed his strategy in a media interview, will host this season. “I never follow a strategy while hosting the show,” Deshmukh said. I instantly respond to the contestants’ actions,” he remarked.

To avoid a conflict with Dhurandhar 2, Akshay Kumar’s Bhooth Bangla will be released in May 2026



Mumbai: A new date has been set for Akshay Kumar’s eagerly anticipated return to the horror-comedy genre. Bhooth Bangla will now open in theaters on May 15, 2026, one month ahead of its initial April 2 release date.Balaji Motion

Pictures posted the news on social media with the caption, “Bangle se ek khabar aayi hai! On May 15, 2026, the doors will open. I’ll see you at the movies.”The change is seen as a deliberate decision made by the producers to make sure

the movie reaches viewers without being trapped in a congested release window. The franchise’s first installment made history by becoming the highest-grossing Indian movie ever made in a single language, making its sequel one of

the year’s most eagerly awaited releases.The crew behind Bhooth Bangla allegedly thought it was wiser to allow their film plenty of breathing room, especially to tap into its core family audience, given the strong anticipation that Dhurandhar 2 would dominate screens and public attention for weeks.Bhooth Bangla, which spans timelines from the 1950s to the present, combines humor with folklore, a genre that director Priyadarshan and actor Akshay Kumar formerly dominated with cult favorites. One of the most nostalgic partnerships in recent memory, the movie represents their reunion after 14 years. Khatta Meetha was their most recent project. The late veteran actor Asrani plays a significant part in the movie, giving it additional emotional weight.

Gulshan Devaiah on Leaving a Movie Because of Professional Misconduct

Mumbai: Recently, Gulshan Devaiah talked candidly about leaving a movie because of professional wrongdoing.

In addition, he discussed his relationship with actor Kallirroi Tziafetta, his ex-wife, four years after their divorce.Gulshan Devaiah discussed why he had to turn down a job once because of payment concerns in an interview with SCREEN Spotlight.“I quit a film once because they didn’t pay me and behaved very badly with my manager,” he stated.

I discovered they couldn’t sue me after looking up the contract’s expiration date. Additionally, the actor discussed his relationship with his ex-wife Kallirroi Tziafetta and the benefits of reflection and couples therapy,

saying, “A good amount of it came from talking to a trained professional.”

He clarified that he is not criticizing those who make casting calls because they may believe it is beneficial to recruit someone based only on their online popularity. As Gulshan noted, some of these well-known performers are quite skilled at what they do.He continued in an easygoing and impartial manner, saying, “Everyone should find their own way.”Gulshan Devaiah used himself as an example to illustrate his idea.”Now check my social media accounts to see how many followers I have. I have no 300K at all. However, I am finding employment,” he remarked. For him, his career—which includes notable parts in both popular



and independent movies—is sufficient evidence that talent can still be found. Gulshan Devaiah was honest when asked if he felt compelled to play the social media game, which includes reels, trends, and everything in between.He responded, “No, I am not taking that pressure.” He is adamant about maintaining

his authenticity. “I won’t be myself if I start acting differently on social media all of a sudden. What matters to me is being my true self!Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela, Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota, Ghost Stories, Badhaai Do, and Ulajh are just a few of the projects Gulshan Devaiah has worked on.

Emraan Hashmi Acknowledges Being “Called Out At Immigration Checks” Several Times

Mumbai: Emraan Hashmi recently revealed that he believes his look, especially his earrings, may have contributed to his repeated stops at immigration checks on his previous journeys. Hashmi discussed the experience on Wednesday in Mumbai during the trailer presentation for his forthcoming web series, Taskaree: The Smuggler’s Web.He portrays a customs officer in the show. The actor recalled the occurrences and stated that he had been stopped by airport customs quite a few times when asked if he had ever been stopped himself. Emraan stated, “No, I think they have been very sweet to me,” when asked if he had ever been stopped at the green channel. They have been incredibly kind every time I have traveled back. However, there is an overwhelming fear that defies rationality. It’s similar like learning to drive and then becoming nervous when you encounter an RTO officer on the

road. That’s what occurs, then. Walking through the green channel while traveling alone makes you feel as though you have 100 kilograms of contraband in your backpack, even if all you’ve packed are clothes.” “But it’s not at all logical,” he continued. When I used to travel alone, I was called out at immigration inspections pretty early on, most likely due to earrings or other things. However, people no longer distrust me when they see me with my lovely family. I was frequently whisked away to the side in the early 2000s. We refer to that as profiling. I don’t know who the individual was, but I think I fit their description.” Regarding his career, he most recently starred in Supam Verma’s Haq, which draws inspiration from the historic Supreme Court ruling in Mohd. Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano Begum. The film’s female lead was played by Yami Gautam.

Shatrughan Sinha Offers Former Reena Roy “Loving Birthday Wishes”

Mumbai: Toxic: A Fairytale for Grown-Ups, which was written by Yash and Geetu Mohandas and directed by Geetu Mohandas, has been shot concurrently in Kannada and English. Dubbed versions in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, and numerous other languages are planned, highlighting the film’s global ambition.The National Award-winning cinematographer Rajeev Ravi, composer Ravi Basrur, editor Ujwal Kulkarni, and production designer TP Abid make up the film’s outstanding technical team.

Leading Indian stuntmen Anbariv and Kecha Khamphakdee, along with Hollywood’s JJ Perry of John Wick fame, are directing the action. Toxic, which was produced by Venkat K. Narayana and Yash under the auspices of KVN Productions and Monster Mind Creations, is scheduled for a global theatrical release on March 19, 2026, which falls on Eid, Ugadi, and Gudi Padwa. Today, Shatrughan Sinha wished his “dear friend” Reena Roy a happy 69th birthday. The actor wrote an emotional statement and shared a number of stills from movies they collaborated on. Given their previously much-discussed relationship, the message attracted notice on the Internet.”Loving birthday wishes for a very dear friend, one of the best actresses ever, ever-charming star, a great human being, wonderful personality in totality,” wrote Shatrughan Sinha. May you always be well blessed.In an interview with Lehren Retro, film veteran



Shatrughan Sinha previously admitted to cheating on his wife, Poonam Sinha, while he was dating co-star Reena Roy.

The elderly actor acknowledged, without nam-

ing individuals, that he made “mistakes” in life and that his love triangle had impacted his mental well-being.The actor disproved stereotypes by revealing that

complex relationships. When asked how he analyzes the time in his life when he had both Reena Roy and Poonam, Shatrughan Sinha responded. “I wouldn’t accept names. However, I am appreciative of all the women in my life. I have no resentment toward anyone. I never think poorly of them. Sonakshi Sinha’s father remarked, “They have all helped me grow and become a better person.” “A man’s mental and physical health suffers greatly when he is in two devoted relationships at the same time and has a healthy heart. You experience guilt as well. Usko khilona banake kyu rakha hai (Why am I treating her like a toy)?” You feel horrible for your lover when you are with your wife and guilty for your wife when you are out with your boyfriend. Unrepentantly, Shatrughan Sinha stated. The seasoned actor stated, “I have definitely made mistakes in my life,” when discussing “mistakes” in his life. For a child who had traveled all the way from Patna, it was only natural that he would become engrossed in the industry’s glamor and glamour. I had no idea how to handle being famous. In all of this, people get lost. I had no guardian to help me. But Poonam was a huge assistance to me after she entered my life.”After meeting on the sets of Kalicharan (1976), Shatrughan Sinha and Reena Roy went on to star in movies like Milap, Sangram, Sat Sri Akal, and Chor Ho To Aisa. They became close until Shatrughan Sinha announced his marriage to Poonam Sinha.

The Censor Board Gives Parasakthi 23 Edits

Mumbai: The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has not yet issued a clearance certificate for Sivakarthiskeyan’s Parasakthi. According to the most recent information, Parasakthi’s certificate will probably be issued today. The movie was assessed yesterday, January 7, after the CBFC requested 23 modifications.According to earlier reports, filmmaker Sudha Kongara was requested by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) in Chennai to cut out specific scenes and dialogue that dealt with the anti-Hindi movement depicted in the movie.According to industry sources, Sudha Kongara has also made contact with the CBFC’s Mumbai Revising Committee.

Bengaluru was named the Best Indian City for Women in 2025, according to a study

New Delhi, Jan 08: According to an indicator, Bengaluru is India's top city for women in 2025. The report, which was published by the Chennai-based workplace inclusion company Avtar, evaluated how well 125 cities help women by combining industrial inclusion with social infrastructure. With a City Inclusion Score (CIS) of 53.29, Bengaluru topped the list, surpassing Chennai (49.86) and Pune (46.27). The top five were completed by Hyderabad (46.04) and Mumbai (44.49), demonstrating the ongoing superiority of southern and western metropolises in developing urban ecosystems that are welcoming to women. The index is based on two pillars: an Industrial Inclusion Score (IIS) that monitors formal job opportunities, corporate inclusion practices, skill-ing, and women's participation in the workforce, and a Social Inclusion Score (SIS) that measures elements like safety, health, education, mobility, and liveability. According to the survey, the greatest sustainable environment for women's long-term professional success are found in places that score highly on both of these pillars. Bengaluru was the leader in industrial inclusion, while Chennai



was the best city in terms of social inclusion due to better public services, safety regulations, and access to healthcare and education.

It had a distinct advantage due to its established corporate ecosystem, extensive formal employment, and broad implementation of diversity and inclusion initiatives. In terms of social and industrial metrics, Pune and Hyderabad showed comparatively balanced performance, indicating better possibilities for long-term female employment involvement. South India had the highest

regional averages for all metrics, with Western India coming in second. However, despite some advancements in social infrastructure, industrial involvement was much lower in the central and eastern regions, suggesting that women had few formal work opportunities. The most resilient cities for women's careers, according to the research, are those that have inclusive industries and robust social structures. The most resilient cities for women's careers, according to the research, are those that have inclusive industries and robust social structures..

An Unusual View : Black Deer Captured on Camera in Kurseong, West Bengal



New Delhi, Jan 08: In West Bengal's Kurseong Range's Dowhill Forest, a rare black deer has been captured on camera. During a regular patrol on Wednesday, the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) made the sighting. According to officials, the animal was photographed in the deep woodland. The sighting was unusual for the area, according to forest officials. Reporters were informed by the DFO that the dark coat most likely results from a genetic mutation rather than a different species. The natural variety of the Darjeeling Hills is

highlighted by the fact that similar sightings have only been documented in isolated areas of the Dowhill and Bagora forests. In India, black-colored deer sightings are exceedingly rare and typically indicate genetic differences rather than a separate species. Deer that are typically brown or tan may seem black due to melanism, a genetic disorder characterized by excessive dark pigmentation.

This is thought to be caused by a recessive gene and has been observed in barking deer (muntjacs) in several forest locations,

including portions of the Darjeeling hills. Because the genetic feature must be acquired from both parents, melanistic animals are uncommon in groups of wild deer, according to researchers. The condition may be a color variation within an existing species of deer rather than a sign of a distinct species. Although India is home to a variety of deer species, such as sambar, many musk deer species, and spotted deer (chital), entirely black individuals are uncommon and typically the product of genetic mutation rather than a distinct wildlife category.

As leaders Inter Milan try to capitalize, Napoli draws with lowly Verona

New Delhi: On Wednesday, Napoli overcame a two-goal deficit to draw 2-2 with lowly Verona, giving Inter Milan the opportunity to overtake the winners in the Serie A championship race. After Scott McTominay's header early in the second half sparked the comeback, Giovanni Di Lorenzo scored a superb equalizer with eight minutes left to secure a point in Naples. Ahead of their Scudetto matchup at the San Siro this weekend, Napoli sits one point behind league leaders Inter, who visit Parma later on Wednesday. Inter, who have won five consecutive league games, put Antonio Conte's squad in danger of slipping four goals down after trailing two goals at halftime thanks to a deft backheel by Martin Frese and a penalty kick by Gift Orban. AC Milan, who are likewise one point behind the pace and will play Genoa on Thursday night, are positioned between Inter and third-place Napoli. "Look we're all bunched up at the top so it's going to go down to the last day like last season," said Di Lorenzo. "Every point is important, maybe the fight-back today could be important for that reason, because it's always better to get something from a game rather than lose." Given Conte's team's ongoing

New Delhi, Jan 08: The Supreme Court stated that it has not ordered the removal of all dogs from the streets and that they should be treated in accordance with regulations. The suo motu case on managing stray dogs in public areas was still being heard by a bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and NV Anjaria on Thursday. Attorneys for both sides—dog lovers, dog bite sufferers, and animal rights advocates—presented their cases. Dogs keep Delhi in balance, but rats and monkeys pose a threat, according to Senior Advocate CU Singh, who speaks on behalf of animal protection organizations. "What occurs when pets are abruptly taken away? He contended. "The rat population is growing, and they are carriers of disease." In a lighthearted manner, Justice Mehta questioned the possibility of a relationship between the populations of dogs, rats, and monkeys. "Cats and dogs are rivals. Since cats are rats' adversaries, we ought to promote more of them," he stated. "JNU is spread over 1,000 acres, DU is approximately 70-80 acres, and railways have open boundaries," Singh said in response to Justice Mehta's question regarding the presence of dogs at the hospital. Dogs will enter. When applied



correctly, the ABC (Animal Birth Control) rule has proven effective. We have noted that the spread of other diseases occurs when dogs are housed in shelters in high numbers in crowded settings. The Court observed that numerous states have experienced violations in spite of the ABC guidelines and court decisions. Speaking on behalf of a renowned authority on animal rights, Senior Advocate Krishnan Venugopal brought attention to the absence of funding for ABC rule implementation. "It will cost Rs 1,600 crore to establish one AB center in each district. There should be five central government ministries participating. There are currently 5.2 crore dogs in the nation, but only 66 ABC centers are recognized.

We also need to train a specialized force because we have a staffing shortage. We must greatly do this in order to control the population," he stated. Venugopal expressed concern about the dearth of facilities for large-scale dog sterilizations and highlighted the necessity of training veterinarians to do such procedures. The attorney for BJP leader Vijay Goel stated that the ABC regulations were designed to methodically lower the dog population while also emphasizing that it is unclear what constitutes a violent dog. He gave an example from Rana Pratap Bagh in Delhi, where a dog was removed after biting a seven-year-old. The dog bit a 78-year-old guy and then another 70-year-old man after being freed a week later. He said that over 20,000 complaints have been received by a helpline they run for victims of dog bites. The highest court voiced worry on Wednesday over the startling increase in dog bite incidents nationwide and the ineffective application of the ABC Rules by local and municipal authorities. The Bench noted that stray animals on highways are a major contributing factor to accidents and that lives were being wasted as a result of ongoing inaction.

Bangladesh's Powerful "Ind vs. Pak" Reaction to the ICC Letter Regarding the T20 World Cup

New Delhi: Although its request for a venue change has not yet been granted, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) stated on Wednesday that the ICC is "willing to work closely" with them to resolve "security concerns" around the team's participation in the T20 World Cup in India. Bangladesh's four matches in the T20 World Cup are scheduled to take place in Kolkata and Mumbai starting on February 7. "In its communication, the ICC has reiterated its commitment to ensuring the full and uninterrupted participation of the Bangladesh team in the tournament," the Bangladesh Cricket Board said in a statement. "The ICC has conveyed its willingness to work closely with the BCB to address the concerns raised and has assured that the Board's inputs will be welcomed and duly considered as part of the detailed security planning for the event," it stated. Following the board's release of the statement on the delicate topic, government advisor Asif Nazrul and BCB president Aminul Islam spoke at a news conference. Both restated their positions for the reasons they find the team's trip to India unsettling. Nazrul

spoke up more than Aminul, the president of the BCB. "As of right now, we have made it quite clear that we will inform the ICC that our environment is unsuitable for playing in India. This will be communicated either tonight or early tomorrow. "With those sufficiently compelling arguments, we will convey to the ICC that the fundamental tenet of our position is that we will not compromise on issues pertaining to Bangladesh's security, honor, and dignity. However, we are adamant about participating in the T20 World Cup," Nazrul stated. Aminul mentioned the agreement between Pakistan and India that allows the bitter rivals to play their ICC games in a third nation. He claimed that as his players' safety was a top priority, the same should be done for the games involving Bangladesh. "India did not travel to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy, and Pakistan did not travel to India for the most recent World Cup. Thus, we also expect that the ICC will respond appropriately. After Bangladeshi pacer Mustafizur Rahman was removed from the IPL on the BCCI's orders, tensions between India and Bangladesh erupted.

All-Round India U19 Completes a 3-0 Clean Sweep Against South Africa U19

New Delhi: At the third Youth ODI, India U19 knocked out South Africa U19 for 160 to record a huge 233-run victory and seal the series 3-0, capping an outstanding all-around performance at Benoni. The visitors were clinical with the ball and never let the South African hitters settle after amassing a massive 393/7 in their 50 overs. India's bowlers shared the wickets in an outstanding display of control and discipline, dismissing the hosts in 35 overs. With impressive figures of 3/15 from his four overs, Kishan Singh spearheaded the bowling attack and tore through the top order. Mohammed Enaan, who finished with figures of 2/36, also had a significant influence. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, the skipper, followed his batting exploits with figures of 1/10 in two overs. Every other Indian bowler contributed a wicket. Due to immediate pressure, South Africa's choice to bat second proved to be expensive. Kishan Singh's first loss of the game came when opener Jorich van Schalkwyk was disqualified for 1. Following Singh's removal of Lethabo Phahlamohlaka for a duck, Henil Patel cleaned up Muhammad Bulbulia for four. As South Africa collapsed to 4/15 in 4.2 overs, Singh took his third wicket when Adnaan Lagadien, Van Schalkwyk's opening partner, went for 9. Jason Rowles was dismissed for 19 shortly after the Proteas hit the 50-run milestone in 10.1 overs. With a 40 off 60 balls, Daniel Bosman attempted to stabilize the innings, but RS Ambrish removed him, ending his resistance. With a valiant 41 off 49 deliveries, Paul James became South Africa's leading scorer, but Mohammed Enaan ended his innings. India swiftly wrapped up the tail, taking the last three wickets for only 23 runs, and kept up the pressure



throughout the middle overs. To complete a decisive victory, captain Sooryavanshi took the final wicket, knocking Ntando Soni for six. In their third and final ODI of the series at Benoni on Wednesday, India U19 defeated South Africa U19 by 393/7 in their 50 overs thanks to twin hundreds from openers Aaron George and captain Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

With 206 runs at an average of 68.66 and a strike rate of over 187, including a century and fifty, Sooryavanshi has topped the charts in three games. After winning the toss, South Africa chose to field first. George and captain Suryavanshi (127 in 74 balls, with nine fours and ten sixes at a strike rate

of 171.62) put on an undefeated 227-run opening partnership to get India off to a great start. Vedant Trivedi (34 in 42 balls, with a four) and George (118 in 106 balls, with 10 fours) put together a 52-run partnership.

India U19 completed a perfect sweep with yet another dominant performance in both departments, and the decisive victory highlighted their supremacy throughout the series. Mohamed Enaan (28* in 19 balls, with a four and two sixes) and Henil Patel (19* in 21 balls, with a four) put on a half-century partnership to propel India into the 390s, but Team India ultimately fell to 335/7 in 43.2 overs.

Twelve suspended Congress council members in Ambernath, Maharashtra, have joined the BJP

New Delhi, Jan 08: "The people elected these councilors and they had promised development to the citizens. They have come with us because the government is working in a dynamic manner and is capable of delivering justice and development to the people," Maharashtra Bharatiya Janata Party president Ravindra Chavan said at the BJP office here late Wednesday night. Twelve newly elected council members in the Ambernath Municipal Council who were suspended by the Congress for siding with the BJP after the elections have officially joined the saffron party. In order to create the leadership of the Ambernath Municipal Council (in Thane district) after the local elections on December 20, the BJP teamed up with its fiercest adversary, the Congress, under the title of "Ambarnath Vikas Aghadi" (AVA), ignoring ally Shiv Sena, which became the single largest party. The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), led by Ajit Pawar, is another member of the Aghadi. In the 60-member local body, the AVA won a majority of 31 seats. Shiv Sena



gained 27 seats in the most recent elections, only four seats short of a majority. The Congress won 12 seats, the NCP 4, the BJP 14, and two independents were also elected. The three-party coalition now has 32 council members, surpassing the threshold of 30 for a majority, thanks to the backing of one independent. The Congress suspended the block president and its twelve freshly elected council members on Wednesday, embarrassed by the embarrassing scenario. The 12 suspended council members' decision to join the BJP has drastically changed the municipality's political landscape. The ruling Mahayuti is allied with the BJP, NCP, and Shiv Sena. According to Chavan, the council members' action demon-

strated their increasing trust in the BJP-led administration. He added that the party would keep concentrating on local body development and governance.

"They believe that only through the BJP can the promises made to the people be fulfilled effectively," he stated. Shiv Sena, a Mahayuti ally, has described the move as a breach of "coalition dharma" because the Ambernath arrangement was designed to prevent the Eknath Shinde-led party from controlling the local body. Chavan stated that their Akot MLA, Prakash Bharsakhale, has received a show-cause notice about the BJP's alliance with the Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM in the Akot Municipal Council in the Akola district.

Harmanpreet's MI in pursuit of third WPL title; Mandhana's RCB and Jemimah's DC also in fray

Navi Mumbai: Still basking in the glory of their maiden ODI World Cup triumph, India's effervescent women cricketers will return to competitive action in the fourth Women's Premier League starting here on Friday, kicking off their build-up to this year's T20 World Cup. Two-time winners and defending champions Mumbai Indians, led by Harmanpreet Kaur, will face the only other title-winning side in the WPL, Smriti Mandhana's Royal Challengers Bengaluru, in the tournament-opener here at the 'home of Indian women's cricket', the DY Patil Stadium. The fourth WPL will be held in two stages, in Navi Mumbai and Vadodara, presenting players from around the world to go against the best and augment their preparations for the T20 World Cup, slated for June-July in England.

MI have the best squad on paper at their disposal led by Harmanpreet with captains of England (Nat Sciver-Brunt) and West Indies (Hayley Matthews) in tow. Having retained the majority of their squad, MI will be the team to beat given their formidable batting, bolstered by New Zealand's Amelia Kerr, promising Australian Milly Illingworth, and India's dependable Amanjot Kaur. With G Kamalini at the top, MI could also find themselves facing selection headache with the available talent. Shabnim Ismail will lead the bowling attack which also includes Saika Ishaque, who will face the challenge of getting her act together after a tough couple of seasons following an impressive debut in 2023.



With Meg Lanning moving to UP Warriorz, mercurial Indian batter Jemimah Rodrigues has taken charge of the Delhi Capitals' outfit which carries the burden of tripping at the finish line all three times in the finals. The Capitals have a dangerous squad and one that can go the distance if things fall in place. Among Indians, Delhi have the World Cup winners and in-form opener Shafali Verma, Sneha Rana and Shree Charani, while domestic talent base includes Niki Prasad, India player Minnu Mani and right-arm Nandani Sharma, who is the only Indian pacer in the camp. Delhi's overseas roster is impressive too, with the the ODI World Cup's best batter and South Africa captain Laura Wolvaardt looking to continue with her form.

Marizanne Kapp and Alana King will handle the bowling workload but Annabel Sutherland's withdrawal has reduced the firepower to some extent. A lot will hinge on how Mandhana, in the absence of the legendary Ellyse Perry, pulls the RCB side while garnering runs at the top. Mandhana's form is never really a concern and she will feel confident

given the talent base which the 2024 winners have. Australian batter Georgia Voll, all-rounder Grace Harris and South Africa's doughty all-rounder Nadine de Klerk will share the batting responsibilities. Behind the wickets and for the finishing job, RCB have the explosive Richa Ghosh in ranks. India's Arundhati Reddy, Pooja Vastrakar, and England's Lauren Bell are among the premier seamers for RCB who also have quality spin bowlers in England's Linsey Smith, India's Radha Yadav and Shreyanka Patil. After a couple of ordinary seasons, Gujarat Giants made it to the playoffs last year and they will look to go one better this year. But for the Ashleigh Gardner-led side, the overseas stars will have to do the heavy-lifting given that they do not have any front-line Indian batter in their ranks. Renuka Singh Thakur is the biggest Indian star in the camp along with Titas Sadhu and Rajeshwari Gayakwad, with wicket-keeper-batter Yastika Bhatia looking for a strong comeback after an injury layoff. However, GG have the formidable Gardner at the helm and a few other Australians around her.

Australia win final Test to complete 4-1 Ashes triumph over England



Sydney: Australia clinched the fifth and final Ashes Test against England Thursday by five wickets to complete a dominant 4-1 victory after a gruelling series, sending the retiring Usman Khawaja out on a high. The nervy hosts lost five wickets as they chased their 160 target, which they reached after lunch on day five with Cameron Green not out 22 and Alex Carey on 16. Australia lost openers Travis Head (29) and Jake Weatherald (34), along with captain Steve Smith (12) and Khawaja who made six in his final knock before retiring after an 88-Test career. Marnus Labuschagne, dropped on 20, compiled 37 before needlessly running himself out to give Ben Stokes's men a flicker of hope as they reduced Australia to 121-5. But victory was never seriously in doubt after England were dismissed for 342 on the back of Jacob Bethell's stylish 154.

Defeat culminated a long tour for the visitors that quickly turned into a horror show when they lost the opening two Tests in Perth and Brisbane by eight wickets and the third at Adelaide by 82 runs. Stokes's side had arrived confident they could win their first series in Australia since 2010-11 amid taunts about the hosts having their worst side in 15 years. Facing heavy criticism over their preparations, discipline and ultra-aggressive "Bazball" style of cricket, they rallied to pull off a stunning four-wicket comeback win in the fourth Test in Melbourne.

Manchester United Caretaker Darren Fletcher To Helm Red Devils Against Brighton

Manchester: Manchester United caretaker Darren Fletcher confirmed that he would helm the team in their upcoming game against Brighton as the Red Devils look to pick up a win against the Seagulls in the Premier League. Fletcher was in charge of United's 2-2 draw against Burnley at Turf Moor, and the Scot will continue to hold the reins for the Red Devils' A Benjamin Sesko double helped United share the spoils as Ayden Heaven turned the ball into his own net before Jaidon Anthony pegged the hosts back on level terms. Heaven, who has been exceptional for United this season, gave Burnley the lead as he found the back of the wrong net in the 13th minute of the game.

But, Sesko pegged the Claret's back on level terms with a 50th minute goal. Fletcher lauded the impact of the Slovenian forward in the side's stalemate on the road and revealed that he gave the striker a few pointers before his next outing. "I sat down with him yesterday and showed him videos of his movement and how the opportunities are going to come. He was fantastic against Burnley," the former midfielder said. Returning United skipper Bruno Fernandes played Sesko through on goal with an exquisite pass before the forward made the most of it with a striker's finish. "The team need to figure out how to put in performances that win them games," the 41-year-old said.

Barca rout Athletic to reach Spanish Super Cup final

Jeddah: Raphinha netted twice as Barcelona strolled into the Spanish Super Cup final with a dominant 5-0 semi-final win over Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday in Saudi Arabia. The holders and record 15-time champions will face either Real Madrid or Atletico Madrid, who meet Thursday, in Sunday's final. Hansi Flick began with teenage star Lamine Yamal on the bench but his team was still able to ease to a comfortable victory at the King Abdullah Sports City stadium in Jeddah. The La Liga leaders have now won nine matches in a row across all competitions and Athletic, enduring a difficult season, were ripped to shreds.

Last season Barca went on to win La Liga and the Copa del Rey after Flick's side won the Spanish Super Cup for the first trophy of the German's reign and the coach had said he wanted to use the competition as a springboard for more success again. "It's us who make games easy or hard -- when we're playing well, doing things right, defending well, attacking well, the game is easier," Raphinha told Movistar. The forward has been in fine form since returning from a hamstring injury that kept him out for around two months. "I am always looking to be at my best level, and I will never say I'm at my best," continued Raphinha. "I will keep looking, keep trying to have a season that, if not perfect, is almost perfect, always looking for the best for the team." Ferran Torres bundled home the opener after 22 minutes with a stroke of fortune after Fermin Lopez's bungled shot fell kindly for him. Barca sliced Athletic open with a more attractive second



goal, with Raphinha cutting the ball back for Lopez to blast into the top corner, for the first of three goals in eight minutes.

Swedish winger Rooney Bardghji got the third after being given a helping hand by Athletic goalkeeper Unai Simon, who somehow mishandled the low shot under his own body and into the net. It offered Spain coach Luis de la Fuente food for thought, given Simon is his number one and Barca stopper Joan Garcia is knocking at the door ahead of the World Cup, although the Euro 2024 winning manager was absent with the flu. Raphinha lashed into the top left corner for Barcelona's fourth after 38 minutes as the Catalans attacked relentlessly. Oihan Sancet struck the post at the other end with Athletic's best chance on a miserable night for the Basque side, who last won the competition in 2021. Brazil international Raphinha grabbed his second soon after the break with a lethal finish from close range to seal Barca's win. "We have to say sorry to the fans who came here, we were not up to the level today, there's nothing else we can do than say sorry," said Athletic captain Inaki Williams.

England's players and management face performance review after lopsided Ashes loss in Australia

Sydney: England's players and management are undergoing a performance review following the 4-1 Ashes series defeat in Australia, with England Wales Cricket Board chief executive Richard Gould vowing to "implement the necessary changes over coming months." Gould issued a statement after England's five-wicket loss in the fifth test Thursday, highlighting disappointment in the campaign after the squad traveled to Australia with high expectations of ending a long drought Down Under. The planning, tactics and preparation of head coach Brendon McCullum and cricket director Rob Key will be part of the review, along with "individual performances and behaviors" and the team's ability to adapt and react to conditions.

"This Ashes tour began with significant hope and anticipation, and it is therefore deeply disappointing that we have been unable to fulfill our ambition of winning the Ashes in Australia," Gould said. "While there were moments of strong performance and resilience during the series, including a hard-fought victory in the fourth test in Melbourne, we were not consistent enough across all conditions and phases of the contest."



Gould said the cricket board was "determined to improve quickly" as the team prepares for the Twenty20 Cricket World Cup in India and Sri Lanka next month. "We will implement the necessary changes over the coming months," he said.

Australia's Cameron Green, left, is congratulated by England's Jacob Bethell following the fifth and final Ashes cricket test between England and Australia in Sydney, Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026 Australia win final Test to complete 4-1 Ashes triumph over England McCullum, the main architect of England's attack-at-all-costs approach that the tourists started the tour with, said he'd be open to minor changes but not a complete overhaul. "You've got to have conviction in your methods," he told the BBC. "You're not against evolution and progress, but you've got to have conviction in what you believe in. "It's about nipping and

tucking to try and get a better version of your style and your beliefs." McCullum said he'd "see what happens" with the review "but I firmly believe in how we go about trying to build this team and progress on what we've done." Australia retained the Ashes with wins in Perth, Brisbane and Adelaide, before England's drought-breaking win in the fourth test in Melbourne made it 3-1 ahead of the test at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Australia has won four consecutive home Ashes series since England's last win here in 2010-11. England struggled this tour with injuries to key bowlers Jofra Archer and Mark Wood, a heavy workload for skipper Ben Stokes which meant he couldn't bowl on the last day of the series, and a consistently flawed approach to batting in pressure situations. England's fielding was also problematic across the series, with too many chances put down.

Tilak Varma Likely To Recover In 3-4 Weeks, May Miss Start Of T20 World Cup 2026: Report



Mumbai: Star Indian middle-order batter Tilak Varma, who has reportedly suffered an abdomen injury, is all set to miss the five-match T20I series between India and New Zealand, and there is a high possibility that he may miss India's first few matches of the T20 World Cup 2026 as well. The five-match T20I series between India and New Zealand will be played from January 21 to 31 across five venues in India, whereas India's first T20 World Cup 2026 match is on February 7 in Mumbai against the United States of America. According to a report in the Indian Express, the 23-year-old left-handed batter from Hyderabad, who scored a century (109) against Chandigarh on January 3, has been advised to undergo surgery, because of which he is likely to remain out of action for three to four weeks. "Tilak faced severe pain in his abdomen today (Wednesday).

He was rushed to a hospital in Rajkot, where various scans were done, and reports were sent to doctors at the COE," a BCCI source told Indian Express. "Doctors have advised him to undergo surgery, which will take three to four weeks for him to recover. Chances of playing the entire T20I against New Zealand look bleak," he added.

India's first Group A match in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 is less than a month away, and if Tilak undergoes surgery, the chances of him getting fully fit to play against the United States will be in danger. After facing the United States at Wankhede Stadium, India will travel to Delhi for their second match against Namibia on February 12 at Arun Jaitley Stadium. India's third Group A match is scheduled against Pakistan on February 15 in Colombo. Tilak is expected to get fit by then. Vi According to the report, the BCCI selectors will name a replacement player for Tilak for the New Zealand series but are unlikely to consider Shubman Gill for the same. Gill was India's vice-captain in the T20I series against South Africa last month but was dropped from the teams picked for the T20 World Cup 2026 and the New Zealand series on December 20, 2025.

Former England coach Kevin Keegan diagnosed with cancer, says family

New Castle: Kevin Keegan, the former England player and coach, has been diagnosed with cancer, his family said Wednesday. The 74-year-old Keegan was recently admitted to the hospital after presenting abdominal symptoms and has undergone further tests. "These investigations have revealed a diagnosis of cancer, for which Kevin will undergo treatment," read a statement from Keegan's family that was shared by Newcastle, a former club for which he played and coached. "Kevin is grateful to the medical team for their intervention and ongoing care. During this difficult time, the family are requesting privacy, and will be making no further comment." Keegan, who won the Ballon d'Or for being European player of the year in 1978 and '79, played 63 times for England, scoring 21 goals, and featured at the World Cup in 1982. He also captained the national team. At club level, he joined Liverpool in 1971 and won three league titles as well as



the FA Cup, the UEFA Cup twice and the European Cup in 1977.

He then played for German club Hamburg, where he won his two Ballon d'Or awards, and later played at Southampton and Newcastle before retiring as a player in 1984. In 1992, Keegan took over as Newcastle manager and narrowly missed out on winning the Premier League in the 1995-96 season. After a brief stint at Fulham, he became England coach on a full-time basis in 1999. He oversaw a disappointing European Championship campaign in 2000 and resigned later that year on the back of a defeat by Germany at Wembley Stadium — the last match at the national stadium before it was rebuilt. Keegan managed Manchester City and Newcastle again afterward.

Sesko Double Rescues United in Four-Goal Burnley Draw

Burnley: Manchester United managed to come away from Turf Moor with a point against Burnley following their 2-2 draw in the Premier League encounter between the sides on Thursday. A Benjamin Sesko double helped United share the spoils as Ayden Heaven turned the ball into his own net before Jaidon Anthony pegged the hosts back on level terms. Heaven, who has been outstanding for United this season, unfortunately gave Burnley the lead by scoring an own goal in the 13th minute. However, Sesko brought United level with a goal in the 50th minute.



The Slovenian striker netted again ten minutes later, giving United the lead for the first time in the match. But Anthony, who had only been on the pitch for a few minutes, equalised for Scott Parker's side in the 66th minute. Burnley initially took the lead at home when the ball deflected off Heaven and found the back of the net, giving the hosts an early advantage and a lead at halftime. United's fortunes changed in the second half when returning captain Bruno Fernandes played an exquisite pass to Sesko, who finished with a striker's touch. Sesko doubled his tally by converting a brilliant cross from Patrick Dorgu at the stroke of the hour mark, putting caretaker Fletcher and his team ahead. However, Anthony, who substituted former United player Hannibal Mejbri, scored past Senne Lammens to level the match for Parker's men. United's draw takes their season's tally to 32 points from 21 games, while Burnley, still battling relegation, remain on 13 points. Nehal Wadhra Hopes To Make India Call-Up And Excited To Play With Shreyas Iyer | Interview

Earlier in the evening, Brighton managed to play out a 1-1 draw at the Etihad Stadium on Thursday against Manchester City, giving Mikel Arteta's Arsenal the opportunity to further the Gunners' lead at the top of the English top-flight. Kaoru Mitoma's second-half strike cancelled out Erling Haaland's opener in the first half as Pep Guardiola's men had to share the spoils on the day at home.

Premier League: Brighton Hold Man City To Boost Arsenal Title Hopes



Brighton: Brighton managed to play out a 1-1 draw at the Etihad Stadium on Thursday against Manchester City, giving Mikel Arteta's Arsenal the opportunity to further the Gunners' lead at the top of the English top-flight. Kaoru Mitoma's second-half strike cancelled out Erling Haaland's opener in the first half as Pep Guardiola's men had to share the spoils on the day at home. Haaland broke the deadlock from the spot in the 41st minute of the game as Guardiola and Co. took a slender one-goal lead into the break. However, Fabian Hurzeler's men pulled back on level terms thanks to Mitoma's equaliser at the hour mark.

The result limited City to 43 points in 21 games, five behind top-placed Arsenal, who can open up a eight point lead if they manage to win against Liverpool on Friday. At the Craven Cottage, Fulham pulled off an unexpected victory by defeating Chelsea 2-1 in their Premier League clash as goals from Raul Jimenez and Harry Wilson, flanking a strike from Liam Delap, secured the win for Marco Silva's team against their London rivals. Jimenez opened the scoring for the Cottagers in the 55th minute, following Marc Cucurella's dismissal just 22 minutes into the match. Delap equalised for Chelsea in the 72nd minute, but Wilson's goal nine minutes from the end ensured Fulham's triumph over Calum McFarlane's side. Meanwhile, Manchester United earned a point from their trip to Turf Moor, drawing 2-2 with Burnley.