

In Brief

Assault on students

Imphal: Manipur Police arrested five men following an assault on four students near Bijoypur on October 30. The identified suspects, aged 18 to 22, were apprehended on October 31 after an immediate investigation. The police seized two vehicles believed to have been used in the attack and are examining them for evidence. There are ongoing efforts to determine if more individuals were involved and whether the assault was premeditated. Authorities emphasized a commitment to legal action against those responsible, citing the importance of maintaining safety for students and locals. The incident has raised concerns among residents and student groups regarding regional security, with hopes that the arrests will deter similar violence in the future.

Mizoram politics heats up

Aizawl: Political tensions in Mizoram are escalating as Lalruatkima, a senior leader of the Mizo National Front (MNF), criticizes the ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) for losing public trust and failing to meet expectations since taking office. During a speech on October 31, he claimed that the ZPM has increased taxes without delivering visible improvements, leading to growing citizen disappointment. Lalruatkima stated that the MNF is the only credible alternative for the state's governance. He also mentioned the weakening influence of the Congress party and expressed confidence in winning the upcoming Dampa Assembly by-election, against competition from ZPM's candidate Vanlalsailova and Congress's John Rotluangliana. The by-election will take place on November 11, with 20,790 voters eligible to participate.

Major illegal drugs trade held in Tripura

Agartala: Tripura Police Crime Branch arrested Rajib Dasgupta, linked to a drug trafficking scheme, after seizing 1,07,800 bottles of banned ESKuf cough syrup worth Rs 5.4 crore from a goods train at Jirania railway station. The operation, based on intelligence, aims to further investigate and dismantle the trafficking network. The cough syrup is prohibited in India due to its narcotic content, and this seizure contributes to over Rs 136 crore of narcotics confiscated in Tripura recently, highlighting ongoing efforts by Assam Rifles and others to combat drug trafficking in the area.

Former GMCH Superintendent Dr. Abhijit Sarma honoured with GLF Jeevandaan Award 2025

Guwahati, Nov 01: The Guwahati Literature Festival 2025 has begun celebrating Assam's art, culture and public service. But the most special moment of the day came when Dr. Abhijit Sarma, former Superintendent of Guwahati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), was honoured with the GLF Jeevandaan Award 2025. The award was given during the inaugural ceremony held at S.B. Deorah College Auditorium at Ulubari in Guwahati. Students, writers, artists, academicians and members of the public stood to applaud Dr. Sarma in the college auditorium. Many recalled his tireless leadership during the pandemic and other crises, guiding GMCH with calm and compassion. Dr. Abhijit Sarma has long

Meghalaya's Cherry Blossom Festival lineup announced by CM

Shillong, Nov 01: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Thursday unveiled the much-awaited lineup for the Cherry Blossom Festival 2025, promising "a grand celebration of music, art, and culture that showcases the rich diversity of our state." The festival will see some of the world's biggest names perform in Shillong. Day One of the Cherry Blossom Festival will showcase artists including The Script, Jason Derulo, and Nora Fatehi, capped off with performances

been known as one of the most dedicated healthcare leaders in Assam. As GMCH Superintendent, he enhanced hospital services, strengthened emergency systems, and ensured timely care for critical patients. Even after stepping down from his official post, Dr. Sarma continued to work for the welfare of the community, supporting families in medical need, guiding young medical students, and taking part in various health-awareness programmes across Assam. At the ceremony, organisers praised Dr. Sarma for giving "life and hope to many" through his work. Thanking him, he said serving the public is his duty and honour. This year's Guwahati Literature Festival honors Zubeen Garg's life and legacy with

by Aqua and Tyga. Day Two will feature a finale by DJ Diplo, alongside a tribute to Zubeen Garg. Local artists like Meba Ofilia and Girish and The Chronicles will join international acts. Chief Minister Sangma emphasized the festival's focus on celebrating Meghalaya's culture and spirit, with various activities including a Mr. & Miss Cherry Blossom competition, cosplay, and arm wrestling at multiple venues. He invited everyone to participate in making the festival memorable.

Singapore sends key forensic reports in Zubeen Garg case; Assam SIT targets December 17 chargesheet



on September 19 while swimming in the sea in Singapore. His death deeply shook fans across Assam and the Northeast, triggering mourning, candlelight marches, and public demonstrations demanding a transparent and credible investigation. The renowned singer, known for his contribution to Assamese music and cinema, had millions of admirers who continue to remember him as a cultural force. The 10-member SIT has been actively pursuing leads and has already taken seven individuals into custody

in connection with the case. All arrested persons are currently lodged in judicial custody. The authorities have not yet disclosed further details regarding the charges being considered, but officials say those arrested played roles that raised serious legal and investigative concerns. Sarma, who also handles the Home portfolio, expressed confidence that the probe is moving in the right direction. He assured the public that the investigation team is working with full diligence and transparency. "The SIT is absolutely confident about ensuring

justice for Zubeen. The chargesheet will be filed within the 90-day legal time frame, by December 17. People will appreciate the work being done when the details come out," he said. While reaffirming the government's commitment to a thorough examination of the events leading to Garg's passing, the chief minister also underlined that other pressing issues of governance would continue alongside the investigation. "We are committed to justice. But the government cannot halt its functioning on other state matters," he remarked.

In a significant development regarding the death investigation of Assam's cultural icon Zubeen Garg, Singapore authorities have shared his post-mortem and toxicology reports with the Assam Police, as confirmed by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Shifting focus to political developments, Sarma launched a sharp attack on the Congress party, accusing it of undermining Assam's identity and interests. He referred to a recent incident in which members of the Congress Seva Dal were alleged to have sung the national anthem of Bangladesh at a programme in Sribhumi. "The Congress wants to make Assam a part of Bangladesh. This cannot be allowed. We have ordered an inquiry into the incident," Sarma asserted. The chief minister also highlighted broader socio-political concerns, including what the government terms cases of "love jihad" and issues related to land encroachment. According to him, these remain significant threats to social harmony and territorial integrity in the state. "Along with ensuring justice for Zubeen, we will continue prioritising issues like infiltration, religious conversions through deceit, and encroachment. These are matters that affect Assam's future," he added.

Nagaland Civil Service bodies question state's stand on IAS induction, demand transparency

Kohima, Nov 01: A group of civil service associations in Nagaland has strongly challenged the state government's defence over the induction of non-State Civil Service officers into the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), saying the move raises serious constitutional and ethical concerns. The Joint Coordination Committee (JCC), a platform representing five major government service organisations — CANSSEA, FONSESA, NIDA, NSSA and NF&ASA — issued a detailed statement on October 31 questioning the basis on which certain officers were considered for IAS elevation. According to the committee, the state's justification does not stand up to legal scrutiny and undermines the principle of fair recruitment. At the core of the dispute is the inclusion of officers whom the JCC described as "irregularly appointed", alleging that these individuals entered government service without going through proper and constitutionally mandated recruitment procedures. The committee argued that allowing such officers to rise to the IAS cadre would compromise both merit and integrity in public administration. The state government spokesperson had earlier defended the selections, saying they were done "within the constitutional framework" and that those regularised in service had shown seniority, experience and honesty deserving of consideration. The government further stated that deserving officers should not be denied advancement simply because they did not enter service through competitive exams. Rejecting this explanation, the JCC questioned



how appointments made in violation of Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution could later be considered valid for IAS induction. "Induction into the IAS is not akin to attaining sainthood where one's past irregularities are washed away. The rule of law applies to all," the committee asserted. The JCC also cited the Supreme Court's landmark 2006 judgment in the Uma Devi case, which held that regularisation cannot cure the initial illegality of an appointment made without due process. According to the associations, the state government's stance contradicts this established legal principle. The Nagaland government had also pointed to a Supreme Court ruling involving Rajasthan,

where a non-SCS officer was allowed induction to the IAS. The JCC countered that the circumstances were completely different, noting that the Rajasthan case involved reserved quota for non-SCS officers, whereas the current issue in Nagaland concerns the eligibility of officers whose entry into service itself is disputed. Calling the explanation misleading, the committee said the government must not attempt to "white-wash backdoor appointees and glorify them." It added that fairness in recruitment is critical for public confidence in the administration and urged the state to ensure transparency and adherence to established procedures.

Safari Tariffs up in all National Parks and Sanctuaries

Guwahati, Nov 01: The revised prices for elephant safaris in all Assamese national parks and sanctuaries where the activity is offered will go into effect from November 1, 2025, according to the Assam administration. The state Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department announced the increase in elephant safari costs in a notification on October 30, 2025. The decision was made in partial revocation of a notification that was sent out on October 31, 2015, ten years prior. According to the updated prices, Indian travelers will now pay Rs 1,200 per seat per trip, up from Rs 750 previously, and foreign travelers will pay Rs 2,000, up from Rs 1,250. According to the notification, all national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in the state that offer elephant safari services will be subject to the updated prices. The raise, according to officials, was implemented in response to long-standing requests from elephant owners who wanted pricing modifications to cover growing operating and maintenance expenses. The government's memo also instructed the Chief Wildlife Warden, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, and other high-ranking authorities to take the required steps to put the updated charge schedule into effect.

Arunachal child rights body orders criminal action against media for revealing identities of abuse victims

Itanagar, Nov 01: The Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Protection of Child Rights has ordered strict legal action against media organisations and individuals who revealed the identities of minor sexual abuse victims from Sanggo Residential School in Mebo, East Siang district. The directive comes after videos, photos and social media posts exposing the children's identities circulated widely on Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp. Acting on its own, the Commission said it was deeply concerned that certain media platforms and individual creators ignored legal safeguards and ethical norms while reporting the sensitive case involving schoolchildren. Among the platforms named in the order is the digital channel "Satik Samachar," which reportedly aired visuals identifying the victims.



The Commission stated that revealing the identities of children affected by sexual offences is a serious crime under Section 23 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, Section 74 of the Juvenile Justice Act and Section 72 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. The directive emphasizes landmark Supreme Court rulings that protect child

victims' privacy and dignity, requiring media outlets to refrain from disclosing their identities. The East Siang Superintendent of Police is tasked with identifying responsible parties and filing FIRs, with offenders facing potential prison time and fines. Media must remove related content within 24 hours, while social media platforms are instructed to

block it. The directive also mandates a child-sensitive approach in investigations, including psychological support for victims, with police required to submit compliance reports. Failure to comply may result in contempt proceedings, penalties, and disciplinary action, reflecting the state's commitment to safeguarding children's rights in abuse cases.

PM Modi on the day of the state formation of Chhattisgarh

Raipur, Nov 01: Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended warm wishes to the people of Chhattisgarh on the state’s formation day, marking its 25-year milestone with a commitment to further development. He reflected on his personal connection to the state, recalling his time there as a young worker. During the silver jubilee celebrations, Modi inaugurated the new assembly building and unveiled a statue of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He also inaugurated the “Shanti Shikhar” of Brahma Kumaris, highlighting their role in the Viksit Bharat movement, and opened the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Memorial & Tribal Freedom Fighters Museum, promoting the state’s historical legacy.



Amit Shah’s helicopter is grounded at Patna Airport due to bad weather

Patna, Nov 01: Union Home Minister Amit Shah’s helicopter was unable to take off due to bad weather at Patna airport on Saturday, delaying his scheduled departure to address public rallies in poll-bound Bihar. Despite this setback, Shah managed to address the rally in Gopalganj virtually.

During a prior rally in Samastipur, he expressed confidence in the National Democratic Alliance’s (NDA) certain victory in the Bihar assembly elections, predicting that the political careers of Lalu Prasad Yadav and Rahul Gandhi would come to an end by 1 PM on November 14, the date when votes will be counted. Shah criticized the Mahagathbandhan alliance for prioritizing family members over capable leaders, highlighting the BJP’s decision to nominate 25-year-old Maithili Thakur.



He also praised the significant crowds that gathered during his rallies across Bihar, striving to convey the sentiment of support for the NDA. He affirmed the timeline for the election processes, stating that counting will begin at 8 AM, ballot boxes will open at 9 AM, and he anticipated clear outcomes by 1 PM. In his remarks, Shah likened the NDA to the “panch pandavas” from the Mahabharata, underscoring the unity within the alliance. He emphasized that the current election is not merely about electing candidates but is aimed at liberating Bihar from “jungle raj,” establishing a strong narrative of unity and purpose among the NDA’s five allies, analogous to the legendary Pandavas.

After taking a bath in the Ganga, I became a vegetarian, and my life changed Vice-President CP Radhakrishnan

Varanasi, Nov 01: Vice President CP Radhakrishnan reflected on his transformative experience during his first visit to Kashi 25 years ago when he adopted vegetarianism after bathing in the Ganga river.

At an inauguration ceremony for a new lodging facility (satram) in Varanasi, built by the Sri Kasi Nattukottai Nagara Satram Managing Society, he acknowledged the significant changes in Kashi over the past quarter-century, attributing this transformation to the efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Radhakrishnan commended the Nagarathar community for their social service contributions and their ₹60 crore funding for the satram, a symbol of faith and cooperation among different regions. He articulated that the facility represents not merely a physical structure but a renewed cultural bond between North and South India, strengthening the historical ties between Tamil Nadu and Kashi.

The Vice President mentioned the importance of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam, which has reinforced this connection through the centuries.



This transformation of Kashi has been made possible by PM Modi and CM Yogi Adityanath, according to CP Radhakrishnan.

Moreover, he highlighted the cultural significance of the return of the idol of Annapurni Devi, stolen over a century ago, to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple complex, illustrating a broader spiritual renaissance occurring in Kashi under current leadership.

The facility, equipped with 76 solar lamps representing a commitment to green energy, is designed to serve visiting devotees, encouraging future generations to engage with the holy city. Radhakrishnan emphasized

the enduring spiritual relationship between Kashi and Tamil Nadu, encapsulated in the phrase “Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat” (One India, Great India). Following the ceremony, the Vice President offered prayers at both the Kashi Vishwanath Temple and the Annapurani Amman Devi Mandir.

NIA Chargesheets 11 for Suhas Shetty’s Murder as an Ex-Bajrang Dal Member

Bengaluru, Nov 01: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a chargesheet against 11 individuals involved in the murder of former Bajrang Dal member Suhas Shetty in Karnataka, an act perceived as an attempt to instill fear within the community. The chargesheet, presented to the NIA Special Court in Bengaluru, details the coordinated ambush on May 1, where Shetty was followed and attacked by a group of armed assailants. This group used two vehicles to block his escape before attacking him with swords and machetes, ultimately forcing him to flee on foot where he was brutally killed in public view.



The chargesheet submitted to the NIA Special Court in Bengaluru details the alleged following, cornering, and killing of Shetty.

The NIA’s involvement was at the direction of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), indicating the case’s potential link to national security and a larger conspiracy. The investigation has uncovered connections to former members of the banned Popular Front of India (PFI) and the Kar-

nataka Forum for Dignity (KFD). The alleged mastermind behind the attack is Abdul Safwan, a former PFI member, who conspired with others including known associates from both groups.

The investigation revealed that the plot was financially supported by Maharoo,

who facilitated the recruitment of additional attackers through promises of payment or by stoking existing hostilities against Shetty. The chargesheet lists additional suspects, while inquiries into one more accused continue.

Following Shetty’s murder, significant unrest unfolded in coastal Karnataka, leading to protests by Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leaders. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) condemned the Congress government’s failure to ensure the safety of Hindu activists. In response to escalating tensions, authorities enacted prohibitory orders to maintain order, resulting in the arrest of twelve individuals linked to the crime.

In the case of temple gold theft, an ex-Sabarimala official was arrested

Pathanamthitta, Nov 01: Sabarimala’s former executive officer, Sudheesh Kumar, has been arrested in connection with the alleged theft of gold from the temple, marking the third arrest in this ongoing case.

The Special Investigating Team (SIT) interrogated Kumar, who served at the temple in 2019, at the Crime Branch office in Thiruvananthapuram. Kumar is accused of misrepresenting gold-plated Dwarapalaka idols as copper sheets in temple documents. He had been associated with Sabarimala since the 1990s and was aware of the gold plating.

The police also arrested Potty and former administrative officer B Murari Babu. Kumar is accused of



enabling Potty, an earlier suspect, to remove the gold plating by documenting the symbols falsely, allowing illicit transactions.

Kumar is scheduled to appear before a Judicial First Class Magistrate Court later. SIT is investigating related cases involving the theft of gold from the Dwarapalaka idols and the sanctum sanctorum, which were entrusted to Potty for electroplating in 2019.

The issue gained atten-

tion in September when Special Commissioner R Jayakrishnan informed the High Court that the temple’s gold-clad copper panels were removed for unauthorized renovations by a private firm, violating legal protocols. Unnikrishnan Potty sponsored these renovations and had previously volunteered for similar work in 2019.

A High Court order revealed that the weight of the gold-plated panels decreased ominously from 42.80 kg to 38.25 kg upon their return from renovation, indicating potential misappropriation of gold. Searches by the Devaswom wing at Potty’s sister’s house recovered missing temple assets, further implicating Potty in the theft.

The head of the Maharashtra Congress claims that a plainclothes police officer attempted to snoop

Mumbai, Nov 01: Maharashtra state Congress president Harshavardhan Sapkal alleged that the Mumbai police are surveilling him, claiming that a plainclothes officer entered his official residence without authorization. During the encounter, the officer inquired whether Sapkal planned to address the press, leading him to question if this intrusion was at the behest of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who oversees the state home department. Sapkal indicated that this was the third incident of surveillance since his appointment as state Congress president, accusing

the BJP party of a history of spying on political opponents, drawing parallels to previous instances involving phone tapping with the Pegasus software.

In response to these allegations, Revenue Minister and senior BJP leader Chandrashekhar Bawankule refuted the claims, asserting that snooping was a tactic used during the Congress and Maha Vikas Aghadi’s governance, emphasizing that the current government focuses on the state’s development rather than on espionage.

Additionally, Sapkal expressed concerns over the

police’s actions during a hostage situation involving Rohit Aaryya, who had taken 17 children and two adults captive at a Powai studio. He questioned why the police opened fire when a National Security Guard (NSG) unit was already present, despite Aaryya’s reportedly unstable mental condition and prior involvement in government projects.

Furthermore, Sapkal accused Chief Minister Fadnavis of enabling criminal activity, alleging that the death of a female doctor in Phaltan was a murder disguised as suicide due to pressure from

• The Congress leader reported that a policeman surveilling his residence claimed to be acting on directives from higher authorities.

BJP officials. He pointed out a lack of accountability regarding former MP Ranjitsinh Naik Nimbalkar despite serious allegations against him, which included extortion and assault. Sapkal’s critique highlighted a broader issue of rising crime under Fadnavis’s administration and alleged that he has become a haven for criminals.

Sanjay Raut is receiving well wishes due to “serious health issues”; PM Modi and others are praying

New Delhi, Nov 01: On Friday, messages of concern and support surged through social media following Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut’s announcement of his withdrawal from public life due to a “serious health issue.” Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his wishes for Raut’s speedy recovery. Raut, a prominent figure in the Uddhav Thackeray faction, conveyed that he has been advised to limit public interactions during his treatment process.

He shared on X, “You have all loved and trusted me. But I have developed serious health issues and am undergoing treatment. I will come out of this,” and expressed hope for regaining good health by next year, stating that he must refrain from mingling in public according to medical advice.



In response to Raut’s announcement, Prime Minister Modi offered comforting words on X, saying, “Praying for your speedy recovery and good health, Sanjay Raut Ji,” to which Raut gratefully acknowledged in Hindi, thanking the Prime Minister and expressing his hope for a swift return to health.

Expressions of support continued from various political figures. Jitendra Awhad,

a former housing minister in Maharashtra from the NCP, commented that Raut’s decision highlighted the seriousness of his health condition. He described Raut as a “fighter leader” and expressed confidence in his strong return, wishing him excellent health and a quick recovery. Additionally, Rajani Patil, AICC in-charge for Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh, noted Raut’s health had “suddenly deteriorated,” describing him as a bold personality unafraid of challenges. She sincerely wished for his quick recovery so he could return to his social and political duties. Rais Shaikh, an MLA from Bhiwandi (East), joined in the sentiments by praying for Raut’s swift recovery, hoping he would soon return with renewed strength to serve Maharashtra and its people.

Cam and the Andhra stampede

Unsettling videos depict people who are stuck and wailing for assistance

Amaravati, Nov 01: On Saturday, a tragic stampede occurred at the Venkateswara Swamy temple in Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh, resulting in the deaths of at least 10 individuals and numerous injuries. This unfortunate event unfolded as thousands of devotees gathered to celebrate the religious occasion of Ekadashi, leading to chaotic scenes and distressing visuals that emerged from the temple area.

During the incident, visuals depicted individuals trapped on the rails of a narrow passage, desperately attempting to flee from a stampede. Among those affected were several women who were observed carrying puja baskets, as they shouted and screamed for assistance amidst the turmoil. The footage from a recent incident revealed disturbing scenes of injured



individuals being transported to ambulances for immediate medical attention at local hospitals. In light of the tragic events, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his deep sorrow, stating that he is “pained” by the stampede.

He extended his condolences to the families who have lost loved ones, as noted in a formal announcement from the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO). Additionally, he conveyed his hopes

for a swift recovery of the injured. In response to the calamity, the Prime Minister declared that a financial aid of ₹2 lakh would be allocated to the families of the deceased from the Prime Minister’s National Relief Fund (PMNRF), while those who sustained injuries will receive ₹50,000 each.

Moreover, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu also shared his sympathies through a

statement on X, expressing sorrow for the families affected by this unfortunate event. The stampede at the Venkateswara Temple in Kasibugga, Srikakulam district, has caused a shock and heartbreak among devotees. Union home minister Amit Shah expressed his condolences to the families of the deceased and urged officials to provide speedy and proper treatment to the injured.

Andhra minister Nara Lokesh also expressed his shock and instructed the government to provide better medical treatment to the injured. He spoke with officials, district minister Achchennaaidu, and local MLA Gauthu Shirish, and instructed immediate assistance to the affected individuals. The tragedy has left many in shock and a sense of loss.

Hindi grants, but disregard for other languages Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah fuels another Kannada dispute

Bengaluru, Nov 01: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, during the 70th Karnataka Rajyotsava celebrations in Bengaluru, criticized the BJP-led Central government for prioritizing the promotion of Hindi and Sanskrit at the expense of other Indian languages, particularly Kannada. He highlighted the state’s significant financial contribution of ₹4.5 lakh crore to the Centre but lamented that Karnataka receives insufficient funds in return. Siddaramaiah emphasized that Kannada is being unfairly treated and accused the Central government of imposing Hindi and neglecting other regional languages.

He articulated a need for a law to ensure that the mother tongue is the primary medium



of instruction in schools, arguing that reliance on English and Hindi diminishes children’s talent. He noted that children in developed countries think and dream in their native languages, contrasting that with the situation in Karnataka where children struggle to maintain their linguistic heritage.

Siddaramaiah’s comments reflect a broader issue related to language politics in India, asserting that the state deserves equitable treatment and sufficient funding for the de-

velopment of its classical language, Kannada. The grievances expressed during his speech resonate with ongoing discussions about linguistic identity and regional equity in India, particularly in the context of cultural preservation and educational policies. Moreover, November 1 marks the formation day for several Indian states and Union Territories, including Karnataka, signaling a day of historical significance in the context of state formation and linguistic pride.

200 Attack Meghalaya home on Witchcraft suspicion; family rescued

Shillong, Nov 01: A family in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district narrowly escaped a violent assault after a large mob attacked their home on Thursday night, accusing them of practising witchcraft.

The incident took place in Khliehshnong locality of Sohra around 9.30 pm, when nearly 200 people gathered outside the house of local resident Ham Shangpliang, threatening to burn the home and harm the occupants. Police officials said tension escalated quickly after rumours spread that a boy had claimed to experience "visions" involving Shangpliang and believed he had been placed under some form of spell.

The unverified allegation ignited panic in the neighbourhood, prompting a crowd to assemble and surround the house, despite the absence of any evidence to support the claim. Authorities described the situation as "extremely volatile," with the mob refusing multiple warnings to disperse. Sohra police teams arrived at the spot along with local magistrates, but faced stiff resistance due to the size and aggression of the crowd.

East Khasi Hills Superintendent of Police Vivek Syiem said officers were

A family in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district faced a mob attack on Thursday night, accused of witchcraft after a boy claimed to have visions involving them.

left with no option but to fire tear gas and stun grenades to create a safe path for evacuation.

"This was necessary to protect the residents and safely extract them from danger," he said. Twenty-two people, including minors and members of two other families who were visiting the house for a memorial service, were safely rescued in a coordinated operation.

They were taken to Shillong Civil Hospital for examination and counselling. Additional personnel from the Special Operations Team were deployed to stabilize the situation and disperse the mob.

Eight police officers were injured while trying to defend the family and maintain order.

A case has been registered at Sohra police station, leading to the arrest of nine primary instigators, with further suspects identified for likely additional arrests as the investigation continues.

Tripura BJP team inspects Santirbazar after bandh violence, report to CM soon

Agartala, Nov 01: A high-level delegation of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Tripura on Thursday visited Santirbazar in Dhalai district to take stock of the situation following violent clashes that erupted on October 23 during a statewide bandh called by the Tripura Civil Society. The five-member team assessed the damage on the ground and interacted with affected residents before returning to prepare a report for Chief Minister Manik Saha. The delegation included SC Welfare Minister Sudhangshu Das, Tribal Welfare Minister Bikas Debbarma, MLA Swapna Pal, and BJP state general secretary Bipin Debbarma. Their visit was aimed at reviewing the aftermath of the unrest, during which several shops were set ablaze and looted, and numerous people — including a Block Development Officer and an engineer — suffered injuries. According to authorities, both officials were "brutally attacked" during the chaos. Speaking to reporters, Minister Sudhangshu Das described the incident as deeply disturbing and unexpected. "We came here to understand firsthand what actually happened. The destruction of property and the injuries caused are shocking. There is no place for violence in our society. We always advocate peace, and those responsible must face strict action," he said. Das noted that the violence impacted both tribal and non-tribal residents, warning against attempts to sow discord between communities. "People here — tribal and non-tribal — live together peacefully. Attempts have been made to create tension, which is condemnable. A section of politicians is trying to take advantage of the situation. I warn them not to disrupt communal harmony," he remarked.



The minister further informed that the state government has already extended interim relief to affected families. A primary assessment of the damage has been completed, and compensation measures are underway. He added that the delegation will shortly submit a detailed report to Chief Minister Manik Saha, recommending necessary administrative and security steps to prevent future incidents. The October 23 bandh witnessed sporadic violence across pockets of Tripura, with Santirbazar emerging as the worst-affected area. While the bandh had been called to protest various governance-related issues, authorities say miscreants used the occasion to incite unrest. Police presence in the region has since been strengthened, and the administration has assured strict action against those involved in the attacks and arson.

Major illegal drugs trade held in Tripura

Agartala, Nov 01: Tripura Police Crime Branch arrested Rajib Dasgupta, a key figure in a drug trafficking racket, in connection with the seizure of 1,07,800 bottles of banned ESKuf cough syrup valued at Rs 5.4 crore from a goods train. The arrest follows intelligence-led operations at Jirania railway station. Authorities continue to pursue another absconding suspect and further investigations are ongoing to dismantle the trafficking network. The ESKuf cough syrup is banned in India due to its narcotic content. This seizure contributes to over Rs 136 crore worth of narcotics confiscated in Tripura in recent weeks, with ongoing efforts by Assam Rifles and other agencies to combat drug trafficking in the region.



'Gaurav Gogoi is 100 per cent Pakistani agent, planted by foreign power': Assam CM

Guwahati, Nov 01: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on October 31 accused state Congress president and MP Gaurav Gogoi of being a "Pakistani agent" allegedly "planted by foreign power". The remark marks an escalation in the ongoing war of words between the ruling BJP and

the Congress in Assam.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a government event, Sarma claimed, "Gaurav Gogoi is a Pakistani agent, he is purely that. He has been planted by foreign power in our country." The Chief Minister and the BJP have repeatedly alleged that Gogoi has links

to Pakistan through his British wife — a claim the Congress leader has dismissed as baseless.

Gogoi earlier hit back at the accusations, saying they resembled a "C-grade Bollywood film" that would "flop" because "the people of Assam understand everything".

Sarma said he would release what he called "evidence" against Gogoi, but only after the investigation into singer Zubeen Garg's death concludes. "I am not convening a press conference now to share the evidence, as some will say the Zubeen Garg issue is being diverted," he told reporters.

Five held in Manipur for assault on students near Kakching, probe underway

Assault on students

Imphal, Nov 01: Manipur Police have arrested five young men in connection with the assault on four students near Bijoypur along the Kakching Lamkhai-Pallel Road on Thursday night, an incident that has raised concern among residents in the area. The attack, which took place on October 30, involved several unidentified individuals who allegedly stopped the students on the road and physically assaulted them without any clear provocation. Officials said the arrests were made on October 31 after police launched an immediate investigation into the case. Those taken into custody have been identified as Elangbam Arun Singh (19), Mayengbam Manglem Singh (22), Nepram Jitan Singh (18), Moirangthem Chinglei Meitei (19) and Moirangthem Linthou Meitei — all hailing from Pallel and adjoining localities. Their arrest marks the first major breakthrough in the case. Police have also seized two vehicles believed to have been used by the accused during the assault. The vehicles are

currently being examined to gather more evidence, officials said. Investigators are now working to verify whether more people were involved in the incident and whether the attack was pre-planned or triggered by a confrontation. Authorities have assured that strict action will be taken against anyone found guilty. "We are pursuing the case seriously and ensuring all legal steps are followed to bring the culprits to justice," a police official said, adding that maintaining safety for students and civilians remains a top priority for law-enforcement agencies in the district. Local residents and student groups have expressed concern over the incident, saying such acts threaten peace and security in the region. Many hope the arrests will send a strong message and help prevent similar attacks in the future. The four assaulted students were reportedly returning from an event when the attack occurred, though officials have not disclosed their identities for safety reasons.

Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia to lay Foundation Stone for Sohra Tourism Circuit in Meghalaya under PM-DevINE

Shillong, Nov 01: In a significant step towards enhancing tourism infrastructure in Meghalaya, Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) and Minister of Communications, along with Shri Conrad K. Sangma, Chief Minister of Meghalaya, tomorrow will lay the foundation stone for the Integrated Development of Sohra Tourism Circuit in Sohra. The event is being organised by the Department of Tourism, Government of Meghalaya, in collaboration with the Ministry of DoNER. It signifies the Union Government's continued commitment to unlocking

the tourism and livelihood potential of the North Eastern Region. Shri Timothy D. Shira, Minister of Tourism, Government of Meghalaya, will also be present on the occasion.

The project, funded under the PM-DevINE scheme with an investment exceeding Rs 200 crore, aims to strengthen tourism infrastructure, enhance sustainable livelihood opportunities, and preserve Sohra's cultural and natural heritage. It will improve visitor facilities, promote eco-friendly tourism, and generate employment for local communities. Dignitaries will showcase local crafts and engage with entre-

In Meghalaya, Union Minister Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia and Chief Minister Shri Conrad K. Sangma will lay the foundation stone for the Integrated Development of Sohra Tourism Circuit.

preneurs at the foundation ceremony, emphasizing community-led tourism development. Additionally, a public program will highlight the project's impact on Meghalaya's tourism landscape. On November 2, 2025, Minister Shri Scindia is set to visit the Mawm-luh Cave and inaugurate DoNER projects in Guwahati, Assam, including a visit to IIT Guwahati.

Mizoram politics heats up

MNF leader says ZPM 'in ICU', predicts defeat in 2028 elections

Aizawl, Nov 01: Political temperatures in Mizoram are rising as senior Mizo National Front (MNF) leader Lalruatkima launched a strong attack on the ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM), declaring that the government is losing public confidence and will struggle to return to power in the 2028 Assembly polls. Addressing party workers at Serlui South in Kolasib district on October 31, the former minister claimed that the ZPM government has failed to fulfil expectations since taking office two years ago. He alleged that the ruling party has increased taxes and collected cess for road works without delivering visible development on the ground. According to him, disappointment among citizens is growing rapidly. "ZPM is in the ICU," Lalruatkima said during his speech, suggesting that the government is in a politically fragile condition. He emphasised that people are looking for a dependable alternative and argued that the MNF remains the only credible option for the state. The MNF leader added that public dissatisfaction would ultimately reflect in the next Assembly election. Lalruatkima also criticised the Congress, saying the party's influence has been



steadily weakening both in Mizoram and at the national level. He asserted that the MNF is set for victory in the upcoming Dampa Assembly by-election, saying the ruling ZPM has not chosen a strong candidate and that Congress is struggling to regain its footing in the state. "We are confident of winning the bypoll. People trust the MNF, and there is no other serious contender," he told party workers. The Dampa by-election, scheduled for November 11, will see 20,790 voters — including 10,185 women — exercise their franchise. Counting of

votes will take place on November 14. Political competition in Dampa is intense, with the ZPM fielding singer-turned-preacher Vanlalsailova, while the MNF has nominated senior vice-president and former health minister R. Lalthangliana. The Congress candidate is former transport minister and party vice-president John Rotluan-gliana. The BJP has put forward Lalthmingthanga, a recent entrant to the party. The People's Conference, led by former chief minister Brig. T. Sailo, has chosen party vice-president K. Zahmingthanga as its nominee.

Emotional Assam embraces 'Roi Roi Binale'

Pathala, Nov 01: On the day of Zubeen Garg's final film 'Roi Roi Binale' release in Assam, the atmosphere was charged with emotion as rain fell across the state, transforming the celebration into a poignant tribute. Audi-



ences emerged from theaters in tears, moved by Garg's music and voice. In Pathala, where the connection to Garg is particularly strong, people gathered outside cinemas in the rain, reflecting on the shared grief, with one youth stating, "Zubeen lives in every drop of rain. Nature cried with us today." The event symbolized a collective mourning for the legendary artist.

Daniel Langthasa slams cement plants on disputed land

Haflong, Nov 01: The year-long dharna against the purported transfer of almost 9,000 bighas of land to the Adani Group in a number of villages in Chhota Lakhindong and the surrounding districts of Umrangshu is coming to an end. According to reports, the corporation and the impacted villagers have negotiated a compensation arrangement, so putting an end to the unrest. The construction of several cement factories, including the proposed Ambuja Cement project, is now anticipated to proceed in the area as the disagreements appear to have been settled. Evidence of this was made clear at the Pollution Control Board's public hearing on Wednesday. The hearing and following approval processes appeared to be more of a formality than a true environmental examination, according to observers, once compensation payments were made. Daniel Langthasa, the Chief Convener of the Sixth

Schedule Protection Committee and a former council member, expressed his deep displeasure, saying the entire process was opaque. Langthasa declared, "We are not opposed to development, but why were the legal processes of land purchase not properly finished? Wednesday's entire drill in Umrangshu was a performance. How can compensation be made prior to approval from the Pollution Control Board?"

He also cautioned that Umrangshu will become a very polluted area due to the careless construction of cement and mining facilities on thousands of bighas of land. "When such large-scale industrial units come up, even the air we breathe will become heavy, and there's no assurance that the drinking water will remain safe," warned Langthasa. Lanthasa also conveyed his dissatisfaction with claims that his group was 'inciting' the locals during the public hearing.

Superstition Turns Violent

Sohra, Nov 01: A family in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills escaped an attack by a mob of about 200 people, who accused them of witchcraft.

The incident occurred on the evening of October 30 in Khliehshnong, where the mob threatened to burn down Ham Shangpliang's home. This violence was allegedly triggered by a boy's claim of having visions of Shangpliang. Despite police efforts to manage the situation, including the use of tear gas and stun grenades, the mob proved resistant. Eventually, police evacuated 22 individuals, including minors, while eight officers were injured. Nine key instigators were arrested, with more arrests anticipated. Police condemned the violence, urging the public to reject superstition and mob justice.

Cultural Performances Mark National Unity Day Celebration in Sivasagar

Sivasagar, Nov 01: Dolmukh Chariali in historic Sivasagar celebrated National Unity Day on Friday, joining the rest of the country in doing so. The occasion marked the 150th anniversary of the birth of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Iron Man and freedom warrior from India. The Associated Press Club of Greater Sivasagar, the Nikhil Asom Samajwadi Janaganatantrik Ganaswaraj Party, and the Indian Patriotic Federation Socialist (IPFS) collaborated to organize the event. Educationist Jyotiprasad Dutta and social worker Bokul Borthakur lit lamps ceremoniously to kick off the session. Before the portraits of the late legendary artist Zubeen Garg, the voice of the Assamese people, and renowned musician and former All India Radio Dibrugarh program executive Syed Sadullah, who passed away on Thursday, lamps were lit and flowers were offered as part of a tribute ceremony presided over by



senior journalist Pranjal Rajguru. There was also a pause in their recollection. Recalling Sardar Patel's crucial role in preserving India's integrity and unity, renowned author Samsul Barik spoke to the audience. He stressed the need for all citizens to support the principles of fraternity and togetherness among all facets of the population. Barik spoke out against the unfairness, brutality, lying, and corruption that permeate society and politics. Concerned about

the moral and ethical deterioration in modern society, Jyotiprasad Dutta presided over the conference. He blamed a portion of leaders' declining integrity for the rise in dishonesty and corruption in social and political life. Aside from the deep musical performances by AIR Dibrugarh vocalists Asima Baruah, Joyamoni Sharma, and Mitali Chutia, the occasion also featured flute and melody played by teacher Ramesh Panging and Manju Mili.

Nissan India posts 45% MoM sales jump in October, crosses 1.2 million export mark

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. (NMIPL) recorded a sharp 45% month-on-month growth in October 2025, clocking 9,675 consolidated units, supported by festive demand and the recent GST rate reduction. The company reported 2,402 domestic wholesale units and 7,273 export units, reaffirming its role as a key global export hub. Nissan also celebrated reaching 1.2 million cumulative exports, led by the success of the New Nissan Magnite.

The festive season during Navratri, Dussehra and Diwali, coupled with GST benefits, boosted retail movement. Nissan has passed on the full GST benefit to buyers, reducing Magnite prices by up to ₹1 lakh. The carmaker highlighted strong customer response to the



KURO Special Edition and the new Metallic Grey variant, alongside the expansion of its CNG retrofit programme for the Magnite BR10 EZ-Shift (AMT). Dealer partners are preparing for three upcoming launches, including the Nissan Tekton, a 7-seater B-MPV, and a 7-seater C-SUV. In Guwahati, Nissan dealerships reported heightened festive showroom traffic and a rise in Magnite enquiries, particularly for the special edition trims. Local dealers anticipate further demand momentum with the GST-driven price cuts and upcoming Nissan models. Nissan said its growing dealer network, lower inventory levels, and focus on customer experience support its “Make in India, Make for the World” and “One Car, One World” strategy.

TCI reports 8% revenue growth in Q2 FY26, driven by Auto & FMCG demand

Guwahati: Transport Corporation of India Ltd. (TCI), India’s leading integrated multimodal logistics and supply chain solutions provider, reported steady growth in Q2 FY2026, supported by robust auto, FMCG and consumer durables movement and improved compliance under GST 2.0.

For Q2 FY26, consolidated revenue rose to ₹12,174 million, up 7.6% from ₹11,314 million last year. EBITDA grew 6.9% to ₹1,624 million while Profit After Tax increased 5.8% to ₹1,135 million. In the first six months of FY26, the com-

pany reported an 8.3% rise in revenue to ₹23,680 million and an 11% jump in PAT to ₹2,207 million. Standalone revenue came in at ₹10,652 million, up 5.3%, with PAT increasing 6.4% to ₹878 million.

MD Vineet Agarwal said all business segments performed satisfactorily, adding that festive demand and simplified taxation have boosted logistics efficiency. He highlighted expansion in warehousing, investments in automation and multimodal assets, and continued green fleet initiatives. TCI’s transportation emis-

sions tool developed with IIM Bangalore has been adopted by DPIIT.

Logistics operators in Guwahati said TCI’s multimodal expansion and warehousing push aligns with rising Northeast consumption. With festive-season inventory buildup and improving road-rail connectivity, market stakeholders expect faster goods turnaround across Assam and neighbouring states.

TCI, with revenues over ₹7,000 crore, continues strengthening freight, cold chain, coastal shipping, express services and logistics parks nationwide.

Automakers report robust India sales in October GST reforms

New Delhi: Automakers like Kia India, Skoda Auto India, Nissan Motor India, and Mahindra’s Trucks and Buses on Saturday reported robust sales in the month of October, driven by strong festive buying due to GST reforms. Kia India achieved its best-ever monthly sales performance in October, with 29,556 units since entering the Indian market. With a robust 30 per cent year-on-year increase over the 22,735 units sold in October 2024 marking an unprecedented sales milestone, this achievement underscores Kia’s strong and

sustained momentum in India’s competitive automotive landscape, the company said in a statement. Skoda sold 8,252 units in October, which is its highest-ever monthly sales. Nissan Motor reported consolidated sales of 9,675 units, marking a 45 per cent month-on-month growth, and Mahindra and Mahindra’s overall sales, including exports in the Trucks and Buses business, stood at 2,034 units. Between January and October, Skoda sold 61,607 cars, hitting an all-time high annual sales in just 10 months.

Best Google Ads Agency in India Helping Brands

Mumbai: Boost Ads, founded by Anaam Tiwary, is recognized as the best Google Ads agency in India, helping brands achieve real business growth through smart, data-driven advertising. With over a decade of experience, Boost Ads delivers high-quality leads, better conversions, and up to 3X ROI using advanced Google Ads strategies tailored to your goals. What makes Boost Ads different is its ROI-focused approach. Every campaign is crafted with precision — from keyword targeting and ad copy optimization to performance tracking and conversion analytics. The result? More qualified leads, reduced costs, and consistent revenue growth. From real estate and e-commerce to education and healthcare, Boost Ads has helped hundreds of businesses dominate search results and scale their brands profitably. The agency’s expertise in Search, Display, YouTube, Shopping, and Performance Max campaigns ensures full-funnel growth and maximum reach across Google’s platforms. Under the expert guidance of Anaam Tiwary, Boost Ads continues to set benchmarks in PPC management.

NMIPL clocks 45% month-on-month domestic sales growth, with consolidated sales of 9675 units in October 2025

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. (NMIPL) has reported consolidated sales of 9675 units in October 2025, marking a 45% month-on-month growth. This performance uplift reflects a strong festive demand for the New Nissan Magnite during Navratri, Dussehra, and Diwali, complemented by the positive impact of the GST rate reduction announced by the Government of India. Domestic wholesale stood at 2402 units, supported by robust demand for the New Nissan Magnite, while exports reached 7273 units, reinforcing Nissan India’s position as a global export hub. The company recently celebrated the export of its 1.2 millionth vehicle strengthening its “Make in India, Make for the World” philosophy. Saurabh Vatsa, Managing Director, Nissan Motor India, said: October



has been a good month for Automotive Industry as well as Nissan Motor India, driven by festive cheer supported by the GST ratio-

Medanta lays foundation for Rs 500-crore super-speciality hospital in Guwahati



Guwahati: Medanta, one of India’s leading multispecialty healthcare groups, has entered the Northeast market with the Bhoomi Poojan ceremony for its upcoming 400+ bed super-speciality hospital in Guwahati. The ceremony, held on October 31, was attended by Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma as guest of honour, along with Medanta Chairman & Managing Director Dr. Naresh Trehan and Group CEO Pankaj Sahni.

Located at the Sarusajai Industrial Estate along NH-27, the ₹500-crore facility will offer comprehensive tertiary and quaternary care, including advanced transplant services,

robotic procedures, cardiology, neurology, oncology, trauma care, and a full suite of diagnostics and preventive programmes. The project is also expected to generate 5,000–7,000 jobs, spanning medical, administrative, and support roles.

Dr. Trehan said the Northeast has long required advanced medical infrastructure, adding that the new hospital reinforces Medanta’s mission to make quality healthcare accessible to all. CEO Pankaj Sahni highlighted Guwahati’s strategic advantage as the gateway to the Northeast, with access to over 50 million people.

IREDA vows bigger push for renewable energy growth in Northeast, eyes green power hub future

Guwahati: The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) has renewed its commitment to accelerating renewable energy expansion in the North-Eastern region. Speaking at an event titled “Financing Renewable Energy in the North Eastern Region” in Guwahati, Chairman and Managing Director Pradip Kumar Das highlighted the region’s crucial role in India’s clean energy roadmap.

Shri Das informed that India’s renewable energy capacity has tripled since FY14 and is projected to double again by FY2030, requiring investment of around ₹28 lakh crore. The Northeast, he noted, holds tremendous green energy potential, particularly in hydropower and solar, with approximately 5



GW of renewable capacity already installed — nearly 60% of the region’s total power capacity.

So far, IREDA has sanctioned over ₹3,500 crore in the Northeast, offering concessional financing, including a 50 basis points rebate for projects in the region and an additional 50 basis points concession for women-led initiatives. The agency has also backed key schemes such as PM-KUSUM and

Rooftop Solar, supporting thousands of installations, including 3,800 solar pumps in Tripura and rooftop projects across Assam.

In Guwahati, industry stakeholders welcomed IREDA’s push, noting rising investor interest in solar rooftops, decentralized energy models, and green business parks. Experts believe enhanced grid connectivity and policy incentives will attract more clean energy

entrepreneurs and MSMEs in Guwahati, strengthening Assam’s position as a renewable energy growth hub.

Shri Das added that with better infrastructure and innovative financing mechanisms, the Northeast could emerge as a clean energy hub for India and neighboring regions, supported by strong local leadership, including many IREDA business heads hailing from the region.

GST 2.0 booster UPI records 20.70 billion transactions worth Rs 27.28 lakh crore

Mumbai: Amid the GST 2.0 reforms, the unified payments interface (UPI) witnessed 25 per cent transaction count growth (year-on-year) at 20.70 billion in the month of October — along with registering 16 per cent annual growth in transaction amount at Rs 27.28 lakh crore, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) data showed on Saturday. Month-wise too, UPI witnessed a growth in transaction amount, from Rs 24.90 lakh crore in September. Average daily transaction amount in October stood at Rs 87,993 crore, a significant rise from Rs 82,991 crore in September, the NPCI data showed. The month of October recorded 668 million average daily transaction counts, up from 654 million registered in September. In September, the UPI saw 31 per cent transaction count growth (year-on-year) at 19.63 billion — with 21 per cent month-on-month growth in transaction amount at Rs 24.90 lakh crore (in August).

Monthly transactions via instant money transfer (IMPS) went up 2 per cent in October at 6.42 lakh crore (on-year), and up 6 per cent (on-month) from Rs 5.97 lakh crore in September, the data showed. Daily transaction amount via IMPS stood at Rs 20,709 crore, up from Rs 19,895 crore in September. Average daily transaction amount in October stood at Rs 87,993 crore, a significant rise from Rs 82,991 crore in September, the NPCI data showed. The month of October recorded 668 million average daily transaction counts, up from 654 million registered in September. In September, the UPI saw 31 per cent transaction count growth (year-



on-year) at 19.63 billion — with 21 per cent month-on-month growth in transaction amount at Rs 24.90 lakh crore (in August). Monthly transactions via instant money transfer (IMPS) went up 2 per cent in October at 6.42 lakh crore (on-year), and up 6 per cent (on-month) from Rs 5.97 lakh crore in September, the data showed. Daily transaction amount via IMPS stood at Rs 20,709 crore, up from Rs 19,895 crore in September. Meanwhile, UPI continues to dominate the country’s digital payments landscape, with transactions surging 35 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to reach 106.36 billion in the first half of

2025, data showed this week. The total value of these transactions stood at a massive Rs 143.34 lakh crore — highlighting how deeply digital payments have become a part of everyday life in India, according to Worldline’s India Digital Payments Report (1H 2025). Person-to-merchant (P2M) transactions grew 37 per cent to 67.01 billion, driven by the “Kirana Effect,” where small and micro businesses have become the backbone of India’s digital economy. India’s QR-based payment network also saw tremendous growth, more than doubling to 678 million by June 2025.

Škoda Auto India sets new sales benchmark, fuels SUV demand momentum in 2025



Mumbai: Škoda Auto India has achieved its highest-ever annual sales within the first 10 months of 2025, marking a milestone year as the brand celebrates 25 years in the country. The company sold 61,607 vehicles between January and October 2025, surpassing its previous full-year record of 53,721 units in 2022. October also proved historic with 8,252 units sold — Škoda’s best-ever monthly performance.

The surge has been driven by the strong response to the Kylaq, the company’s first sub-4m SUV, which has already clocked nearly 40,000 units. Other contributors include sustained demand for the Kushaq and Slavia, ris-

ing interest in the luxury 4x4 Kodiaq, and the Octavia RS, which sold out within 20 minutes of launch. Škoda has now sold over 200,000 locally produced vehicles in India and expanded its network to 318 touchpoints across 180 cities.

Brand Director Ashish Gupta said the milestone reflects the company’s “strength of purpose, clarity of vision and agility of execution,” backed by new product launches, dealership expansion and customer-focused initiatives. The carmaker also plans to increase dealership workforce by 50% and invest in 25,000 training days to enhance service quality, as part of its long-term strategy for India.

Allu Sirish and Nayanika Reddy Get Engaged

Hyderabad: Actor Allu Sirish and his longtime girlfriend Nayanika Reddy are “finally and happily engaged.” The actor shared the joyous news on Instagram, posting a series of heartwarming photos from their engagement ceremony.

In the pictures, Sirish and Nayanika are seen exchanging rings with bright smiles as their loved ones cheer them on. For the occasion, Sirish looked elegant in a white ethnic ensemble, while Nayanika dazzled in a stunning red lehenga. Sharing the photos, Sirish captioned his post, “I’m finally & happily engaged to the love of my life, Nayanika!” adding a ring and white heart emoji that perfectly captured the moment’s warmth. The post quickly drew love and wishes from



friends and colleagues across the industry. Pragya Jaiswal wrote, “Many, many congratulations, Siri.” Shanvi Srivastava commented, “Siriiiiii this is Congratulations.” Parvati Nair added, “Congratulations and celebrations,” while Sophie Choudry said, “Sooooooo happy for you both! Congratulations and tons of love, my dearest Siri and Nayanika.”

The engagement, held on Friday, was an intimate family affair steeped in Telugu traditions. Among the attendees were Allu Arjun and his family, Megastar Chiranjeevi and his family, Ram Charan

and Upasana, as well as Varun Tej and Lavanya. Allu Sirish, the younger brother of Allu Arjun, had earlier announced the engagement on the birth anniversary of his grandfather, legendary actor Allu Ramalingaiah. Sharing a heartfelt note on Instagram, he wrote, “Today, on the birth anniversary of my grandfather Allu Ramalingaiah garu, I feel blessed to share something very close to my heart — I will be getting engaged to Nayanika on 31st October.” The engagement, which followed beautiful Telugu traditions and blended sophistication with familial warmth, marks a wonderful new chapter for the couple, who have been showered with blessings and well-wishes from the entire film fraternity and their fans.

Rashmika Mandanna’s Grooming Session: Prepping for Cocktail 2 Delhi Shoot

Mumbai: Rashmika Mandanna is currently flying high over the success of her recently released horror comedy, Thamma, co-starring Ayushmann Khurrana, Paresh Rawal and Nawazuddin Siddiqui. Helmed by Aditya Sarpotdar, the film has already crossed Rs 100 crore at the box office and continues to win the audience’s hearts. Now, after wrapping the promotional events, Rashmika is gearing up to resume the shooting for her upcoming romantic drama, Cocktail 2, but before that, some grooming is necessary, right?

On Friday night, the actress was snapped outside a salon in the city. A video, shared on Instagram, depicts Rashmika stepping out and striking a pose in front of the shutterbugs stationed at the location. She greeted the paparazzi with her adorable smile and also waved at them. Moving ahead, we see her walking



and sitting inside her car as she leaves the location. As for her look, the Pushpa actress kept it casual and wore a peach sweater paired with grey pants. She opted for a no-makeup look and styled her tresses in a half-tied, half-open look.

According to a report by Pinkvilla, after wrapping up the European schedule of Cocktail 2, the entire team will now be heading to Delhi for a month-long sched-

ule. Earlier, the team was spotted filming in Sicily, Italy, where they were seen having some fun moments on set. Apart from Rashmika, the film also features Shahid Kapoor and Kriti Sanon in the lead roles. Helmed by Homi Adajania, the spiritual successor to the 2012 film Cocktail, featuring Saif Ali Khan, Deepika Padukone and Diana Penty, is produced by Dinesh Vijan’s Maddock Films. While

the official release date has not yet been announced, it is expected to be released in the latter half of 2026.

Cocktail 2 is expected to follow a similar Love-triangle concept as the first part. Up next, Rashmika also has The Girlfriend, scheduled to be released on November 7, 2025, in Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Kannada, and Malayalam, as well as a solo-led action film, Mysaa in her kitty.

Salman Khan to Work with Anurag Kashyap, Ignoring Abhinav Kashyap’s Feud

Mumbai: Looks like Salman Khan is all set to sign a new film with Anurag Kashyap. If a viral Reddit post is to be believed, the actor-director is planning to collaborate on a project soon. While not many details about the project are known, the viral post claims that it will be a “dark grounded action cop thriller”.

“Salman Khan and Anurag Kashyap may work together (which was kind of shocking considering what Abhinav has been saying to media). Bobby Deol has suggested and is working as a mediator between the two. Bobby really respects Salman for helping in reviving his career and he also loved working with Anurag in Bandar which is said to be his best performance in the industry. The movie will be a dark grounded action cop thriller,” the post reads. Interestingly, this comes at a time when Anurag Kashyap’s brother, Abhinav Kashyap, has been making some serious comments against Salman Khan and his family. “Salman is never involved. He is not even interested in acting, and he hasn’t been since the last 25 years. He does a favour by turning up to work. He is more into the power of



being a celebrity, but he is not interested in acting. He is a gunda (goon),” he told SCREEN recently. Kashyap did not stop here. He went on to allege that Khan is “ill-mannered” and “vindictive.” “He (Salman Khan) is the father of the star system in Bollywood. He is from a film family which has been in the industry since 50 years. He continues the process. They are vindictive people. They control the whole process. If you don’t agree with them, they come after you,” he added. However, it should also be noted that

Abhinav Kashyap does not share a close relationship with his brother, Anurag. Abhinav has publicly said that they’ve been estranged for years and don’t get involved in each other’s professional or personal lives.

Even Salman Khan and Anurag Kashyap had no good relationship in the past. Kashyap had once claimed that he was supposed to direct Khan’s movie Tere Naam. However, he was removed from the project after he asked the actor to grow chest hair.

Deepika-Alia reunion, Aryan Khan’s Hollywood look wows on Halloween



Mumbai: On October 31, Bollywood celebs went all out to celebrate Halloween, and thanks to Orry, we witnessed a Deepika Padukone-Alia Bhatt reunion. As per the video shared by Orry, Alia Bhatt was dressed up as Lara Croft from the Tomb Raider movies, and Deepika Padukone went as her character, Lady Singham.

Deepika and Alia’s reunion moment has gone viral across the internet. Both actresses

were looking stunning as they posed together. Alia rocked an all-black ensemble with a statement belt, high boots and a long braid. Deepika looked fabulous in the police-woman avatar, complete with aviators. Just last month, the two superstars were spotted in Mumbai sharing a laughter-filled padel session, a rare and refreshing sight that fans are now calling the beginning of their “BFFs era.” Their frequent sightings have

Gaurav Gupta’s Bigg Boss journey ends



Hyderabad: The Bigg Boss Telugu 9 weekend shoot is underway at Annapurna Studios. If the latest reports are to be believed, Gaurav Gupta has been eliminated from the show. He received the fewest votes from the viewers.

It remains to be seen whether Gaurav Gupta will leave the house or will he get another chance to stay. Thanuja has diamond power; if she uses it, then the makers could skip the elimination. If not, Gaurav Gupta could leave the house.

Ayushmann confirms: ‘Thamma-Bhediya’ full crossover will be exciting

Mumbai: The Maddock Horror Comedy Universe (MHCU) has brought two powerful actors together, Ayushmann Khurrana as the vampire Thamma and Varun Dhawan as Bhediya. Their on screen clash in Thamma became one of the film’s biggest talking points. Following the success, Ayushmann has opened up about the idea of a possible Thamma vs Bhediya spinoff and shared his thoughts on the film’s future. He said taking this universe ahead isn’t simple, but the love his character has received gives him hope.

Calling it a new chapter with new characters, Ayushmann said the real fun begins when different heroes cross paths again. He praised Varun for their fight scene and hinted that a rematch is needed. Ayushmann called Stree 2’s character Sarkata the most dangerous villain yet and revealed his wish to reunite with his real life brother Aparshakti Khurana in upcoming films. Speaking about the crossover with Pinkvilla, Ayushmann Khurrana said, “It’s not that easy to take this universe forward. But having said that, the kind of love Thamma has received is quite commendable. Because this is a new chapter, a new character has been introduced and how this universe will move forward in the future, let’s see. The most exciting part will be when different characters cross each other’s paths. That will be very interesting. There definitely should be Bhediya vs Thamma again, that was a highlight of the film. “For me, Sarkata is a super villain, the most dangerous one,



who completely lifted Nawazuddin Siddiqui’s character. I really want to meet my brother Aparshakti in whatever film, in whatever capacity, in the future films of the Maddock Horror Comedy Universe,” the actor added. For Ayushmann Khurrana, Thamma was a new kind of experience for him because he had mostly worked in realistic films before. This movie was full of imagination and fantasy, which helped him get more comfortable with doing action scenes. He also noticed that children have started liking him even more after this film. His earlier movies made people think, but Thamma was made for a wider audience with a fun feel. The big fight scenes, especially between Bhediya and Thamma or the battle with Betaal, were a big hit among kids. Ayushmann felt happy that through this film, he was able to connect with the younger generation who loved the action and adventure in the story. Thamma, starring Ayushmann Khurrana, Rashmika Mandanna, Paresh Rawal and Nawazuddin Siddiqui, has earned around Rs 143 crore at the box office, according to Sacnilk.

Verdict: Mass Jathara is a Mediocre Cop Thriller with Outdated Comedy

Hyderabad: Director Bhanu Bogavarapu seems to have recycled bits and pieces from Ravi Teja’s earlier hits like Krack, with a similar plot point involving a cop’s death and the hero’s retaliatory rampage, including killing mysterious-looking killers, ala Krack.. The action sequences offer a few sparks, but the narrative feels stale and repetitive throughout.

The love track with Sreeleela and Ravi Teja’s family angle with Rajendra Prasad fails to evoke emotion. Even Rajendra Prasad, usually a master of comedy, ends up delivering flat humor and annoying antics. Sreeleela, though charming on screen, is wasted in a poorly written role as a drug peddler. Casting Naveen Chandra as the antagonist turns out to be a misstep — he simply doesn’t carry the menace or screen presence needed to stand



up to Ravi Teja. The much-hyped songs, including Ravi Teja’s dance numbers with Sreeleela, pale in comparison to the energetic tracks of Dhamaka.

The story begins with a police officer (Murali Sharma) covering up an honor killing by staging it as a suicide on railway tracks. This incident led to Ravi Teja’s posting at a railway station located in Warangal to punish the culprits. He is transferred to the Agency areas of Andhra

Pradesh, where he takes on a local drug mafia led by Naveen Chandra. What follows is a predictable cat-and-mouse chase with no emotional depth or narrative novelty. After memorable cop roles in Vikramarkudu, Krack, and Waltair Veerayya, Ravi Teja’s Mass Jathara feels like a rehash of his own past successes, only without their punch. The wafer-thin plot revolving around drug smuggling in hill regions never rises above mediocrity.

Veteran Actor Dharmendra Hospitalized: ICU Admission for Breathlessness, Family Clarifies Diagnosis

Mumbai: Hours after it the news of veteran actor Dharmendra’s hospitalisation left everyone worried, it has now been reported that he is doing fine and that there is nothing to worry about. On Friday night, journalist Vickey Lalwani took to his social media and claimed that Dharmendra was rushed to the Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai after he complained of breathlessness. “Dharmendra came in complaining of breathlessness. He is in the ICU and he is sleeping now,” a person from the hospital, cited by the journalist, said, adding, “He came in complaining of breathlessness. He is in the ICU.” The unnamed staff member from the hospital also clarified that Dharmendra is “stable” and said, “No, right now nothing to worry. He is stable. His parameters are okay—the heart



rate is 70, the blood pressure is 140 by 80. His urine output is also good.” Reports of Dharmendra’s hospitalisation made headlines on Friday evening after a source cited by India Today claimed, “Someone may have spotted him and created a news piece. He is absolutely fine and there’s nothing to be worried about. He is in great spirits and just went for his scheduled tests.” However, just a little later, another report claimed that the actor has been in the hospital

for the last five days.

Earlier this year, Dharmendra underwent an eye graft surgery. A video of him walking out of the hospital with a bandaged eye had gone viral. He then told the paps, “I am strong. Abhi bhi Dharmendra mein bahut dum hai. Abhi bhi jaan rakhta hoon. Meri aankh, eye graft (corneal transplantation) ho gayi hai. I am strong. Love you, my audience and my fans.” The actor is about to turn 90 years old on December 8. He

Abhishek, Ashnoor blamed for eviction twist



Mumbai: Bollywood superstar Salman Khan in his own style will reprimand “Bigg Boss 19” contestants Ashnoor Kaur and Abhishek Bajaj in the latest episode, holding them responsible for one of the housemates’ elimination. A new promo was shared by the channel on Instagram, which was captioned: “Abhishek aur Ashnoor ke rules todne par bhadke Salman!”

The video begins with Salman talking to Abhishek and Ashnoor over breaking house rules despite repeated warnings. Salman said: “Abhishek, Ashnoor. The rule break was a mess. Continuing even after three warnings and then saying we completed our conversation and now the entire country is curious to know what did you both talk about?” Abhishek tried to defend himself, saying: “We didn’t talk about anything.” Salman then responded sharply: “Aha! Your reaction was, I am like this. This is the biggest strength of my life. This is strength. So what would be your weakness? Because of you two. One will leave the house.” The entire house was nominated following a rule break by Abhishek and Ashnoor Kaur, who were caught whispering. Bigg Boss had asked the housemates to unanimously decide whether only Abhishek and Ashnoor should face nomination. When the votes ended in a tie, Bigg Boss handed over the final decision to Mridul. He decided that the two should not be the only ones nominated, which led to the entire house being put up for eviction as punishment. Locked up inside the show are names such as Tanya Mittal, Pranit More, Farhana Bhatt, Gaurav Khanna, Amaal Malik, Ashnoor Kaur, Mridul Tiwari, Kunickaa Sadanand, Abhishek Bajaj, Malti Chahar and Neelam Giri. Reports about a few more wildcard entries including Abhishek’s former wife is doing the rounds on social media. Based on the Dutch format of Big Brother, Bigg Boss first premiered on November 3, 2006. The show has completed eighteen seasons and three OTT seasons.

What I learned from walking Britain’s entire coast

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



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



pretty much half of the entire coastline. I didn’t realise the most dramatic parts of north-west Scotland would feel like the Norwegian fjords. People say Britain’s an overpopulated island, but when you get away from the towns and cities on the coast, you don’t need to walk far to feel space and isolation. You get that easily in Dorset, Essex, Cornwall. I think Britain is the most geographically diverse place in the world. If you look at a geological map of Britain, it’s like a big piece of different coloured Play-Doh that got squished apart. The geology affects the landscape, and the landscape affects the nature of the people. That makes it a very interesting place to walk through. How proud and distinctive every region is. My feeling of Britain is a patchwork of “clans”. I was moved by how much people I met would talk with love and fondness for their region, with different accents and different words for, say, a bread roll: Walking the south coast of England is like a mini history lesson. You walk past the first Roman landing sites in Kent, then past the Norman Dover Castle. You see Napoleonic-era Martello towers and the places where first attacked on English soil at Portland in 787. You go to Portsmouth and see HMS Victory, where Nelson died in the Battle of Trafalgar and the Tudor Mary Rose. You can’t help but feel the depth of history of our island. The remains of thousands of tank traps and defences of World War Two also encircle the island. For thousands of years, the coast has been about how we try to defend this island. There are the remnants of those defences and fears of invasion all around. Knoydart and the Rough Bounds because it’s so isolated and dramatic. People there were amazing, and there was a great sense of adventure. The other big discovery for me was Northumberland. I found that whole area really beautiful: Bamburgh Castle, Holy Island (Lindisfarne), the long beaches and amazing light. I’d

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



The Overseas Highway: The US’ ‘floating’ highway

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



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

Bezoz or Bill Gates might be able to do it today. Elon Musk with his SpaceX might be the best modern comparison.” The railroad operated until 1935, when the deadliest hurricane in a century swept away miles of tracks. Instead of being rebuilt, Flagler’s masterwork was reincarnated to accommodate Americans’ newfound love of automobiles. In 1938, the US government set out to construct one of the longest overwater roads in the world by relying on Flagler’s seemingly indestructible bridges, which could withstand 200mph winds. Crews paved over the rails to accommodate cars, and the newly opened Overseas Highway forever transformed the far-flung Florida Keys into the thriving tourist destination they are today. More than a century after the railroad’s completion, 20 of the original bridges still carry travellers from Miami to Key West. You can make the drive in under four hours, but detouring along the way is part of the fun. A series of fascinating, under-the-radar stops helps travellers better appreciate how this engineering marvel came to be, and its lasting impact on the Florida Keys. Sixty-nine miles south of Miami, Key Largo is the northernmost of the Florida Keys and great first stop. Gators, snakes and other water-bound critters may have terrified Flagler’s construction crews, but these days, travellers come to Key Largo (the self-proclaimed “dive capital of the world”) to marvel at its abundant marine life. The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary adjoining John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park attracts snorkelers and divers eager to immerse themselves in North America’s only living coral barrier reef. The seagrass beds here provide a critical habitat for fish, manatees

and sea turtles, but the main attraction is swimming into the outstretched arms of Christ of the Deep, a submerged 9ft-tall bronze statue of Jesus that has been watching over visitors since 1965. Once you’ve dried off, head to Islamorada, a community halfway between Miami and Key West that was once the site of an Over-Sea Railroad station. Here, at the Keys History & Discovery Center, a 35-minute documentary highlights the railroad’s construction and its many obstacles. The museum also presents artefacts from the train’s golden era, including dining car dishes, as well as an original menu showing that a sirloin steak cost \$1.60. In 1909, civil engineer William J Krome was charged with the daunting task of crossing a 6.8-mile expanse of open water. Construction crews worked round the clock, driving more than 700 supporting pilings into the middle of the ocean, sometimes nearly 30ft below sea level, to build the route’s longest bridge. They were assisted by divers who helped create underwater concrete pedestals to support the weight of the rail track. Remnants of the old construction camp can be accessed by taking a trolley across the old bridge from the city of Marathon to Pigeon Key. A 2.2-mile section (the only part that is accessible) reopened in January 2022 following a \$44m, five-year renovation. Closed to non-trolley traffic, the once-decaying bridge is now a safe playground for those who want to cycle or rollerblade 65ft above the crystal-clear water or observe marine life, like sea turtles and nurse sharks. Those driving the full length of the Overseas Highway today know the journey is complete when they see US Mile Marker 1 in Key West.

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

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



What happens when you drink too much raw turmeric tea

Turmeric tea has become a go-to drink for many health enthusiasts, known for its vibrant golden color and impressive health benefits. The star of this tea is curcumin, a powerful compound that's praised for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Drinking turmeric tea in moderation can aid digestion, enhance skin health, and strengthen the immune system. But like with anything, when consumed in excess, raw turmeric tea can have some unwanted side effects. Here's a look at what could happen if you overdo it. While turmeric is often recommended to soothe the stomach, drinking too much raw turmeric tea can actually lead to digestive issues. Some people may experience bloating, gas, or even stomach cramps. This happens because curcumin can boost bile production, which can irritate the digestive system when overproduced. In more extreme cases, it might even trigger diarrhea, leaving your gut feeling unsettled and uncomfortable. Increased Risk of Bleeding Turmeric is known for its natural blood-thinning effects, which can be beneficial for people looking to improve circulation or prevent blood clots. However, when consumed in large quantities, raw turmeric tea can increase the risk of bleeding. If you're on blood-thinning medications like aspirin or warfarin, or if you have a medical condition that affects blood clotting, excessive turmeric tea could make it harder for your blood to clot properly. This becomes particularly concerning before surgeries or if you're prone to injury. Your liver plays a key role in breaking down compounds like curcumin from turmeric. While small amounts of turmeric are generally harmless, drinking too much raw turmeric tea could overwhelm your liver over time. In extreme cases, high doses of curcumin might even cause liver strain, leading to issues like jaundice or elevated



liver enzymes. If you already have liver problems, it's especially important to avoid excessive turmeric intake and consult a doctor for personalized advice. Although rare, some people may experience an allergic reaction to raw turmeric, which could manifest as rashes, itching, or swelling. If you're allergic to spices like ginger or other plants in the Zingiberaceae family, you might be at a higher risk. Plus, drinking too much turmeric tea could increase photosensitivity, making your skin more vulnerable to sunburn or irritation from UV rays. If you notice any skin reactions or changes in sensitivity, it's best to cut back and monitor your body's response. Turmeric's active compound, curcumin, can interact with various medications, especially those for blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol. For example, drinking too much raw turmeric tea might cause your blood sugar to dip too low if you're taking diabetes medication. Similarly, if you're on blood pressure medication, turmeric could lower it too much, potentially causing dizziness or fainting. Always

check with your healthcare provider before increasing your turmeric tea intake, especially if you're on any long-term medications. Excessive consumption of raw turmeric tea can also affect your kidneys. Curcumin may increase oxalate levels in the body, which can contribute to the formation of kidney stones in some individuals. If you're prone to kidney stones or have a history of kidney issues, drinking too much turmeric tea might put additional stress on your kidneys. You may also notice changes in urination or discomfort, which could signal that your kidneys are being affected. Another lesser-known effect of drinking too much turmeric tea is dehydration. Turmeric has mild diuretic properties, meaning it encourages the body to excrete more water. While this can be beneficial in

moderation, drinking too much could result in a loss of important electrolytes like potassium and sodium. This can lead to symptoms such as dizziness, muscle cramps, and fatigue. It's important to stay hydrated and replenish electrolytes if you're regularly drinking large quantities of turmeric tea. Curcumin can also have an effect on hormone levels, particularly estrogen. While this might not be a concern for everyone, consuming large amounts of raw turmeric tea could potentially affect hormone-sensitive conditions. This is especially important for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or dealing with hormone-related issues like endometriosis or uterine fibroids. High doses of turmeric may interfere with menstrual cycles or fertility, so moderation is key. Turmeric tea can be a wonderful addition to your wellness routine, offering many health benefits when consumed in moderation. However, drinking too much raw turmeric tea can lead to digestive problems, liver strain, blood thinning, and other unwanted effects. If you're considering increasing your turmeric intake, it's important to listen to your body and be mindful of how much you're consuming. And as always, if you have any underlying health conditions or are taking medication, it's wise to consult with a healthcare provider before significantly upping your turmeric tea intake. When enjoyed in balance, this golden beverage can be a powerful tool for supporting your health.



why women should eat soaked black raisins every day

Black raisins are more than just a sweet snack – they are packed with a variety of nutrients that can do wonders for a woman's health. When soaked overnight, they become even more beneficial and easier to digest. Incorporating them into your daily routine can help address many common health concerns women face. Here are six reasons why you should consider adding soaked black raisins to your daily diet. Iron deficiency is something many women struggle with, especially during their menstrual cycle, pregnancy, or menopause. Black raisins are rich in iron, which is vital for the production of hemoglobin, the protein that carries oxygen in your blood. Soaking them helps your body absorb the iron more easily. By eating soaked raisins daily, you can help combat fatigue, weakness, and the other effects of low iron, ensuring you feel energized and healthy. If you've ever dealt with bloating or constipation, you know how important digestion is to feeling good. Black raisins are an excellent source of fiber, and soaking them makes them easier on your stomach. The fiber helps regulate bowel movements and promotes a healthy gut by feeding the good bacteria. By making soaked black raisins a regular part of your diet, you can keep things moving and support your digestive system naturally. Hormonal imbalances can be a huge challenge for women at various stages of life, whether it's due to menstrual cycles, pregnancy, or menopause. Black raisins are a great source of vitamins like B, C, and K, along with magnesium and calcium, all of which help keep your hormones in check. Soaked raisins support your adrenal glands, which produce hormones, and can alleviate symptoms like mood swings, hot flashes, and menstrual discomfort. Incorporating them into your daily routine can make a real difference in balancing those fluctuating hormones. Bone health is something women should pay extra attention to, especially as they age. As women enter menopause, the risk of conditions like osteoporosis increases due to a decrease in bone density. Black raisins are an excellent source of calcium, which is essential for strong bones. Soaking them helps the body absorb



the calcium more efficiently. Additionally, the boron found in raisins helps prevent bone loss and supports bone strength. Eating soaked black raisins daily can help fortify your bones and reduce the risk of bone-related issues as you get older. For women trying to conceive, black raisins can play a supportive role in enhancing fertility. They contain a rich blend of antioxidants, iron, and folate, all of which are crucial for reproductive health. Folate, in particular, is essential for a healthy pregnancy, as it aids in the proper development of the baby's neural tube. Soaking and eating black raisins regularly can help improve ovarian function and promote the production of healthy eggs, making it a natural way to support your fertility journey. Soaked black raisins might be small, but they are mighty when it comes to promoting a woman's overall health. Packed with essential nutrients, they help boost iron levels, improve digestion, give your skin a healthy glow, balance hormones, support bone health, and enhance fertility. Incorporating a small handful of soaked raisins into your daily routine is an easy and delicious way to take care of your body from the inside out.

Paratha or Poori

India as a land of flavours offers a wide range of breads, which are enjoyed in breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The most popular breads in Indian homes are roti, paratha, and poori. While roti just uses flour, the latter two use oil and other ingredients and that is what makes it a matter of debate, whether paratha is healthier or poori. Let us find out. Also known as flat-bread in English, it is a bread cooked in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. It is made of two words, Parat and Atta. The complete meaning of the two words is "layers of the dough which is being cooked". Mainly the Parathas are cooked using wheat flour (atta or maida). Parathas are more popular in Northern India. In different places, Parathas are called with different names. Like in Punjab, people call them Parontay or Prontha. In the Bengali and Malayalam languages, people call them Porota. Poori refers to a deep-fried Indian bread, which comes from the Sanskrit word, 'Purika' which means filled. Other than India, Poori is also popular in Bangladesh, Nepal, Burma, Pakistan, Singapore, and Malaysia. urri is cooked using wheat flour only. But there are different variations of Puri which are completely different in taste and are cooked using other things like Luchi, Bhatora, Panipuri, and Sev-puri. First similarity between the two is, they both are made with flour and use oil. Both Paratha and Puri have different varieties apart from the plain Paratha and plain Poori. There are different types of Parathas available like Aloo-Paratha, Gobhi-Paratha, Paneer-Paratha, Matar-Paratha, Methi-Paratha, Pyaaz-Paratha, etc. Similarly, we have a variety of Pooris like Palak Poori, Matar Poori, Methi Poori, Moong Dal Poori and so on. Paratha is a flatbread cooked using oil or ghee. However, Puri is a small round shaped Indian bread, which is deep-fried in oil. Paratha has a few layers inside it, while poori forms a shape of a bubble when deep-fried and has just two layers, top and bottom. While they use almost the same ingredients in different quantities, the process of making both breads is totally different. Paratha absorbs more oil as compared to Poori. Former is cooked on low flame (shallow-fried), while the latter absorbs less oil as these are cooked on high flame and Poori floats on the surface of the oil. It is said that oil of poori is usually heated at high temperature and crosses its smoking point, which may create carcinogens. And on the other hand, parathas are better, as they use less oil and are cooked on low flame. On the contrary, experts also feel that use of traditional cooking methods make poori consume less oil in comparison to paratha. And if we look at the nutritional values, paratha offers more calories than poori, and on the contrary, paratha has less carbs as compared to poori. So, while they both have their own pros and cons in terms of nutritional values, it is suggested to eat both in moderation with a lot of fiber on the side to balance out taste and nutrition.

Breadcrumbs sold in the USA recalled by FDA due to this undeclared allergen

Breadcrumbs sold by La Fiesta Food Products are being recalled by the company for presence of an undeclared allergen. The company has announced the voluntary recall of its 8-ounce packages of "Unseasoned Bread Crumbs" and "Seasoned Bread Crumbs" due to the presence of undeclared sesame, a potential allergen. The recall, announced on January 25 and later posted by the FDA, affects products sold nationwide between April 2024 and January 2025, though no illnesses have been reported. "The products contain sesame as an undeclared allergen. Additionally, the labels do not include the allergen declaration in Spanish," said the press release by the company. "People who have an allergy or severe sensitivity to sesame run the risk of serious or life-threatening allergic reaction if they consume these products," said La Fiesta Foods. Sesame has become the ninth major allergen that must be labeled in plain language on packaged foods in the U.S. from January 1, 2023 onwards. Upon investigation, it was found out that the error happened in the product labelling. "The recall was initiated after discovering that the product contained

undeclared sesame. Further investigation revealed that the issue was caused by errors on the product labeling," said La Fiesta Foods. The press release urged people to return the product and get a full refund. Sesame is the ninth most common food allergy among children and adults in the US. The edible seeds of the sesame plant are a common ingredient in cuisines around the world. However, reports suggest this allergy has become common worldwide over the past two decades. When a person with sesame allergy is exposed to it, proteins in the sesame bind to specific IgE antibodies made by the person's immune system. This triggers the person's immune defenses, leading to reaction symptoms that can be mild or very severe. Some of the symptoms of sesame food allergy are wheezing, trouble breathing, coughing, hoarseness, throat tightness, belly pain, vomiting, diarrhea, itchy, watery, or swollen eyes, hives, red spots, swelling, drop in blood pressure, causing lightheadedness or loss of consciousness. Milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans account for 90% of food allergies, said the FDA's website.



6 fiber-rich Millets to add to your kid's diet

Millets were one of the most ancient grains consumed in most Indian households, but over the years, people switched to refined grains. However, in the last few years the narrative has changed, and now people are again falling back to the basics and including healthy foods like millets in their day-to-day diet. Well, if you too want your kids to develop a habit of eating healthy, then millets can be the best way to give them a wholesome bowl of nutrition. This is because these tiny, nutrient-packed seeds are not only rich in fiber but also contain essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Including them in your child's diet can be a great way to support digestion, regulate blood sugar, and promote overall health. Here are some millets that you can add to your kids daily diet. Pearl millet, or Bajra, is a fiber powerhouse. Its insoluble fiber helps keep your child's digestive system running smoothly and combats constipation, a common issue for kids. Bajra is also loaded with iron, which is essential for growing kids. You can serve Bajra in the form of porridge, flatbreads (roti), or even as a base for refreshing salads. Its mild, nutty taste makes it a kid-friendly option that's easy to add to their meals. Finger Millet (Ragi) Ragi, or finger millet, is another fiber-rich millet that's great for kids. It's packed with soluble fiber, which helps slow down digestion and keeps your child feeling full longer. This is great for preventing overeating and helping your little one stay energized throughout the day. Ragi is also rich in calcium, vital for bone health. You can turn it into porridge, smoothies, pancakes, or even Ragi flour cakes, which kids usually love. Foxtail millet, also known as Kakum, is an excellent source of both soluble and insoluble fiber, making it a digestive-friendly option for children. It promotes regular bowel movements and helps prevent constipation. In addition, foxtail millet is packed with protein, an essential nutrient for your child's growth. It's super versatile and can be cooked as upma, porridge, or tossed into a vegetable pulao for



extra nutrition. Jowar, or sorghum, is another fiber-rich, gluten-free millet that is perfect for children with gluten sensitivities. The fiber in jowar promotes gut health, helping keep your child's digestion on track. This millet is also rich in B vitamins and minerals like magnesium and potassium, which are key for overall development. You can serve jowar in a variety of ways, from delicious rotis to cookies, or even stir it into soups and stews. Barnyard millet, or Sanwa, is a great fiber-rich choice

for your child's diet. It contains both soluble and insoluble fibers, which are fantastic for digestion and keeping constipation at bay. Barnyard millet is also low in calories and a good source of iron, helping to prevent anemia. You can use it to make upma, porridge, or get creative and turn it into nutritious energy bars or millet cakes that kids will love. Little millet, or Samai, is another high-fiber option that helps with digestion and maintaining a healthy weight.

SPORTS

16-year-old Ilamparthi AR India's 90th Grandmaster

Mumbai: Young chess prodigy Ilamparthi AR on Thursday etched his name in history by becoming India's 90th Grandmaster. The 16-year-old from Chennai achieved his final GM norm at the GM4 Bijeljina 2025 Chess Festival in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He joins a long list of chess stars from Tamil Nadu, including Viswanathan Anand, D Gukesh, and R Praggnanandhaa. Ilamparthi earned his first GM norm at the Ha Noi tournament in Vietnam in December 2023, and his second at the Singapore International Open in 2024. He crossed the 2500 Elo rating mark during the Rilton Cup (2024-25), and finally sealed his title in Bosnia at the Bijeljina Open 2025. All India Chess Federation (AICF) president Nitin Narang congratulated Ilamparthi on X and wished him "continued success in making the nation proud." Five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand, who has closely followed the youngster's progress through his academy, also lauded him for the feat. Ilamparthi was born on March 28, 2009, and as mentioned above, he hails from Chennai, Tamil Nadu. His full name is Ilamparthi



Avalpoondurai Ravikumar. He is a student of Velammal School, the same institution that has produced world-class chess players like Gukesh and Praggnanandhaa. He trains under Grandmaster Shyam Sundar M, who has helped several other players achieve the GM title, including Pranav V, Srihari LR, and Harikrishnan AR. Ilamparthi has

also received international support in his journey, as in 2022, Dutch GM Anish Giri donated his Death Match prize money for his training, calling him a "special talent worth investing in." Women's World Cup winner Divya Deshmukh and Rishi KS were the previous two Indian players to achieve the Grandmaster title before Ilamparthi.

Perry says even the Aussie dressing room would applaud

Mumbai: The Australian all-rounder hailed India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and Jemimah Rodrigues for batting India into the World Cup final, saying their composure under pressure earned applause even from their dressing room. Perry said the Australian dressing room would acknowledge the efforts of India captain Harmanpreet (89) and Jemimah (127 not out).

"It's really easy to stand here in retrospect and throw ideas into the wind," she replied when asked if Australia could have done anything differently. "But at the end of the day, all of us in our dressing room would applaud Harman and Jemi for the way that they played, the way that they went about that chase after probably losing two early wickets in the power play. "They just made us pay. All credit goes to them as opposed to anything that we did or didn't do," Perry added while talking to media after the intense game.

World Cup win would be historic moment for Women's cricket



"Mark my words, the way the 83 World Cup changed cricket for men's in India, in case they get to win the day after, this would be a historic moment for all times to come for women's cricket in India."

New Delhi: Indian Premier League (IPL) Chairman Arun Dhimal predicted that if India wins the Women's World Cup, it would be a historic moment for women's cricket in the nation, similar to the 1983 Men's World Cup win. He credited initiatives like the Women's Premier League (WPL) and pay parity for the sport's phenomenal growth, expressing pride in the team's achievements. India's women's cricket team pulled off a historic win over Australia by five wickets in a thrilling semi-

final match to storm into the ICC Women's World Cup 2025 final. They will clash with South Africa on Sunday for the Women's CWC title in Navi Mumbai. "Mark my words, the way the 83 World Cup changed cricket for men's in India, in case they get to win the day after, this would be a historic

moment for all times to come Arun Dhimal told ANI. "pay parity, amazing decisions taken at that point in time. There was a lot of speculation at that point in time. But these girls have made each one of us proud today of our decision that was taken at that point in time," he added.

Shreyas Iyer discharged from hospital, remain in Sydney for further evaluation



New Delhi: Indian batter Shreyas Iyer has been discharged from hospital in Sydney after undergoing treatment for a blunt injury to his abdomen sustained while fielding during India's third ODI against Australia on October 25. A statement from the BCCI confirmed that India's ODI vice-captain was stable and recovering well, having undergone a minor procedure and appropriate medical management for the injury. He will now remain in Sydney for follow-up consultations, and travel back to India when he is deemed fit to fly. Shreyas suffered the injury while completing a diving catch to dismiss Alex Carey during the final ODI between India and Australia on October 25. He appeared in immediate discomfort, and left the field to go to hospital for further evaluation. He was later admitted to the ICU after his vitals dropped due to internal bleeding. Doctors subsequently diagnosed a laceration to the spleen. However,

Shreyas was soon stabilised and moved out of the ICU on Monday. He took to Instagram on Thursday to confirm that he was recovering, saying, "I'm currently in recovery process and getting better, every passing day. I'm deeply grateful to see all the kind wishes and support I've received. It truly means a lot. Thank you for keeping me in your thoughts."

Novak Djokovic's ATP Finals status debated as former tennis stars share their verdict

New Delhi: Former tennis stars John Isner and Sam Querrey have delivered their verdicts on whether the 38-year-old Novak Djokovic will play in the ATP Finals 2025 or not. The ATP Finals will be played in Turin from 9 to 16 November, and while Djokovic was the third player to seal qualification for the prestigious event, the Serbian is yet to confirm his participation. Djokovic did not play any tourna-

ments between Wimbledon and the US Open 2025 and after the last Grand Slam, he has only played at the Shanghai Masters. Djokovic's possible absence or participation in the ATP Finals was discussed by Isner and Querrey on the Nothing Major podcast. The former world No 8 Isner feels the former world No 1 Djokovic is set to skip the tournament. Djokovic recently pulled out of the ongoing Paris Masters, and

the only tournament he is guaranteed to play in the remainder of 2025 is the Hellenic Championship in Athens, an ATP 250 event which replaces the tournament that earlier took place in Belgrade. The Hellenic Championship is extremely important for Djokovic as his family now lives in Athens, Greece, and his brother is the tournament director. However, considering the fewer number of tournaments he has been



playing lately, there's a good chance he could skip the ATP Finals.

IOC terminates collaboration with Olympic Esports Games committee

New Delhi: The initiative of the Olympic Esports Games has created a great deal of excitement amongst all stakeholders of the Olympic Movement and in the esports community, who are all looking forward to the first edition. In the last year, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee (SOPC) have discussed the concept of the Olympic Esports Games at length in line with the partnership they announced in 2024. Recently, the two parties and the Esports World Cup Foundation sat down again and reviewed this initiative. They mutually agreed that they will end their cooperation on the Olympic Esports Games. At the same time, both parties are committed to pursuing their own esports ambitions on separate paths. The IOC, for its part, will develop a new approach to the Olympic Esports Games, taking the feedback from the "Pause and Reflect" process into account, and pursue a new partnership model.



This approach will be a chance to better fit the Olympic Esports Games to the long-term ambitions of the Olympic Movement and to spread the opportunities presented by the Olympic Esports Games more widely, with the objective of having the inaugural Games

as soon as possible.

The overwhelming feedback received from the Olympic Movement stakeholders and the esports community shows that there is a great desire and considerable support for the initiative.

Sabalenka targets first title as stars collide in Riyadh WTA Finals 2025 Preview

New Delhi: Aryna Sabalenka will aim to reinforce her status as the world's top player by winning her first WTA Finals title in Riyadh as the season finale gets underway on Saturday with all four of the year's Grand Slam champions featuring in a strong field. The Belarusian exemplified consistency in 2025 and arrives for the November 1-8 tournament having retained her U.S. Open title in September, after finishing runner-up to Madison Keys at the Australian Open and Coco Gauff at Roland Garros. The only Grand Slam final she failed to reach was at Wimbledon, where Iga Swiatek defeated Amanda Anisimova. "It's easier when you qualify early in the season but I'm super excited," said Sabalenka, who punched her



Swiatek, Sabalenka and Gauff are prime contenders to lift the WTA Finals title in Riyadh

ticket to the WTA Finals in July. "Honestly I cannot wait to get back. I love that place, I love to play there, and I hope that this year I can do better than I did last year." Martina Navratilova said the 27-year-old's sustained high-level performances made her the favourite in the eight-player line-up. "Her consistency is not to be underestimated," 18-time Grand Slam singles champion Navratilova told

the WTA website. "There are so many players you can lose to these days, you have to be on your game at all times, and she was. She's the heavy favourite on any surface but particularly on medium-pace hard courts, where you get a solid bounce and good footing. It's fast enough for her to do damage and slow enough for her to prepare for her shots. She's deadly on this stuff."



ICC announces record prize for T20 World Cup

New Delhi: The International Cricket Council on Monday announced a record-prize purse of \$11.25 million for the 2024 T20 World Cup with the winners pocketing at least \$2.45 million. The runners-up will receive at least \$1.28 million, while the losing semi-finalists walk away with \$787,500 each. The previous edition in 2022 had a total prize pool of \$5.6 million with winners England receiving \$1.6 million. "The ninth edition of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup will see the winners of the 20-team tournament earn at least \$2.45 million, the highest prize money in the history of the tournament, along with the trophy that they will lift at Kensington Oval in Barbados on 29 June," said the ICC in a statement.

Australian and Indian players to wear black armbands during second T20I in Melbourne

Melbourne: Australian and Indian players will wear black armbands during the second T20I at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Friday as a tribute to Ben Austin, a 17-year-old cricketer who tragically passed away on Wednesday after being struck by a ball during training. Along with wearing the black armbands, a moment's silence will also be observed in memory of Austin ahead of the match. His image will be shown on the big screen at the MCG, and his favourite song will be played following the tribute. "At approximately 15 minutes before play, both teams will stand with match officials and representatives from Ben's Cricket Clubs, Cricket Victoria, and Cricket Australia on field," Cricket Australia said in a statement on Friday.

The Indian and Australian women's teams had also sported black armbands during their Women's ODI World Cup semifinal in Navi Mumbai on Thursday as a tribute to Austin. Austin was reportedly



facing an automatic bowling machine in the nets with a helmet on before a Twenty20 game in Melbourne on Tuesday when he was hit in the head and neck area.

He was rushed to hospital in critical condition and died Wednesday.

"We are absolutely devastated by the passing of Ben, and the impacts of his death will be felt by all in our cricket community," the Ferntree Gully Cricket Club said in a statement. Austin was an emerging bowler and batter, considered by his club as a "star

cricketer, great leader and an awesome young man". Australia and India players, match officials and staffers at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) are wearing black armbands in memory of 17-year-old cricketer Ben Austin, who died in Melbourne after being

hit by the ball on the neck during training. Players of both the teams also observed the moment of silence before the play started. Austin died after being hit in the neck while facing a ball-throwing device in a nets session at Wally Tew Reserve in Ferntree Gully Cricket Club, before playing a local T20 game. Austin was rushed to hospital in critical condition but passed away at Monash Children's Hospital. "The tribute will include: At approximately 15 minutes before play, both teams will stand with match officials and representatives from Ben's Cricket Clubs, Cricket Victoria, and Cricket Australia on field, where a moment's silence will be observed. Ben's image will be on the big screen. Ben's favourite song will be played following the tribute. Players from both teams, match officials and the MCG Arenas Team will wear black armbands," said CA in a statement on Friday. Previously, players where the incident with Austin occurred on Tuesday.

India's road the Women's World Cup Final 2025



From early defeats to a record semifinal chase, here's how India reached the Women's World Cup 2025 final to face South Africa.

New Delhi: Jemimah Rodrigues produced one of India's greatest World Cup innings, striking an unbeaten century to lead India to a record chase and a stunning five-wicket win over Australia in the Women's ODI World Cup semifinal in Navi Mumbai.

Tears streamed down her face as Amanjot Kaur struck the winning runs, a thriller. From early defeats to a record semifinal chase, here's how India reached the Women's World Cup 2025 final to face South Africa.