

Aizawl International Half Marathon on Feb 14

Aizawl, Jan 22: The second edition of the Aizawl International Half Marathon (AIHM) — the biggest international sports event ever organised in Mizoram — was officially unveiled at Mizoram House, Guwahati, offering key insights into what promises to be a landmark moment in the state’s sporting and tourism history. The marquee event is scheduled to take place on February 14 at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium, Aizawl.

The event was attended by several distinguished dignitaries and stakeholders, including Lalnghinglova Hmar, Minister of Sports, Tourism & Youth Services, Government of Mizoram, Captain Rahul Bali, Bollywood Filmmaker and Curator of the Aizawl International Half Marathon, R. Lalrodingi, Director, Tourism Department, Government of Mizoram and Brigadier G. S. Arora, Group Commander, National Cadet Corps (NCC), Mizoram, along with representatives from leading institutions supporting the event.

Addressing the media, the Minister highlighted the historic importance of the marathon for Mizoram.

“The Aizawl International Half Mar-

athon has grown into one of the biggest international sports event hosted by Mizoram. It reflects our commitment to sports excellence, tourism development and youth empowerment, while showcasing Mizoram’s potential on a global platform,” said Lalnghinglova Hmar, Minister of Sports, Tourism & Youth Services, Government of Mizoram.

The stature of the event is further underscored by its distinguished patrons, which include Governor of Mizoram, General (Dr.) V. K. Singh, Lalduhoma, Chief Minister of Mizoram, Lieutenant General Varinder Vats, Director General, National Cadet Corps, Anshul Gupta, Former General Manager, Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) and Anil Verma, Executive Director, Research Designs & Standards Organisation (RDSO).

The Aizawl International Half Marathon 2026 is expected to witness participation from across India and multiple countries, with over 5,000 runners anticipated this year — a significant rise from its inaugural edition. Accredited by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI), the event is duly supported by the National Cadet



Corps (NCC), Sports Authority of India (SAI), Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) and several other premier organisations and institutions of India.

Speaking about the vision and expanding scale of the event, Captain Rahul Bali, Curator of AIHM, said: “AIHM has now become a movement rather than just a marathon. With international participation, strong institutional backing and visionary leadership, we are placing Mizoram firmly on the global marathon map while inspiring a culture of fitness and unity.”

With the theme “CONNECTING

INDIA, DEVELOPING MIZORAM, EMPOWERING SPORTS”, the marathon aims to promote national integration, strengthen sports culture and act as a catalyst for tourism-led growth in the region. The choice of Valentine’s Day adds a special dimension to the event.

“This Valentine’s Day, Mizoram sends a unique message to the world — celebrate love by running together for health, happiness and harmony,” Captain Bali added.

R. Lalrodingi, Director of Tourism, Government of Mizoram, highlight-

ed the marathon’s role in promoting Mizoram as a premier sports tourism destination, especially with enhanced accessibility following the rail connectivity linking Mizoram to the rest of India, which is expected to significantly boost tourist inflow.

Brigadier G. S. Arora, Group Commander, NCC Mizoram, reaffirmed the NCC’s strong support for the event and emphasised the role of youth participation, discipline and community engagement in making AIHM a grand success.

Organisers also announced that the total prize money has been doubled from Rs 10 lakhs in 2025 to Rs 20 lakhs in 2026, making the event even more attractive to elite and amateur runners alike.

Registrations for the Aizawl International Half Marathon 2026 are now open, and interested participants can register online at www.aihm2026.com. With its scale, vision and international appeal, the Aizawl International Half Marathon 2026 is set to be a defining milestone for Mizoram — blending sporting excellence, tourism promotion and a powerful message of unity through sport.

Bike rally promotes road safety awareness

Imphal, Jan 22: With an aim to promote and disseminate road safety awareness as part of the series of events under 37th National Road Safety Month which is being observed from January 1 to 31, the District Administration Jiribam, District Police, and District Transport Office jointly organised a bike rally today. The rally was flagged off by Deputy Commissioner, Jiribam Krishna Kumar, IAS, and was participated by around 100 bikers, including personnel from CRPF, Jiribam Police, and students from Jiri College. The rally was started from Jiri Bridge near ILP Check Point and concluded at Irawat Square, Babupara, covering a distance of 4 kilometers via Lamkhai Bazar. Krishna Kumar highlighted the importance of the ongoing National Road Safety Month, which is being observed with the aim of raising awareness among the general public regarding road safety and the crucial measures that can be adopted to ensure safer travel for everyone. The Deputy Commissioner urged the public to adhere to the guidelines and rules associated with road safety, emphasizing that these precautions are essential actions meant to protect the lives of individuals on the roads. By following these instructions, citizens can significantly reduce the risk of accidents and contribute to creating a safer environment for all road users. Krishna Kumar reiterated the importance of community involvement in such awareness campaigns, stating that collective efforts can foster a culture of safety.

COCOMI condemns killing of Rishikanta, questions centre’s handling of armed militants

Imphal, Jan 22: The Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) on Thursday strongly condemned the killing of Mayanglambam Rishikanta Singh and alleged that the Central government has failed to effectively control armed militant groups operating in Manipur, which continues to witness prolonged violence and unrest. Addressing a press conference at the COCOMI office, senior member Y. K. Dhiren described the killing as a brutal and tragic incident that has further shaken public confidence in the prevailing security system. He said the incident occurred at a time when several civil society organisations and peace groups have been making continuous efforts to restore normalcy in the state. “Despite sincere initiatives by civil society and peace groups, such a tragic

and brutal incident has taken place. This is deeply unfortunate and reflects the worsening security situation,” Dhiren said while addressing the media. COCOMI alleged that the Central government’s continued inaction has pushed the situation in Manipur beyond acceptable limits. Dhiren pointed out that more than 60,000 security personnel, including central and paramilitary forces, have been deployed across the state since the outbreak of violence. However, he questioned the effectiveness of this deployment in protecting civilians. “Even after such a massive deployment, armed militants are allegedly moving freely and using sophisticated weapons. The government appears to be a mute spectator instead of taking firm and decisive action,” he said, adding that civilian lives continue

to be lost despite the heavy presence of security forces. The organisation also raised concerns over the safety of ordinary people and questioned whether the existing security arrangement is serving its intended purpose. “If these forces are unable to safeguard innocent civilians, then their presence has little meaning,” Dhiren remarked, controversially suggesting that forces should withdraw and return only after conditions of peace and normalcy are ensured. COCOMI reiterated its demand for immediate and concrete steps by the Government of India to restore law and order, fix accountability, and ensure that those responsible for the killing are brought to justice. The organisation stressed that failure to act decisively could further deepen public anger and mistrust.

Bishnupur DC inaugurates market shed for IDPs

Imphal, Jan 22: Deputy Commissioner of Bishnupur, Pooja Elangbam, today inaugurated a market shed at the Kwakta Sericulture Pre-Fabricated House Relief Camp, Kwakta, as part of ongoing efforts to empower Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) through sustainable livelihood initiatives. The market shed, comprising 18 stalls at present, has been set up under the initiative to enhance livelihood opportunities for IDPs. The programme was organised by the District Administration, Bishnupur, in coordination with the Churachandpur Meitei United Committee. Speaking at the inaugural function, DC Pooja Elangbam expressed happiness over the initiative, stating that it would help generate income for IDPs while providing them with a dedicated space to im-

prove their livelihoods. She called upon all stakeholders to extend their support and ensure the success of such meaningful initiatives. The Deputy Commissioner further appealed to the IDPs to make full use of the opportunities provided by the government under various developmental schemes. She particularly encouraged youths between the ages of 18 and 30 to come forward and enrol in hospitality training programmes to be conducted within the state, stating that these programmes would help enhance their skills and provide a platform to access better employment opportunities. The inaugural programme was also attended by ADM Bishnupur, Toijam Opendro, along with members of the Churachandpur Meitei United Committee.

Assam government to repay 6.21% state development loan on February 17

Guwahati, Jan 22: The Assam government has announced that it will repay the 6.21 per cent Assam State Development Loan (SDL) 2026 on February 17, 2026, along with interest calculated up to February 16, 2026. The announcement was made through an official press communique issued by the Finance (Budget) Department on January 20. According to the notification, the repayment will be made at face value to all eligible holders of the loan. The government has clearly stated that no further interest will be paid after the repayment date. The loan was originally raised in February 2021 as part of the state’s borrowing programme to meet development and expenditure needs. The government also clarified that if February 17 is declared a holiday under the Negotiable Instruments Act, the repayment will be carried out on the previous working day. This measure is intended to ensure that investors do not face delays due to unforeseen holidays. As per the official guidelines, the maturity amount will be paid either through direct credit to the holder’s registered bank account or through a pay order, depending on the banking details available with the authorities. Loan holders have been advised to check and update their bank account details with the concerned bank, treasury office, or State Bank of India branch where their interest payments are currently registered. In cases where bank account details are not available, investors have been asked to submit their securities to the Public Debt Office at least 20 days in advance to ensure timely repayment. The securities must be properly signed and endorsed for repayment.

Royal Bengal Tiger Recorded for First Time in Dibru-Saikhowa National Park

Dibrugarh, Jan 22: In a landmark moment for wildlife conservation in Assam, a Royal Bengal Tiger has been recorded for the first time in Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, raising fresh hopes for the revival of the big cat in one of the state’s most ecologically sensitive landscapes.

The historic sighting was made at Salibari in the Kundaghat area of the park, which falls under the Tinsukia Wildlife Division.

Confirming the development, Assam Forest Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said in a post on X that Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and Biosphere Reserve has created history with its first-ever recorded sighting of a Royal Bengal Tiger.

Forest officials said the presence of the tiger was confirmed through camera-trap evidence. Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Tinsukia Wildlife Division, Bibison Tokbi, said the first photographic



evidence was captured on December 14, 2025, followed by another confirmation on January 1, 2026.

“For the past month, a joint team of the forest department and the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) has been conducting camera trapping inside the park. Around 60 camera traps were installed, and the tiger was recorded on two occasions,” Tokbi said.

He added that this marks the first confirmed photographic record of a Royal Bengal Tiger in Dibru-Saikhowa since it was notified as a National Park.

“There were claims in the past about the presence of tigers in Dibru-Saikhowa, but no scientific or photographic evidence was available. This is the first time the species has been officially documented here,” the DFO said, acknowl-

edging the logistical support provided by WTI.

The sighting has generated excitement among wildlife enthusiasts and local residents. Nature enthusiast Devojit Moran described the development as encouraging. “This is wonderful news for nature lovers. We are happy to know that the Royal Bengal Tiger has returned to Dibru-Saikhowa,” he said. Local resident and conservation enthusiast Niranta Gohain recalled the park’s history. “Earlier records suggest that Dibru-Saikhowa had around 27 tigers in 1997, but over time they disappeared. This sighting gives hope that the habitat can once again support the species,” he said. Conservationists say the development highlights the ecological importance of Dibru-Saikhowa and underscores the need for sustained protection, scientific monitoring and habitat restoration in one of Assam’s most fragile riverine ecosystems.

Financial aid extended to deceased VDF jawan’s family



Imphal, Jan 22: Personnel of the Village Defence Force (VDF), Heirol, have extended financial assistance to the bereaved family of late Laishram Budha of Heirol Part-I, Mayai Leikai, who passed away on December 28 last year after a prolonged illness. Late Laishram Budha, son of Laishram Tampha, was serving as a VDF personnel. The VDF personnel of Heirol, formerly known as SPO, collectively raised an amount of ₹1,38,500 and handed it over to his wife Laishram ongbi Suni on Wednesday.

Arunachal festival opens rare visa-free crossing Into Myanmar through Pangsau Pass

Itanagar, Jan 22: A rare and unusual moment of cross-border movement was witnessed in eastern Arunachal Pradesh during the recent Pangsau Pass International Festival, where Indian visitors were allowed to walk a short distance into neighbouring Myanmar without passports or visas. The temporary arrangement drew wide attention and highlighted the long-standing cultural links between communities living along the India-Myanmar border. The three-day festival was held at Nampong in Changlang district and attracted thousands of visitors from different parts of Arunachal Pradesh and neighbouring states. The main attraction of the event was Pangsau Pass, a high-altitude mountain corridor located along



the international boundary. During the festival, special local permissions allowed visitors to cross the border briefly, under supervision, without formal travel documents. Officials said the arrangement was symbolic in nature and was meant to showcase people-to-people ties that have existed in the region for generations. Communities on both sides of the border share common traditions, food habits

and cultural practices, much older than modern political boundaries. Addressing the gathering, PD Sona, the Tourism Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, said tourism does not grow only through buildings and roads. He said the behaviour and warmth of local people play the biggest role in attracting visitors. “Tourism grows with people, not just infrastructure. If hospitality fails, everything collapses,” he said, comparing tourism to a balloon that bursts with a single pin. Sona also pointed out that personal experience and word-of-mouth publicity are more powerful than advertisements. He added that the region has strong potential to become a major tourism destination. According to him, the government has already

approved an eastern circuit guest house to support future visitors. The festival was also attended by local MLA Laisam Simai, who is the chief patron of the event. Several speakers credited him for keeping the festival alive and expanding its scale over the years, despite logistical challenges in the remote border area. Pangsau Pass lies in the Patkai hill range and carries deep historical importance. During the Second World War, it formed a key part of the Stilwell or Ledo Road, which was used by Allied forces to supply China. Because of its steep slopes, dense forests and harsh weather, the pass earned the nickname “Hell Gate.” The nearby Lake of No Return also adds to the region’s wartime history and mystery.

Protesters block Indo-Myanmar Sugnu road over alleged killing of Meitei civilian in Manipur

Imphal, Jan 22: Tension gripped parts of Manipur on Thursday after local residents blocked the Indo-Myanmar Sugnu Road in protest against the alleged abduction and killing of a Meitei civilian in Churachandpur district. The road blockade was imposed by residents of Kakching Khunou soon after news spread about the death of Mayanglambam Rishikanta Singh, a 31-year-old man from Kakching district. Protesters alleged that Singh was abducted and later killed by suspected Kuki militants. They described the incident as a brutal and cold-blooded act and demanded justice for the victim. According to local residents, the blockade was meant to draw the attention of the authorities to the growing insecurity faced by civilians amid the continuing ethnic unrest in the state. Protesters said normal movement of vehicles was stopped as a mark of protest. They also announced plans to hold a public meeting in the area to decide on further steps following the incident. As per a complaint filed by the family,

Rishikanta Singh, a resident of Kakching Khunou Uchan Makhong Leikai, was allegedly abducted on the evening of January 21 and killed later the same night in Churachandpur district. He was the son of M. Tombi Singh and was married to Chingnu Haokip, a resident of Tuibong village in Churachandpur. Family members said the couple had been living together in Churachandpur since December 19, 2025, after Rishikanta returned from Nepal, where he had been working. The family said they first learned about the incident after coming across a disturbing video on social media that allegedly showed his killing. Soon after, his wife reportedly contacted the family and informed them about the abduction and murder. A family member told reporters that Rishikanta had married across communities and had remained in regular contact with his family before the ethnic violence began. “After the situation worsened, communication became irregular,” the family member said.

Assam Youth Conclave 2026 to focus on economy, media, women’s safety

Guwahati, Jan 22: The Assam Youth Conclave 2026, organised by the Hiteswar Saikia Foundation, will be held on January 24 and 25 with the objective of placing youth voices at the centre of policy discourse and development planning in the state.

The two-day conclave will bring together students, young professionals, academicians, journalists, activists, and policymakers from across Assam to deliberate on contemporary issues critical to the state’s future. Inspired by the legacy of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the initiative aims to go beyond symbolic consultation by creating a structured platform for direct interaction between young participants and experienced stakeholders. The conclave is being organised under the chief patronage of Dr. Hemoprabha Saikia. Its patrons include Debabrata Saikia, Bandana Saikia, Ashok Saikia, Purabi Saikia, Gautam Saikia, and Mamata Saikia. The chief advisors are Abdul Khaleque, Paban Singh Ghatowar, and Pradyut Bhuyan, while Raman Jha and Sailen Sonowal will serve as advisors. According to the organisers, the programme will feature six thematic sessions focusing on economic security and entrepreneurship, challenges confronting Assam’s media, women’s safety in physical and digital spaces, the role of religion in state politics, Clause 6 of the Assam Accord, and the sustainability of Assam’s ecosystems in the face of climate change. Each ses-



sion will be moderated by senior professionals and will include panellists drawn from law, academia, journalism, social activism, and environmental studies. The organisers said the conclave seeks to encourage informed dialogue, ethical leadership, and meaningful civic engagement at a time when Assam is navigating significant economic, social, and environmental transitions.

Railway signs MoU with SBI cash pick-up at 400 station

Guwahati, Jan 22: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the State Bank of India (SBI) to provide cash pick-up facilities at 400 stations across the NFR network. The MoU was signed at the NFR Headquarters in Maligaon, Guwahati in the presence of Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager, Northeast Frontier Railway, along with senior officials of SBI and NFR. Under this arrangement, SBI will collect cash from designated stations and ensure its timely deposit into the respective SBI branches. The system will allow real-time tracking of cash movement through GPS-enabled vehicles and aims to reduce risks associated with theft, loss, or misappropriation. The facility is expected to reduce expenditure on vehicle hiring and security personnel, while also decreasing the need for staff to transport cash manually. This is intended to allow station staff to focus on operational and commercial activities.



Meghalaya CM Conrad Sangma Celebrates 54th Statehood Day



Aizawl, Jan 22: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma on Wednesday marked the 54th Meghalaya Statehood Day at Baghmara, the first-ever celebration in the homeland of the state’s founding father, Captain Williamson A. Sangma. He urged residents to rise above negativity and hatred and to remember the sacrifices of forefathers that made Meghalaya a reality. Sangma also expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his greetings on Meghalaya Day and called for the state to move forward with unity, confidence, and determination. Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma on Wednesday marked the 54th Meghalaya Statehood Day at Baghmara, the first-ever celebration in the homeland of the state’s founding father, Captain Williamson A. Sangma.

unity, sacrifices, and blessings that led to the creation of Meghalaya and emphasized that while the state has made significant progress, development must be reflected in the daily lives of its people. He urged residents to rise above negativity and hatred and to remember the sacrifices of forefathers that made Meghalaya a reality. Sangma also expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his greetings on Meghalaya Day and called for the state to move forward with unity, confidence, and determination. Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma on Wednesday marked the 54th Meghalaya Statehood Day at Baghmara, the first-ever celebration in the homeland of the state’s founding father, Captain Williamson A. Sangma.

Mizoram is getting ready for the Aizawl International Half Marathon’s edition

Aizawl, Jan 22: The second edition of the Aizawl International Half Marathon (AIHM) the biggest international sports event ever organised in Mizoram was officially unveiled today at a press conference held at Mizoram House, Guwahati, offering key insights into what promises to be a landmark moment in the state’s sporting and tourism history. The marquee event is scheduled to take place on 14 February 2026 (Valentine’s Day) at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium, Aizawl. The Aizawl International Half Marathon 2026 is expected to witness participation from across India and multiple countries, with over 5,000 runners anticipated this year a significant rise from its inaugural edition. Accredited by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI), “AIHM has now become a movement rather than just a marathon. With international participation, strong institutional backing and visionary leadership, we are placing Mizoram firmly on the global marathon map while inspiring a culture of fitness and unity.” the event is duly supported by the National Cadet Corps (NCC), Sports Authority of India (SAI), Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) and several other premier organisations and institutions of India. Speaking about the vision and expanding scale of the event, Captain Rahul Bali, Curator of AIHM, said: The press conference was attended by several distinguished dignitaries and stakeholders, including Lalnghinglova Hmar, Minister of Sports, Tourism & Youth Services, Government of Mizoram, Captain Rahul Bali, Bollywood Filmmaker and Curator of the Aizawl International Half Marathon, R. Lalrodingi, Director, Tourism Department, Government of Mizoram and Brigadier G. S. Arora, Group Commander, National Cadet Corps (NCC), Mizoram, along with representatives from leading institutions supporting the event. Addressing the media, the Minister highlighted the historic importance of the marathon for Mizoram. “The Aizawl Inter-



national Half Marathon has grown into one of the biggest international sports event hosted by Mizoram. It reflects our commitment to sports excellence, tourism development and youth empowerment, while showcasing Mizoram’s potential on a global platform,” said Lalnghinglova Hmar, Minister of Sports, Tourism & Youth Services, Government of Mizoram. The stature of the event is further underscored by its distinguished patrons, which include His Excellency the Governor of Mizoram, General (Dr.) V. K. Singh, Lalduhoma, Chief Minister of Mizoram, Lieutenant General Varinder Vats, Director General, National Cadet Corps, Anshul Gupta, Former General Manager, Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) and Anil Verma, Executive Di-

rector, Research Designs & Standards Organisation (RDSO). With the theme “CONNECTING INDIA, DEVELOPING MIZORAM, EMPOWERING SPORTS”, the marathon aims to promote national integration, strengthen sports culture and act as a catalyst for tourism-led growth in the region. The choice of Valentine’s Day adds a special dimension to the event. R. Lalrodingi, Director of Tourism, Government of Mizoram, highlighted the marathon’s role in promoting Mizoram as a premier sports tourism destination, especially with enhanced accessibility following the rail connectivity linking Mizoram to the rest of India, which is expected to significantly boost tourist inflow.

Senapati District Administration Organises Cleanliness Drive Ahead Of Republic Day

Aizawl, Jan 22: In preparation for the upcoming Republic Day celebrations, the District Administration of Senapati on Wednesday organised a massive cleanliness drive across the Mini Secretariat Complex and several key public locations in the district headquarters. The initiative aimed at improving hygiene and enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the town. Major areas covered during the drive included the Astro Turf ground, banking offices, the multi-level

parking facility, and various public thoroughfares. Heads of departments along with their staff actively participated in the drive, taking responsibility for cleaning their respective offices and the surrounding areas. The designated zones included office buildings, approach roads, entrance gates, waiting sheds, gardens, and other public spaces. As part of the exercise, participants carried out sweeping, removal of overgrown bushes and weeds,

collection of plastic waste and litter, and proper disposal of the accumulated garbage through municipal collection trucks. The district administration stated that the cleanliness drive reflects its commitment to ensuring a clean, dignified, and welcoming environment for the national celebration, while also promoting a sense of civic responsibility among government employees and the general public..

Assam woman’s death linked to Russian man accused of Killing Two Women in Goa

Guwahati, Jan 22: The death of Assam woman 40-year-old Mridusmita Sainkia has now been linked to Russian national Aleksei Leonov, who is also accused of killing two of his women friends in Goa, allegedly over borrowed money and a borrowed “rubber crown”, ND TV reported. Police are probing Leonov’s role in the death of Mridusmita Sainkia, a resident of Amguri in Assam’s Sivasagar district, who was found dead at her Goa residence on January 12. The two had known each other for a long time and had travelled to Goa together several times in the past. Sources said Leonov and Mridusmita were together on January 11, a day before her body was found. A preliminary investigation suggests she may have died due to a drug overdose, though police are examining all possible links. Leonov has already been arrested for the murder of



two Russian women — Elena Vaneeva and Elena Kasthanova — who were his friends. According to police sources, the killings were triggered by disputes over borrowed money and a “fire crown”, a rubber crown used by fire dancers to hold fire on their heads. Elena Kasthanova, a fire dancer, had borrowed money and the fire crown

from Leonov, who worked as a firework artist. Elena Vaneeva, a bubble artist, had also borrowed money from him. When the money and the crown were not returned, Leonov allegedly slit their throats in their rooms on two separate days — January 14 and January 15. Sources said the murders were not pre-planned but were “triggered”,

adding that the accused was overly obsessed and easily provoked. Police are also investigating whether Leonov was under the influence of drugs at the time of the crimes. Elena Vaneeva had arrived in Goa on January 10, while Kasthanova had been living in the state since December 25 last year and was staying with Leonov. The trio frequently travelled across India and often visited Goa, police said. Investigators revealed that Leonov was on a long-term India visa and had lived in several Indian cities, doing odd jobs. He had returned to Goa in December but had not worked for nearly a month. During interrogation, Leonov claimed he had killed five more people over past disputes. However, police verification found that all those individuals are alive. Sources described involved the earlier cases have a direct connection to the death of the Assam woman.

Mizoram To celebrate Chapchar Kut festival



Aizawl, Jan 22: Mizoram’s traditional Chapchar Kut festival, one of the state’s largest cultural celebrations, will begin on March 9 with a week-long programme, officials said on Tuesday after a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Lalduhoma. The celebrations will open on March 9 with the customary ‘Kut Run’, during which the Central Young Mizo Association will provide T-shirts to participants, continuing a long-standing tradition. On March 10, exhibitions showcasing handlooms, textiles and handicrafts will be held, along with a food court and flower show. These events will take place at Aijal Club, with the main venue to be finalised soon. Painting and photo exhibitions, along with a film screening, are scheduled for March 11 at Vanapa Hall. The Information and Public Relations Department will also organise the Lianchhiri Run in Aizawl on the same day. On March 11 and 12, a living museum highlighting Mizo cultural heritage will be set up at Zokhua in Falkawn village, around 15 km from Aizawl. The main programme will be held on March 13 at 10:30 am at Lammual ground. Chief Min-

ister Lalduhoma will serve as ‘Kut Pa’ (festival father), while Art and Culture Minister C Lalsawivunga will be the ‘Kut thlengtu’ (host). The organisers have announced that the festival will be observed as a garbage-free event, appealing to participants to maintain cleanliness. The theme for this year’s Chapchar Kut is “Zo nun ze mawi – Inremna” (Mizo code of ethics – Peace). The Chief Minister’s Trophy, carrying a cash award of Rs 1 lakh along with a citation and memento, will also be presented. Similar celebrations will be organised across other parts of Mizoram. Chapchar Kut is traditionally linked to jhum cultivation and marks the completion of forest clearing and burning before sowing. The festival is believed to have originated about 500 years ago in Suaipui village near present-day Myanmar. Though it was discouraged in the late 19th century by Christian missionaries, it was revived in 1973 without animistic rituals or alcohol. Over the years, Chapchar Kut has become a major attraction for tourists from India and abroad.

Gaurav Gogoi targets Assam government over Karbi Anglong land and conflict issues

Guwahati, Jan 22: Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Gaurav Gogoi on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on the BJP-led Assam government, accusing it of deliberately creating unrest and failing to address long-pending land problems in Karbi Anglong district. Speaking to the media, Gogoi alleged that peace would not return to Karbi Anglong as long as Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma remains in power. He further claimed that the land crisis in the hill district would continue under the present leadership, including the current Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council leadership. The APCC president said



that people in Karbi Anglong were struggling due to unresolved land disputes and rising tensions between communities. According to him, the state government has failed to take genuine steps to bring lasting peace. He argued that a change in government was necessary so that people could live with dignity, peace, and self-respect.

Gogoi accused the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party government of encouraging divisions among different ethnic and social groups for political benefit. He also alleged that the government was planning to hand over land to large corporate interests, claiming that land could be transferred to capitalists “at the press of a single button.”

Centre committed to holistic development of Northeast, says Union Minister B L Verma in Nagaland

Kohima, Jan 22: Union Minister of State B L Verma on Wednesday reaffirmed the Central government’s strong commitment to the overall development of the Northeast, stating that the region has witnessed clear and visible progress over the past decade. He said improvements in infrastructure, welfare delivery and healthcare since 2014 reflect the Centre’s focused approach to bringing the Northeast into India’s mainstream development process. The minister, who handles the portfolios of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Social Justice and Empowerment, is currently on a two-day visit to Nagaland. During his visit, he carried out on-ground inspections of several centrally sponsored schemes in Chumoukedima district to assess their implementation and impact at the grassroots level. As part of the visit, Verma inspected fair price shops operating under the public distribution system to review the availability and distribution of essential food grains. He also visited Anganwadi centres, which play a key role in child nutrition, maternal health and ear-

ly childhood care. Officials briefed him on the functioning of these centres and the services being provided to local communities. The minister also visited the Centre for Disease Control and Cancer Treatment at the Christian Institute of Health Sciences and Research (CIHSR), a major healthcare institution serving people not only from Nagaland but also from neighbouring states. He reviewed healthcare facilities and interacted with officials to understand the challenges faced in delivering advanced medical services in the region. After a detailed review meeting on the progress of central schemes and projects, Verma told reporters that the transformation seen in Nagaland since 2014 is “self-evident.” He highlighted better road connectivity, improved healthcare infrastructure and more effective welfare service delivery as key indicators of change. According to him, these developments have made essential services more accessible to citizens, especially in previously underserved areas. The Union Minister said the Centre remains firmly committed to ensuring inclusive and



sustainable development in the Northeast. He stressed that special attention is being given to remote and border areas so that development benefits reach all sections of society. Strengthening institutional capacity and speeding up project execution, he added, would continue to be priorities.

Nagaland to launch ‘Nagaland–Japan Connect 2026’ to boost investment and youth opportunities

Kohima, Jan 22: The Government of Nagaland, through the Investment and Development Authority of Nagaland (IDAN), will organise Nagaland–Japan Connect 2026, a major initiative aimed at strengthening investment ties and long-term cooperation between Nagaland and Japan. The programme is being organised in collaboration with the Centre of Excellence for Foreign Languages (CoEFL) and other key institutional partners. Officials said the initiative seeks to promote investment and economic engagement by building strong people-to-people connections, identifying shared opportunities, and creating a

structured platform for long-term collaboration between the two regions. Nagaland–Japan Connect 2026 is a direct outcome of a high-level delegation visit to Japan led by Neiphiu Rio, during which extensive discussions were held with senior officials of the Japanese government, the then Ambassador of India to Japan, and representatives of leading Japanese companies. These engagements laid the foundation for deeper cooperation in areas of human resource development, skills exchange and future business partnerships. The initiative will also mark the official launch of a Government-to-Govern-

ment partnership formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding signed with Kochi Prefecture in July 2025. The MoU focuses on promoting human resource exchange, collaboration in agricultural technology, and the development of future strategic partnerships between Nagaland and Japan. According to officials, the programme reflects the state government’s growing emphasis on human capital development as a key driver of employment, economic participation and global engagement. The initiative brings together skill development, foreign language training, recruitment support and cultural exchange

within a single institutional framework. A central pillar of the programme is the Centre of Excellence for Foreign Languages (CoEFL), hosted at Nagaland University. The centre was set up to equip Naga youth with internationally recognised foreign language skills, cultural awareness and pathways to overseas employment, while also strengthening bilateral ties and future business collaboration with partner countries. Japanese is the first foreign language introduced at CoEFL, in partnership with ARMS Incorporation. Officials said the initiative has already helped

generate steady income and remittance inflows to the state, contributing to household welfare and supporting local economic development. Nagaland–Japan Connect 2026 will include awareness sessions on career opportunities in Japan, on-the-spot job interviews in sectors such as caregiving, agriculture, tourism and hospitality, and manufacturing, conducted by visiting Japanese companies. The programme will also feature testimonials from past participants, cultural performances, business-to-government interactions, and the exchange of additional memorandums of understanding.

Free medical camp conducted across districts

Imphal, Jan 22: Under the aegis of the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), the Manipur State AIDS Control Society (MSACS), in collaboration with the Centre of Rural Upliftment Service (CRUS), Thoubal Wangma Taba, organised a free medical camp at the campus of Arambai Tenggol Unit-4, Khangabok. The camp was organised with the objective of promoting public health awareness and providing basic medical services to the general public.

The initiative was supported by Arambai Tenggol under its leader Koroungamba Khuman with active cooperation from all Arambai Tenggol units functioning in Thoubal district, which played a key role in the successful conduct of the camp. Speaking at the camp, Dr Ningombam Shantakumar stated that due to their busy daily schedules, many people are unable to visit hospitals regularly, resulting in several undiagnosed illnesses. He emphasised that fear and lack of awareness often prevent people from undergoing medical tests at hospitals.

3 suspects held in Guwahati robbery case

Guwahati, Jan 22: Police have apprehended three persons for their alleged involvement in the sensational robbery that took place in sensational robbery at Guwahati’s Ganeshpara area late Monday night. Police sources said the suspects were picked up from Barpeta district. More arrests are likely to be made in the case as further investigation is continuing. The robbery took place at Sneharoi Apartment in Ganeshpara, at the residence of businessman Anil Deka. According to police, the crime was carried out by four armed miscreants who arrived at the spot in a white Swift car. As per CCTV footage, the robbers entered the apartment with their faces covered and executed the crime in a planned manner over nearly 40 minutes. At the time of the incident, Anil Deka and his daughter were not at home. However, his wife, Karabi Deka and the family’s driver were present and were threatened at gunpoint.

Manipur Police recover 600 grams of heroin in statewide crackdown, seven held

Imphal, Jan 22: Manipur Police have seized around 600 grams of heroin and brown sugar and arrested seven people during a series of coordinated anti-drug operations carried out across different parts of the state. The actions were taken between January 19 and January 21, police officials said. According to police sources, the operations were

conducted in Chandel, Kakching, Senapati and Churachandpur districts as part of an intensified drive against drug trafficking networks operating in the region. Officials said the investigation is still underway and more arrests may follow. The biggest seizure was made on Tuesday in Kakching district. Police intercepted two residents

of Chandel district at Pallel Makha Leikai Pathabi along the Pallel IVR Road. The accused were identified as Veronica Moyon (28) of Thangkin village and Chihanring Shinglai (32) of Thotchannam village. During the search, police recovered 25 soap cases containing about 299 grams of heroin number 4 powder. A two-wheeler and two mobile

phones were also seized from their possession. In another operation on the same day, security personnel arrested Avio S of Katafimai village at the Tadubi police station checkpoint along National Highway 2 in Senapati district. Police recovered 20 soap cases of brown sugar from his white Bole-ro vehicle. A mobile phone and identification docu-

ments were also seized. Meanwhile, security forces, along with the forest department, the Narcotics and Affairs of Border, and an executive magistrate, destroyed around 15 acres of illegal poppy cultivation at the G. Monglian hill range in Churachandpur district. Two huts found at the site were also burnt. Sangaikot Police have registered a case for further legal action.

NGT takes suo motu action over alleged illegal road work in Arunachal’s Papum Pare

Itanagar, Jan 22: The eastern zonal bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in Kolkata has taken suo motu cognisance of an alleged illegal road construction in environmentally sensitive areas of Papum Pare district in Arunachal Pradesh. The action was initiated after a report on the issue was published in a local newspaper last year. The matter was heard by a bench comprising Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi, judicial member, and Dr Afroz Ahmad, expert member. The tribunal examined a news report dated April 22, which claimed that road construction activities were being carried out in fragile catchment areas between Ganga–Taipu and Ganga–Tago without following

proper environmental safeguards. After going through the report, the tribunal observed that the allegations were serious in nature and required detailed examination. It noted that road construction in catchment areas, if done without statutory clearances and safeguards, could lead to long-term environmental damage. To ensure effective adjudication, the tribunal ordered that the state of Arunachal Pradesh, represented through the principal secretary of the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department, be made a party to the case. The Public Works Department, represented by its secretary and commissioner, was also impleaded as a respondent.

The tribunal has directed all respondents to file their replies within one month, clearly explaining their position on the alleged road construction and the environmental safeguards, if any, that were followed. During the hearing, an interlocutory application was filed by SD Loda and Tech Tat, who sought to be impleaded as co-applicants in the case. However, the bench clarified that since the proceedings were initiated by the tribunal on its own motion, co-applicant status could not be granted. At the same time, the tribunal allowed them to assist the court by submitting relevant documents and making oral submissions during the hearings. The matter has now been listed for

further consideration on March 27. According to the newspaper report that triggered the tribunal’s action, the alleged road construction has caused concern among environmental observers and local residents. The report warned that the catchment areas involved are ecologically fragile and vulnerable to landslides and soil erosion. It also pointed out that unregulated construction in hill districts like Papum Pare can disrupt natural water flow, increase the risk of landslides, and cause long-term ecological harm. The publication stressed the need for strict adherence to environmental laws and clearances, especially in sensitive mountainous regions.

Meitei civilian allegedly abducted and killed in Manipur

Imphal, Jan 22: A 31-year-old Meitei civilian was allegedly abducted and killed in Manipur, with his family suspecting the involvement of Kuki militants. The incident reportedly took place in Churachandpur district and has once again raised serious concerns over safety amid the continuing ethnic tension in the state. The deceased has been identified as Mayanglambam Rishikanta Singh, a resident of Kakching Khunou Uchan Makhong Leikai in Kakching district. He was the son of M. Tombi Singh and was married to Chingnu Haokip, a resident of Tuibong village in Churachandpur district. According to family members, the couple had been living together in Churachandpur since December 19, 2025. Family members said they first came to know about the incident after a disturbing video, allegedly showing Rishikanta’s

killing, surfaced on social media. Soon after, they received a phone call from his wife, who informed them that he had been abducted and killed by armed men. Speaking to the media, a family member said Rishikanta had married a Kuki woman and had earlier been working in Nepal. “Before the ethnic violence broke out, we used to speak to him regularly. After the situation worsened, communication became less frequent,” the family member said. According to information shared by his wife, Rishikanta returned from Nepal on December 17 and reached Churachandpur on December 19 to reunite with her. On the evening of the incident, at around 6:30 pm, three unidentified armed men allegedly came to their residence and forcibly took him away. She reportedly told the family that she tried to stop the men but was overpowered.

Tension over Saraswati Puja permission at Holy Cross Convent School in Dharmanagar

Agartala, Jan 22: Tension has surfaced in Dharmanagar town of North Tripura following a dispute over the celebration of Saraswati Puja at Holy Cross Convent School, located at Sakaibari. The issue has triggered concern among local residents and Hindu organisations after allegations that the school authorities did not allow the observance of the festival within the school premises. According to the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), its North District Committee has been requesting permission for several years to organise Saraswati Puja at the school. The organisation claimed that despite repeated appeals,

no written approval has been granted by the school management so far. Leaders of the VHP stated that nearly 95 per cent of the students studying at the school belong to the Hindu Bengali community. They argued that allowing Saraswati Puja would give students an opportunity to take part in an important cultural and religious occasion. The organisation maintained that their demand is not intended to create any religious conflict but to respect the faith, traditions and beliefs of the majority of students. On the other hand, the school authorities have reportedly maintained that as a matter of policy, no religious func-

tions are permitted within the campus. They cited institutional rules and internal guidelines as the reason for not allowing any religious celebrations on school premises. A meeting was held on January 16 to find a solution, but it ended without any clear decision. The situation escalated on Wednesday when members of the VHP North District Committee visited the school to submit a formal letter seeking written clarification and permission to conduct Saraswati Puja. The organisation alleged that the school authorities refused to accept or acknowledge the letter. This led to a heated verbal exchange between VHP members and

a female teacher inside the campus. Following the incident, personnel from Dharmanagar Police Station reached the spot and brought the situation under control. Police intervention prevented the matter from worsening, and no physical altercation or damage was reported. However, the incident added to the growing unease in the Dharmanagar area. In an attempt to calm the situation and resolve the issue through dialogue, a meeting involving parents and teachers has been scheduled for Thursday, January 22. Sources said the question of allowing Saraswati Puja will be discussed in detail during the meeting.

The VHP has expressed hope that the talks will lead to a peaceful and acceptable solution for all concerned. The organisation has also pointed out that Saraswati Puja falls on a school holiday. According to VHP North District Committee Secretary Pratap Ranjan Deb, while the school authorities have verbally suggested that the puja could be held on Thursday, the organisation insists that it should be observed on January 23, Basant Panchami. Basant Panchami holds special religious importance for Hindus and is traditionally associated with the worship of Goddess Saraswati.

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the crime was carried out by four armed miscreants who arrived at the spot in a white Swift car. As per CCTV footage, the robbers entered the apartment with their faces covered and executed the crime in a planned manner over nearly 40 minutes. At the time of the incident, Anil Deka and his daughter were not at home. However, his wife, Karabi Deka and the family’s driver were present and were threatened at gunpoint.

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Pitfalls of a fragile peace in BTR

Isolated pockets of Kokrajhar and Chirang districts witnessing ethnic clashes over an incident of mob- lynching following a road accident have pressed the alarm bell on disruptive elements seeking to turn hard-earned peace in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) fragile again. BTR has left behind a violent past of ethnic conflicts and insurgency to move ahead along a trajectory of peace and progress. Fresh ethnic clashes which claimed two lives saw incidents of arson and attack which led to about 1,200 displaced people belonging to Bodo and Adivasi communities taking shelter in makeshift relief camps. Swift and decisive action by Assam Police with the help of the army and central paramilitary forces, as ordered by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is closely monitoring the situation from Davos in Switzerland, where he is attending the World Economic Forum 2026, prevented escalation. As simmering tension continues to grip the affected areas, the guards must not be lowered. A flag march by the army and the deployment of the Rapid Action Force helped Assam Police contain the situation. Convening of a peace meeting is a laudable initiative to restore confidence among displaced people to return to their villages at the earliest. Communities isolating the disruptive elements is crucial to ensure faster restoration of normalcy. Even though preventing escalation and the return of displaced people to their homes remain the top priority, a thorough investigation into the incident that triggered the clash is essential to get to the bottom. Bodoland Territorial Council Chief Hagrama Mahiliary, hinting at the involvement of a “third force” behind the outbreak of violence, which he claimed had occurred due to “misunderstanding”, called for an investigation of the “conspiracy angle” and identification of the conspirators. Demographic and ethnic faultlines in BTR have been mended by the central government through the signing of the peace accords, which was possible through years of dialogue and articulation of solutions for conflict resolutions. Any fresh clash runs the risk of opening the deep wounds of past conflicts, and, therefore, leaders and organisations of different communities shouldering the responsibility to prevent escalation in the situation is critical for sustainable peace in BTR. Increasing community economic interdependence through trade, commerce and regular cultural exchange can strengthen the bond and harmony. The Bodoland Territorial Council can play the crucial role in strengthening such a bond by ensuring that the development process is inclusive and that there is an equitable distribution of

resources. BTC authorities need to build awareness among the communities that BTR is on the cusp of unprecedented development, with the central and state governments initiating a host of infrastructure development projects, and all the communities stand to gain from these projects. Notable among these is the rail link between Kokrajhar and Gelephu in Bhutan. With Bhutan fast-tracking the development of the Gelephu Mindfulness City as a sustainable and technologically advanced city, the strategic rail link has the potential to transform the entire BTR into a global hub of economic activities. The Ministry of Railways already notified this cross-border rail link as a Special Railway Project, which is reflective of the strategic importance of the BTR region for the entire country. When India and Bhutan expedite the strategic projects along the India-Bhutan borders to deepen bilateral relations between the two neighbouring countries, an outbreak of violence in BTR will only send negative signals to potential investors. People in BTR are realising that maintenance of peace and harmony is vital to creating the conducive situation and building of the required ecosystem to attract domestic and global big-ticket investors to leverage the cross-border strategic infrastructure projects pushed by India in BTR. It is unfortunate that when people in BTR need to focus on increasing agricultural production, skill building of youth, and improving health and education to derive optimal economic benefits from multisectoral development initiatives by the central government, to create trouble and revive the bitter memories of the past to divide the people on ethnic lines. Organisations of different communities in BTR playing an active role to dissuade people from abusing the social media networks for spreading hate messages against members of other communities can be more effective than suspension of internet services to prevent escalation in the situation. The organisations and BTC authorities spreading information about economic opportunities from various development projects and cross-border connectivity projects and bilateral trade and commerce between India and Bhutan can help bring development in BTR to the centre stage of social media discourse and counter hate campaigns. With assembly elections around the corner, the administration will be under pressure to maintain law and order as forces inimical to the country try to disrupt peace and harmony to prevent the smooth conduct of the election process. BTR risks missing the bus of faster progress if communities fail to see through the vested interests which are determined to sabotage peace.

After the Bondi terror attack people keep calling me a hero. But I am not a hero. I’m a mum who was at a Hanukah event

Hanukah is called “the festival of light”. It is a minor holiday in the Jewish calendar, not biblically prescribed. There are no long synagogue services, no onerous prohibitions or requirements. Just candles, songs and doughnuts. This is probably part of why I always loved it. There were four or five events in Sydney for the first night of Hanukah. In 2024 we went to an event at Dover Heights, but parking was a nightmare. We decide on Bondi (where parking is also a nightmare). Five of us – my mum, husband, son (3), daughter (one-and-a-half) and I pile into the car. We walk past the Christmas markets at Bondi beach, looking for the festival. I google it, but don’t expect to find an answer. Typically, Jewish events in Sydney are advertised without locations. A party is at an “eastern suburbs location” or “outdoor venue, Sydney south-east”. The exact location is provided only to people who register, and only on the day. This is a security measure. The idea is that nobody can plan an attack on an unspecified location. So I’m surprised when Google tells that it’s down near the children’s playground. We meander over with the pram. My son runs straight to his paternal grandmother, already inside. We take some photos – the photographer tells us we’ll have a fridge magnet in about half an hour. I will later learn his name is Peter Meagher. We play with bubbles. We visit the petting zoo. We eat doughnuts. The kids share a hotdog with my husband. My son is with my mother-in-law. My husband takes my daughter to chase down my mum in a bid to stop her buying more hotdogs. I am chatting with friends. I haven’t seen my son – or my mother-in-law – for a while. The others

haven’t either. Nobody is worried, they are off having fun somewhere. Still. I leave the conversation to go to look for them. I am by myself, walking around an open area, not too far from the gate, trying to get sight of them. I hear a very loud bang. I am not sure what it is. I don’t think much of it. I am busy looking for my kid. I have never heard a gun before. There is another bang, and another. I see someone fall to the ground. I see blood. People are screaming. People are getting on the floor. This is not fireworks. The music hasn’t stopped. Techno covers of Hanukah classics. Songs I have sung since I was a kid. The screaming doesn’t stop the music, but it distorts, somehow, like a bad sci-fi movie. I see the back of my husband’s shirt, I see he is holding my daughter, I see he is near a fence and running. I know he will keep her safe. But I still cannot see my son. I scream his name. I run in circles looking for him for a few more shots. I cannot see him. I see a little girl with face paint. She is screaming for her mummy and daddy. She is scared. She is in an open space. I run and grab her. This space is too open. There are too many shots. I take maybe five steps towards the chairs, I am behind the last row. It is the closest thing I can find to cover. I lie on the grass, on top of the little girl. There are many people lying or crouching in the chairs in front of me. Most are elderly. Everyone is screaming. I stay calm, I understand the importance of calm. I talk to the little girl. I say, I’ve got you. She is calm, too. The shots keep coming. This next part is a jumble; I am not sure of the order of events. It seems to go forever. It is less than six minutes. I lift

my phone to take a video; the zoom helps me to see better. One man is on the footbridge. He is holding a gun. It is pointed towards me. He fires two times, three. The other man is pacing on the ground, outside the fence. He is moving slowly. He looks calm. The little girl says, “Can you hide?” “Yes,” I say. I put the phone down. It is 6.43pm. A woman is lying in front of me, maybe a metre-and-a-half away, among the chairs. She is facing the shooters – I see the back of her head. Then – the woman is a body. Her head must have turned with the impact. I can see the tip of her nose. There is a U shape where her eyes and forehead used to be. Bits of brain, beige and squishy, are laced through the grass. My shoulder stings. I am dripping blood. I am dripping blood. I am dripping blood and I don’t know how much of it is mine. I am dripping blood on to a little girl. She won’t tell me her name. There is blood on my glasses. I take a selfie to see whether the blood is mine. I see small pieces of brain in my hair. I stop paying attention to the blood. It is 6:47pm. I get a text from my husband. There is blood on my phone. He says, “We are safe. I have [daughter] only.” I say “Have a little girl. Not mine. Someone has been shot.” The texts are short. I write, “I hand bloom. Blood. I don’t kni”. He writes “From you?” I say, “I don’t know. Keeping girl safe. [Son]. My mum.” He responds to son with “With [grandma]. Safe inside playground.” I should explain: these texts are atypical. Normally I write in full sentences, even in text, with no spelling mistakes. It is 6:53pm. My kids should be starting a bath. This next part is better. A man comes

up to me, he is crouched. He says I have his daughter. I don’t know him. I don’t want to give her over unless it’s safe. She says “Daddy” and reaches. I feel grateful. I give her over. I tell him: the blood is not hers. I think it is mine. This lady got shot. I tell him, I am sorry. He asks if I am OK. He says I saved her life. His daughter is safe. I am grateful. I want my husband. My kids. My mum. Nobody has said it is safe. I stay on the floor. Two young men come up to me. They are not wearing shirts – I think they have come from the beach. They say: come, run, we will get you out of here. I do not trust them. I hate that I do not trust them. I always trust. I say – sorry, I do not know you. I will go myself. They say, of course. Now I am sorry. I feel grateful. I get up. I stay low, move towards the boardwalk. I see my mum. She looks unharmed. I am grateful. We walk down the boardwalk. I tell her to walk faster. I find my husband. My daughter. I feel grateful. I tell him, I need to see a doctor. When I was a kid, if I got a cut on my left hand, my dad would give it a kiss, then ask if we needed to amputate the right hand so the left hand didn’t hurt any more. This is to say: I was raised strong. So if I say I need a doctor, my husband takes it seriously. But also: there are two, three ambulances. And there are bodies. Wounded, dead. Being dragged or carried to the far side of the park. I see three paramedics working on someone who is more blood and flesh than human. I do not look too closely. My husband is yelling for a doctor. Someone says, “Wait here.” People are dying. I am sore, but I am OK. I just want to check our

baby. We decide to make our own way. I hold my daughter. My husband says, “You need to clean yourself first, you are covered in blood.” I don’t care, I want to hold her. We catch my mother-in-law, my son. I am grateful. I am so grateful. Relief. Relief beyond measure. “Another time,” I say. We talk lightly; my son is asking about the helicopters. We are holding hands. We are holding each other. We are going to go back to the car, we are going to go home, we are going to have dinner. My husband drops me off at the hospital on the way home. He takes the kids home. I have not prepared dinner. I am worried about what they will eat. He tells me later he gave them yoghurt and jam and put them to sleep. This is not a real dinner. I am grateful. At the hospital, I am seen quickly. People are kind. They are kind beyond measure. My nurse’s name is Connor. He is gentle, speaks softly. I am grateful. I have minor cuts and bruises. A deep gash in my nose. A long slash on my right shoulder blade, with no depth. Little dots of bleeding on my forehead, my arms. These are already drying. The body heals. Later, I will find out my body has healed around a little piece of shrapnel, under that little dot of bleeding, next to my eyebrow. All that is for later. Now, I want to check my baby. I get an ultrasound. Baby is moving. Baby’s heart is beating. I cannot describe how grateful I am. I cannot possibly put this into words. I text my husband. Kids are asleep. My husband comes. Connor and I agree to skip stitches for my nose and glue it instead; it will bleed for a week, but scar less. Connor gets permission to allow me to have a shower. There are brains in my hair.

A shower. I am grateful. My husband helps me to wash my body. He is gentle and slow. He finds more cuts in my scalp. I put my bloody clothes back on. We drive home. It is quiet. In coming days, I meet the girl’s parents. She is three years old, just like my son. Her parents say she is OK. I am grateful. People keep calling me a hero. I am not a hero. I am a mum. I am a human. I did what any parent would do. There are so many people I could not help. I am so sorry. I am not a hero. But I have heroes. My husband, who saved my daughter. My mother-in-law, who saved my son. Every single parent, every single person who saved every single child. When my son started walking, he would often walk himself into danger, as toddlers do. I would stop him from falling off a couch, and he would scream and kick and bite. I taught him: “Our number one job is to keep you safe. Our number two job is to give you love.” I could not keep him safe. I could not keep so many people safe. I do not know how to live in a world where a parent does not know how to keep their children safe. I have other heroes. A group of men who went to the playground, shielded women and children, including my mother-in-law and my son, barricaded them in the surf club. Hatzolah, paramedics. Community Security Group. Police. Lifeguards. Connor. Every single doctor and nurse in every single hospital. Kids are asleep. My husband comes. Connor and I agree to skip stitches for my nose and glue it instead; it will bleed for a week, but scar less. Connor gets permission to allow me to have a shower. There are brains in my hair. A shower. I am grateful.

The Trump administration has a Nazi problem

That was the title of a racist tract published in 1978 by William Gayley Simpson, a former leftist Christian pastor turned one of the most influential neo-Nazi ideologues in American history. The book helped radicalize an entire generation of white supremacists in the US, with its vicious antisemitism, opposition to all forms of immigration and open praise for Hitler. The purpose of the book, wrote Simpson, was “to reveal organized Jewry as a world power entrenched in every country of the white man’s world, operating freely across every nation’s frontiers, and engaged in a ruthless war for the destruction of them all”. In recent decades, Which way, western man? has become a popular meme – but only on the far-right fringes of the internet. Until, that is, the return of Donald Trump to the White House. Last August, the X account of Trump’s Department of Homeland Security (DHS) posted an ICE recruitment poster featuring an Uncle Sam figure holding a “law and order” sign while standing by a crossroads post featuring arrows reading “invasion” and “cultural decline”. The DHS caption? “Which way, American man?” Shocking? Yes. Coincidence? Nope. Earlier this month, the official White House Twitter account posted a cartoon of Greenlandic huskies with Danish flags on their sleds facing a choice between the White House on one side and China’s Great Wall and Russia’s Red Square on the other. The White House’s caption? “Which way, Greenland man?”

It should be one of the biggest stories in the United States, if not the world. Eighty years after the death of Hitler and the defeat of Nazi Germany, the US government, in the form of the Trump administration, has a Nazi problem. Think I’m exaggerating? Consider the copious amounts of evidence. On social media, as recent investigations by CNN, NBC News and PBS NewsHour have all confirmed, official government accounts can’t stop posting Nazi imagery and memes, using dehumanizing language about migrants, and leaning heavily into fascist aesthetics. The Department of Labor posted a video with the caption “One Homeland. One People. One Heritage”, recalling the Nazi slogan “Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer” (“one people, one realm, one leader”). Another tweet from the Department of Labor announced that “America is for Americans,” which sounds a lot like another notorious Nazi slogan: “Deutschland den Deutschen” (“Germany for Germans”).



And the Nazi rhetoric goes far beyond internet memes. Earlier this month, DHS secretary Kristi Noem stood behind a podium which said “One of ours, all of yours” – a phrase that “seems related to the practice (although not the explicit policy) of collective punishment used by the Nazis against their enemies”, according to Holocaust historian Page Herrlinger. Last year, the White House deputy chief of staff Stephen Miller gave a demagogic speech at Charlie Kirk’s memorial service that sounded like it had been plagiarized from Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels’s 1932 speech The Storm is Coming. Even the myth-busting website Snopes could not help but “observe the similarities” between Miller and Goebbels’s fascist rhetoric. Then there is the staffing issue. In February 2025, it emerged that James Rodden, an ICE prosecutor in Texas, had been running a social media ac-

count praising Hitler and declaring that “America is a white nation”. This is a federal prosecutor – not a teenager or a troll – pushing Nazi ideology. He was pulled from his post after the story first broke, but this month it appears he returned to work. When the Texas Observer, which broke the story, called Rodden for comment, he had none, and referred reporters to his press office. Then there’s Paul Ingrassia, the former White House liaison to the DHS now serving as acting general counsel at the General Services Administration, who once allegedly declared in a group chat: “I do have a Nazi streak in me from time to time, I will admit it.” In June 2024, he was also spotted at a rally in Detroit headlined by Holocaust denier Nick Fuentes. (In a statement to Politico, Ingrassia’s attorney said about alleged leaked text messages: “Looks like these texts could be manipulated or are being provided with material context omitted. However, arguendo, even if the texts are authentic, they clearly read as self-deprecating and satirical humor making fun of the fact that liberals outlandishly and routinely call Maga supporters ‘Nazis.’”) There’s also Ed Martin, the pardon attorney at the Trump

DoJ, who appeared at multiple events with a 6 January rioter called Timothy Hale-Cusanelli and referred to him as an “amazing guy”, “extraordinary leader”, and “great friend”. Hale-Cusanelli was described by federal prosecutors as a “Nazi sympathizer” who went to work in a “Hitler mustache”. (Martin has since gone on to distance himself from Hale-Cusanelli after scrutiny and has condemned his views.) How does this rhetoric and behavior from Trump administration officials and social media accounts not amount to the normalization of Nazis and Nazism? And how are the rest of us supposed to be OK with any of this? As ever, the rot of course starts at the top with Trump himself. His own vice-president once suggested he might be “America’s Hitler” (regarding his vocal critiques of Trump, he has since said “I was wrong”). Trump’s first wife said he kept a book of Hitler’s speeches in a cabinet by his bed. (Trump said he was “given the book by a friend”.) Trump has repeatedly used language lifted straight out of the pages of Mein Kampf, denouncing his political opponents as “vermin” and accusing immigrants of “poisoning the blood” of the nation. In 2022, he hosted Ye, a Hitler admirer, and Fuentes, the Holocaust denier, for dinner at Mar-a-Lago. (While Trump has reportedly distanced himself from Fuentes, he stopped short of condemning or denouncing him.) During his first term, the president’s own former chief of staff claimed Trump spoke admiringly of Hitler and said he did “some good things”. (In a lawsuit against CNN, Trump alleged that any suggestion that he “would be Hitler-like in any future political role” is “false and incendiary”, as it is to suggest any association between [himself] and Hitler”. The lawsuit was dismissed.) To be clear: this isn’t about calling everyone the left disagrees with a Nazi, as Trump administration spokespersons like to claim; it’s about recognizing when actual Nazis are not just right in front of us but in power. So here’s a simple rule for Trump and his friends: if you don’t want to be called Nazis, stop hiring Nazis, quoting Nazis and posting Nazi imagery. But don’t expect any of that to stop any time soon. In his first term, the president praised neo-Nazis as “very fine people” and then his acolytes spent years desperately denying he had ever done so. Today, there is very little denial, shame, or contrition. The United States government under Trump has made a deliberate, calculated, and shameful decision to embolden and enable Nazi-glorifying elements within his party; to elevate and amplify Nazi messaging. Don’t take my word for it. Last year, Dalton Henry Stout, founder of the neo-Nazi Aryan Freedom Network, said the quiet part out loud: “[Trump] awakened a lot of people to the issues we’ve been raising for years. He’s the best thing that’s happened to us.”

US–India collaboration crucial says McKinsey’s Gautam Kumra

New global economic era

New Delhi: The US and India are set to play pivotal roles in the emerging global economic order, and deeper collaboration between the two countries is essential, Gautam Kumra, Senior Partner and Chair, Asia (ex-China) at McKinsey, said, even as he cautioned against viewing any single trade deal as a panacea. Kumra said that while expectations around a potential US–India trade agreement remain high, predicting its timing or final shape is difficult. “Fundamentally, I believe that the US and India are two very important players in the new era. There certainly need to be more collaboration opportunities, and I hope the deal does happen,” he said. However, he added that trade agreements have become increasingly fragile, with policy reversals, tariffs and new restrictions often emerging even after deals are signed.Against this backdrop, Kumra said India should treat the current moment as an opportunity to broaden its global engagement. “It’s not just about the EU and the US, which are obviously significant,” he said, stressing the need for India to build alignment with a wider set of partners. A more open and diversified approach to global trade and diplomacy, he noted, would help India navigate rising geopolitical and economic uncertainty.Kumra’s comments come as he outlined a broader shift in the global economy away from the conditions that defined the past

three decades. “The last 30 years were an era of markets, low interest rates, a unipolar world and abundant liquidity, with global trade benefiting most economies,” he said. While globalization delivered substantial gains, it also resulted in growing inequality.He said the current phase is markedly different, with the global order moving towards a bipolar or tripolar structure. High interest rates, sticky inflation and heightened geopolitical tensions have made cross-border commerce more complex. “Friends have turned into competitors or even adversaries, and it is no longer clear what striking a trade deal really means,” Kumra said.Looking ahead, Kumra outlined two potential paths for the global economy. One scenario involves a more diversified world where trade patterns shift but remain broadly open. The other points to a fragmented, regionalised system in which capital and trade flows become increasingly constrained-Despite these challenges, Kumra said global trade continues to grow by around \$1 trillion annually. Over the next decade, he expects \$12 trillion to \$14 trillion of trade to be re-wired as supply chains and routes change. Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Japan and the European Union expected to expand.For India, Kumra said the changing global landscape also underscores the need for renewed domestic reform.

Premier Energies Q3 results: Net profit might increase by 47% year over year

New Delhi: Premier Energies Ltd is seen reporting up to 47 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth in net profit for the December quarter on 14-34 per cent growth in sales. Competitive intensity, progress on capex plans and update on new business vertical will be key things to watch out for. Kotak Institutional Equities expects Premier Energies to report 35 per cent YoY growth in revenue, primarily due to the stabilisation of 1.4 GW module facility commissioned in Q1FY26, production scale-up of recently inaugurated 1.2 GW cell facility, partly impacted by a weakening realisation of module and cells in the domestic market.

“We model Ebitda margin at 29.4 per cent (down 58 bps YoY) due to the reducing realisation of module and cells in the domestic market by 6-7 per cent. However, the effect of this will only be partly felt in 3QFY26,with full impact likely in the next quarter,” Kotak saidAdjusted profit is seen at Rs 376.30 crore, up 47.5 per cent YoY. Net sales are seen surging 34.6 per cent YoY to Rs 2,306.30 crore.PL Capital estimated Premier Energies’ Q3 revenue growth at 21 per cent YoY, supported by sequential improvement in capacity utilisation, partly offset by pricing moderation. It sees adjusted net profit jumping 24 per cent YoY to Rs 316.40 crore on 21.1 per cent rise in sales at Rs 2,075 crore. Margin is seen at 27.5 per cent. The brokerage has ‘Buy’ rating on Premier Energies.

Nomura estimated profit for Premier Energies



to grow 32.9 per cent YoY at Rs 339.30 crore and sales by 23.3 per cent YoY at Rs 2,112 crore.”We expect 23 per cent YoY revenue growth led by higher volumes due to execution of the healthy order book. Further, we estimate Ebitda margin to sustain at healthy levels due to the strong presence in the DCR segment and external sale of cells. Key things to watch out for: Competitive intensity, progress on capex plans, update on new business verticals,” it said.Nuvama, meanwhile,

sees Premier Energies’ Q3 profit to jump 30 per cent YoY to Rs 332.70 crore on 14 per cent YoY rise in sakes at Rs 1,951 crore.

“We expect Premier’s revenue/Ebitda to jump 14 per cent/15 per cent YoY, driven by our expectation of robust module/cell production of 0.96/0.6GW and resilient DCR module realisation. We estimate Q3FY26 EBITda margin at 30 per cent on steady capacity utilisation due to expanded module and cell capacity,” Nuvama said.

Today’s trending stocks are Zomato and Nestle



Mumbai: Zomato parent Eternal Group’s CEO Deepinder Goyal is stepping down from his current role. Albinder Dhindsa has been named as his successor, effective February 1. With Blinkit Chief Executive Albinder Dhindsa taking over operational leadership, investors and analysts largely view the transition as a handover that preserves business continuity while freeing Goyal to pursue longer-horizon, research-driven ventures outside the constraints of a listed company.Nestle India Ltd said the Supreme Court of India has dismissed as withdrawn the income tax department’s appeals related to the disallowance of general licensing fees for multiple financial years, providing

closure to a long-running litigation involving ₹101.21 crore. The company said the matter pertained to the disallowance of general licensing fees for the financial years 1996–1998, 1999–2001 and 2004–2008. Raymond Realty has announced the launch of ‘The Address by GS, Wadala’, a marquee residential redevelopment that marks the brand’s strategic entry into one of Mumbai’s most centrally connected and rapidly evolving neighbourhoods. Spread across a 5.62-acre land parcel, the project carries an estimated revenue potential of ₹5,000 crore and reinforces Raymond Realty’s ambition to redefine luxury living beyond traditional South Mumbai corridors.

Margins are under pressure; profit may decline year over year due to December interruptions

IndiGo Q3 results preview: InterGlobe

New Delhi: the parent company of budget carrier IndiGo, is set to announce its results for the quarter and nine-months ended on December 31, 2025 on Thursday, January 22. This will be IndiGo’s first earnings after massive flight disruptions, cancellations and delays that crippled India’s largest airline in December 2025.Shares of InterGlobe Aviation Ltd rose 1.5 per cent to Rs 4,932.75 in the early trade on Thursday, commanding a total market capitalization of more than 1.9 lakh crore. The stock is down 21 per cent from its 52-week high at Rs 6,225.05, hit in August 2025. The stock has is down 5 per cent in the last one month.According to the brokerages tracking the stocks, IndiGo is likely to return to black on a sequential (QoQ) basis, but the bottomline may fall on a year-on-year (YoY) comparison. IndiGo is likely to post modest revenue growth of around 3-7 per cent YoY in the December 2025 quarter, supported by strong sequential recovery. However, profitability may weaken, with net profit seen declining YoY due to operational disruptions, higher costs from flight cancellations, and softer yields. EBITDAR is likely to improve sharply QoQ, aided by better capacity utilisation and international expansion, said the analysts.Nuvama Institutional Equities expects IndiGo’s revenue at Rs 23,245 crore, up 5 per cent YoY and 25 per cent QoQ for the quarter. EBITDAR

may come in at Rs 4,430.3 crore, down 25 per cent YoY but up 393 per cent QoQ. Net profit may crash 65 per cent YoY to Rs 865.6 crore.

“We expect a 25 per cent YoY decrease in EBITDAR due to muted available seat kilometer (ASKM) growth on account of FDTL-related operational disruptions leading to a 4 per cent fall in PRASKs. Further, opex shall be inflated during the quarter on account of compensation to affected passengers due to flight cancellations,” Nuvama added.Motilal Oswal Financial Services is expecting IndiGo’s revenue to come in at Rs 23,618.8 crore, up 6.8 per cent YoY and 27.29 per cent QoQ. Ebitdar is seen at Rs 5,981.7 crore, flat on a yearly basis and up 591 per cent QoQ, with margins coming in at 25.3 per cent. Net profit may come in at Rs 2,189.5 crore, down 10.3 per cent YoY.It expects ASK at Rs 4,480 crore, PLF at 86.5 per cent, and RPK at Rs 3,880 crore. “According to our database, IndiGo’s average fare remained flat QoQ at Rs 6,110 on one-month forward bookings in Q3, while it rose 26 per cent QoQ to Rs 7,194 on 15-day forward bookings. Management is focused on international expansion, with the addition of new networks and code-share agreements,” Motilal added.

Kotak Institutional Equities is pencilling in revenue at Rs 22,694.5 crore, up 2.6 per



cent YoY and 22.3 per cent QoQ. Ebitda is seen at Rs 5,255.1 crore, up 1.5 per cent YoY and 806.8 per cent QoQ, with margins rising more than 2,000 bps sequentially to 23.2 per cent. Net profit may come in at Rs 1,870.6 crore, down 23.7 per cent YoY.”We expect a 8 per cent YoY increase in ASK on the back of mass flight cancellations in

December, with 150 bps lower YoY load factor at 85.5 per cent. We build in 3 per cent lower YoY yield at the lower-end of 3QFY26 guidance. We expect RASK less CASK at Rs 0.38 per ASK, against Rs 0.76 per ASK in Q3FY26. The same reflects the effect of lower yield and slightly inferior cost structure,” it said.

Orders from outside are as Indian space technology



New Delhi: Exports are fast emerging as a key growth engine for Indian space-tech start-ups, marking a clear shift from an ecosystem once driven largely by domestic demand.As ISRO-led credibility deepens, cost competitiveness improves, and flight heritage builds, Indian start-ups are increasingly winning international customers, signalling the sector’s transition from national missions to global markets.

Manastu Space is a case in point. The start-up now derives about 40 per cent of its revenue from overseas markets, underlining growing global demand for Indian propulsion and in-space solutions.

“The US and Europe will be our largest markets, with strong traction also emerging in Japan, Singapore and Australia,” said Tushar Jadhav, Co-founder and CEO, Manastu Space.

As Blinkit and Hyperpure reach Ebitda breakeven, Eternal’s share price goals

New Delhi: Eternal Ltd Q3 results surprised analysts, as Blinkit and Hyperpure turned Ebitda breakeven much before estimates and Deepinder Goyal resigned as company CEO. Eternal’s sales and Ebitda beat analyst estimates while profit came in line with expectations. Despite this, analysts believe the Ebitda respite will be short-lived and more pain is ahead. They maintained ‘Buy’ rating on the stock for now.Goyal’s move to step down is intended to avoid potential conflicts, as he invests in ventures outside Eternal while continuing to retain his existing responsibilities within Eternal, Nuvama said.”Eternal delivered multiple surprises with Blinkit and Hyperpure achieving adjusted EBITDA breakeven much before estimates. Deepinder shall retain all responsibilities of CEO albeit without the title of CEO. We are changing FY26/27E EPS by 41 per cent/2.3 per cent due to higher-than-expected profitability. Maintain ‘Buy’ with a revised target price of Rs 430 (earlier Rs 400) as we roll forward estimates to FY28,” Nuvama said.MOFSL said its view of lower competitive intensity and cost focus in the industry has not played out. Contrary to earlier expectations, the risk is that the market leader could be drawn into a dogfight too, with lower minimum order values and higher discounts, it said. “We also note that Eternal has stopped reporting GOV and has moved to NOV reporting, which means that going forward we will not be able to ascertain the extent of dis-



counting at Blinkit; this could point to slightly higher discounting intensity. We believe this will delay the path to profitability for Blinkit,” it said. This brokerage lowered its target on Eternal to Rs 360 Rs 420 earlier.The management cautioned that if irrational discounting persists, it may need to respond, and quarterly profitability is not guaranteed, Nirmal Bang Institutional Equities noted.This brokerage said aggressive dark store opening is counter-productive as it delays paybacks and pushes out the profitability path. Consequently, the target of 3,000 dark stores by March 2027 assumes irrationality but

if it moderates, Blinkit can target 3,500-4,500 dark stores which would keep the net order value (NOV) growth to 100 per cent-plus growth rate.

”It also means the 100 per cent growth rate trajectory is contingent upon competition. While this can be a bit of a overhang, investors are likely to appreciate profitable growth trajectory ahead with meaningful adjusted Ebitda kicking in rather than delivering Ebitda loss with superlative NOV growth,” Nirmal Bang said.This brokerage suggested a target price of Rs 355 on the stock.

Hong Kong national security trial of three pro-democracy activists to open

Dubai: The national security trial of three pro-democracy activists who organised an annual memorial in Hong Kong to mark the Tiananmen Square massacre opened on Thursday, in another landmark case brought under the Beijing-imposed law that has practically crushed protests in the semiautonomous Chinese city. Chow Hang-tung, Lee Cheuk-yan and Albert Ho are charged with inciting subversion under Hong Kong’s national security law. Their trial is one of the most high-profile national security cases to be heard in Hong Kong since Beijing imposed the law in 2020. The defendants face a maximum penalty of 10 years’ imprisonment if convicted. The law has a near-100% conviction rate. The three defendants were key members of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, the group that for decades organised the annual vigil for the victims of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing. As they entered the courtroom, Lee waved at his supporters, who waved back and said “good morning” to him. Ho sat calmly. Chow thanked her supporters for enduring the windy weather during the night and bowed to her supporters. Minutes later, Lee and Chow pleaded not guilty, while Ho entered a guilty plea, which could help him get a sentence reduction. Until the vigil was banned in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic, amid a crackdown on free expression in Hong Kong, it was the only mass memorial event for the massacre on Chinese territory. For decades, it was a symbol of Hong Kong’s autonomy from mainland China, an identity that persisted even after Hong Kong was returned from British to Chinese rule in 1997. Before sunrise, dozens of people had queued outside the court building to secure a seat in the public gallery under a cold-weather warning. Tang Ngok-kwan, a former core member of the alliance, has been queuing since Monday afternoon. He said he wanted to show support for his former colleagues in detention. “They use their freedom to exchange for a dignified defence,” he said. “It’s about being accountable to history.” Critics say their case shows that Beijing’s promise to keep the city’s western-style civil liberties intact for 50 years when the former British colony returned to Chinese rule in 1997 has weakened over time. But the city’s government said its law enforcement actions were evidence-based and strictly in accordance with the law. Chow, an internationally lauded human rights barrister, has been detained for more than four years awaiting trial. Lee and Ho, former Hong Kong legislators, have also been previously sentenced for convictions of unauthorised assembly in relation to protests and vigils held during the 2019-20 pro-democracy movement. Ho was part of a group of activists who were convicted for organising and participating in an unauthorised assembly in August 2019. In 2024, that conviction was upheld by judges on Hong Kong’s top court, a panel which included the British judge David Neuberger. The annual vigil organised by the Hong Kong Alliance attracted tens of thousands of attendees each year. Organisers estimated that 180,000 people attended the 2019 vigil, which was held days before Hong Kong erupted in a series of protests against the Chinese Communist party’s tightening grip on the city.

Filipino journalist Frenchie Cumpio found guilty of terror financing in verdict rights groups call ‘absurd’

Dubai: A young Filipino journalist who spent nearly six years in a crowded provincial prison was found guilty of terror financing on Thursday, in a case rights groups and a UN rapporteur labelled a “travesty of justice”. Community journalist and radio broadcaster Frenchie Cumpio, 26, and former roommate Marielle Domequil broke down in tears and hugged each other as the guilty verdict was read and they were sentenced to 12-18 years in prison by judge Georgina Uy Perez of the Tacloban regional court. They were both acquitted on a lesser weapons charge. Speaking outside the courthouse, Cumpio’s lawyer Norberto Robel said his team would file an appeal. “Despite this [ruling], there is still a legal remedy and pending application for bail,” he said. The case has been closely monitored by human rights groups including Amal Clooney’s Clooney Foundation for Justice, which in October questioned the lengthy detainment, citing “repeated postponements and slow progress”. UN special rapporteur Irene Khan had previously said the charges against Cumpio appeared to be “in retaliation for her work as a journalist”. Cumpio and Domequil were arrested in February 2020 on weapons charges, accused of possessing a handgun and a grenade. More than

a year later, a charge of terror financing, with a potential 40-year jail sentence, was added. Both Cumpio and her advocates have insisted she was a victim of “red-tagging”, in which the government links its critics to a long-running communist insurgency to silence them. On Thursday, Beh Lih Yi, Asia-Pacific director of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), condemned the court’s decision. This absurd verdict shows that the various pledges made by president Ferdinand Marcos Jr to uphold press freedom are nothing but empty talk,” she said, adding it was the first time a journalist had been charged with financing terrorism in the Philippines.

The ruling underscores the lengths that Philippine authorities are willing to go to silence critical reporting.” Outside the courthouse, riot police blocked a crowd of supporters that included Cumpio’s mother, Lala, from entering the courtyard. Aleksandra Bielakowska, advocacy manager for Reporters Without Borders, said the verdict demonstrated a “blatant disregard for press freedom”. “The Philippines should serve as an international example of protecting media freedom – not a perpetrator that red-tags, prosecutes and imprisons journalists simply for doing



their work,” she said. In September, more than 250 journalists and media groups called on president Marcos to release Cumpio, calling the charges “trumped up”. At a press briefing on Wednesday, Josa Deinla, one of Cumpio’s lawyers, said the country’s anti-terror law was being used “as a ready and convenient weapon against dissenters in this society”. Hours later, after an evening mass, Cumpio’s mother, Lala, told AFP that she visited her daughter in pris-

on once each month, bringing her groceries, medication and chicken from Jollibee. Bringing in the gravy and soft drinks that accompanied the fast food meals was prohibited by guards, she added. Of course, I’m worried,” Lala said of the looming decision. “My youngest keeps asking when his big sister will come home.” On Thursday, she broke down in tears alongside her two sons outside the courthouse as the verdict was announced

Rescue efforts underway after landslides hit New Zealand campground, house, 2 dead

Dubai: Landslides hit a house and a campground in New Zealand on Thursday, leaving at least two dead while emergency crews were trying to rescue others buried in rubble, officials said. The first hit a house in the community of Welcome Bay on New Zealand’s North Island at 4:50 a.m., police said. Two people escaped the house, and the bodies of two who were trapped inside were recovered hours later, Emergency Management Minister Mark Mitchell said. Later the same morning, emergency services were called to a second slide at the base of nearby Mount Maunganui. The rubble hit Beachside Holiday Park in a town named after the extinct volcano. Images showed vehicles, travel trailers and an amenities block crushed by debris. Police Superintendent Tim Anderson said the number of people missing was in the “single figures.” No survivors or bodies had been recovered

by late Thursday from the Mount Maunganui rubble, where dogs were being used to sniff for human victims, Mitchell said. “There was a shower block and a, sort of, combined shower block-kitchen block and there were people using that at the time the slide came through and they are some of the ones that we’re working hard to try and recover now,” Mitchell told Australian Broadcasting Corp. Further north near Warkworth, a man was missing after floodwaters swept him from a road Wednesday morning as heavy rain lashed large swathes of the North Island, a police statement said. New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon urged residents in affected areas to heed local authorities’ safety advice during the extreme conditions. “Extreme weather continues to cause dangerous conditions across the North Island. Right now, the government is doing everything we can to support those impact-



ed,” Luxon posted on social media. Fire and Emergency NZ commander William Pike said there were some signs of life immediately after the Mount Maun-

ganui slide. “Members of the public ... tried to get into the rubble and did hear some voices,” Pike told reporters. “Our initial fire crew arrived and ... were able to hear the same. Shortly after our initial crew arrived, we withdrew everyone from the site due to possible movement and slip.” Mayor Mahe Drysdale said those unaccounted earlier had included people who had left the campground without notifying authorities. The campground was closed after the disaster. Australian tourist Sonny Worrall said he was lazing in a hot pool within the campground when he heard then saw the landslide. “I looked behind me and there’s a huge landslide coming down. And I’m still shaking from it now,” Worrall told New Zealand’s 1News news service. “I turned around and I had to jump out from my seat as fast as I could and just run.” He looked back to see the rubble carrying a travel trailer behind him.

ActionAid to rethink child sponsorship as part of plan to ‘decolonise’ its work

Dubai: Child sponsorship schemes that allow donors to handpick children to support in poor countries can carry racialised, paternalistic undertones and need to be transformed, the newly appointed co-chief executives of ActionAid UK said as they set out to “decolonise” the organisation’s work. ActionAid began in 1972 by finding sponsors for schoolchildren in India and Kenya, but Tahira Ghazi and Hannah Bond have launched their co-leadership this month with the goal of shifting narratives around aid from sympathy towards solidarity and partnership with global movements. That will involve looking at how ActionAid UK’s work is funded by working with teams in Africa, Asia and Latin America so they can help shape a model that reflects what the communities they work with need. Ghazi said: “Most of our supporters are relatively well-off people and many of them are white, so if you’re asking them to choose a picture of a brown or black child and choose the country they come from – effectively, that’s a very transactional relationship and quite a paternalistic one. We recognise that the current child sponsorship model reflects a different time.” ActionAid’s supporters sponsor children in 30 countries, with the money providing 34% of the charity’s global funds, according to Ghazi. Ghazi said: “We’re in the process, until 2028, of transformation that includes our systems, what money we give, how we procure services – we’re decolonising it.” “We are evolving the model so it is shaped by community voices and responds to the realities they face today,” adds Bond. “We value our sponsors and remain committed to making sure their support continues to have a real impact.” Meaningful change takes time, and this work is rooted in genuine commitment rather than lip service.” As a method of fundraising, the process of allowing donors to choose between children to support has been likened to “poverty porn” that perpetuates racist attitudes, leading to calls for it to be phased out. Charities vary in how they spend the money raised through child sponsorship; some use the funds to support the child directly, while others spend it on projects that support the child’s community. The charities often provide the sponsors with regular updates and the opportunity to exchange letters with them. Save the Children, a pioneer of the fundraising method from when the charity was



founded in 1919, ended its child sponsorship programme last year. It said it was not suitable for modern contexts and was also expensive because money that could have been spent on projects had to be used to facilitate the exchange of letters between donors and the sponsored children. Bond and Ghazi’s vision for ActionAid’s future sees it as a feminist, anti-racist organisation that focuses more on fundraising through partnerships with civil society groups. One way that could work would be to encourage groups of friends or family members to form “sisterhoods” where they collectively raised money that would go towards women’s rights groups in a developing country. They also aim to provide long-term funding to grassroots groups that give those on the ground more power over how they spend it, and are planning to launch a fund specifically for women’s rights groups that are under attack as a result of the global anti-rights movement.

“ActionAid’s future is about solidarity, justice and how we can really drive forward change,” said Bond. “The world is in a bad place and we have a really important role as a global federation in pushing back on the levels of injustice that are happening all over the world.” Themrise Khan, an independent researcher on the aid sector, said the practice of marketing mostly African children to a western audience should be abandoned altogether. “The entire concept is highly problematic and racist in its overtones anshrieke ‘white saviourism’,” said Khan. “Nothing should replace it.” Better education, state welfare systems and healthcare should be the model – all responsibilities of a nation state. Not: ‘sponsor a poor African/Asian child at x dollars a month’ to make you feel good about a child you have never even seen in person, and may never see other than in a picture on your refrigerator.”

Three journalists among 11 Palestinians killed by Israeli forces in Gaza

Dubai: Hospitals in Gaza say Israeli forces killed at least 11 Palestinians on Wednesday, including two 13-year-old boys and three journalists, in the latest violence to undermine a three-month-old ceasefire. Palestinian health officials said the Israeli airstrike killed three Palestinian journalists who were travelling in a car to film a newly established displacement camp in the Netzarim area of central Gaza. The Palestinian Journalists Syndicate said in a statement that the reporters who died “were carrying out a humanitarian, journalistic mission to film and document the suffering of civilians”. n separate incidents on the same day, two boys aged 13 were killed in different parts of Gaza. In one strike, a boy, his father and a 22-year-old man were hit by Israeli drones on the eastern edge of the Bureij refugee camp, according to officials at al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in Deir al-Balah, which received the bodies. In another case, a 13-year-old boy, Moatsem al-Sharafy, was shot dead by Israeli troops while collecting firewood in the eastern town of Bani Suheila, according to Nasser hospital. Footage shared online showed the boy’s father weeping over his body on a hospital bed. The journalists killed were named as Mohammed Salah Qashta, Abdul Raouf Shaat and Anas Ghneim. Shaat was a regular contributor to Agence France-Presse as a photo and video journalist, although the agency said he was not on assignment at the time of the strike. Local journalists said their work was sponsored by the Egyptian Relief Committee, which oversees Egypt’s relief operations in Gaza. Mohammed Mansour, a spokesperson for the committee, said the vehicle had been known to the Israeli military. Video circulating online showed a burned-out vehicle by the roadside, with smoke still rising from the wreckage and debris scattered across the ground. The bodies of two journalists had been taken to al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City, while the third was transferred to



al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital, medical officials said. The Israeli military said it had ordered the strike after its soldiers “identified several suspects who operated a drone affiliated with Hamas” in central Gaza. “Following the identification and due to the threat that the drone posed to the troops, the IDF precisely struck the suspects who activated the drone,” it said, adding that the details of the incident were under examination. The media watchdog Reporters Without Borders said Israeli forces had killed at least 29 Palestinian journalists in Gaza between December 2024 and December 2025 and that nearly 220 journalists had been killed since the start of the Gaza war in October 2023. Other groups put the toll higher. Moatsem al-Sharafy’s mother, Safaa al-Sharafy, told the Associated Press that her son had gone out to gather firewood so she could cook. She said: “He went out in the morning, hungry. He told me he’d go quickly and come back.” Israeli forces have killed at least 466 Palestinians in Gaza since the ceasefire took effect in October, according to health authorities.

Affordable, Portable, and Chic: 5 Travel-Friendly Solid Perfumes Under Rs 499

In today’s fast-moving, on-the-go lifestyle, fragrances need to keep up. Enter solid perfumes – compact enough to slip into your pocket, spill-proof for travel, and gentle on skin, these luxe gems are fast becoming favourites among fragrance lovers who crave sophistication without the hefty price tag. Discover 5 standout solid perfumes, all under ₹499, that punch way above their weight. Each delivers long-lasting, high-end scent profiles – think warm vanillas, fresh citrusues, woody ambers, and floral bouquets – that linger for hours without fading. Perfect for busy days, these non-liquid wonders offer all-day wear with just a quick swipe on pulse points, blending seamlessly into your routine. Toss one in your bag and smell polished from dawn to dusk—luxury, redefined.

Saavi Solid Perfume

Saavi Solid Perfumes capture what movement-friendly fragrance means – easy to carry, great fragrance, and each tin captures a vibe. It blends notes like peony, vanilla, raspberry, and citrus to create a fragrance that lasts. It’s balm-like formulas melt effortlessly into skin as your body heat activates

gradual fragrance release. It is ideal for daily wear, layering scents, or discreet reapplication all day long. Travel-friendly tins make them perfect companions.

Plum Perfumes

Plum BodyLovin’ delivers playful feel-good vibes through mess-free twist-up solid perfume sticks, perfect for quick touch-ups anywhere without needing fingers. It is alcohol-free and travel-ready as your daily signature scent. Choose from Oh So Pistachio, which opens with

that sticks with you from morning rush to evening unwind.

The Love Co

If you like your fragrances to make an impression without being loud, The Love Co.’s solid perfumes are worth exploring. They are smooth, richly scented, and designed to feel sensual yet wearable, where the texture glides effortlessly onto pulse points as the fragrance develops slowly. As these perfumes stay close to the skin, they are perfect for intimate settings, dinners, or evenings out, embodying the philosophy of turning everyday routines into moments of love and connection. Love A’ddict delivers playful florals, vanilla creaminess, and a flirtatious spicy kick—ideal for brunch dates or evening events without overpowering your aura, with a strong personality in compact form, an elegant fragrance profile, and ideal suitability for evenings and special occasions.

Studd Muffyn

Studd Muffyn brings a lifestyle-driven, minimal aesthetic to solid perfumes and is inspired by natural elements, where their fragrances feel grounded, calm, and versatile. While some of their variants are priced slightly higher,



there are several options that retail under ₹499, making them a great budget discovery. Their solid perfumes are smooth, non-greasy, and designed to feel comforting rather than overpowering, making them suitable for long

wear. Their scents are subtle, everyday-friendly and perfect for minimalists who want quiet luxury that layers beautifully from morning coffee to evening unwind without fading fast.

Bare Necessities

Bare Necessities brings

natural simplicity and everyday sophistication to solid perfumes. They are focused on clean, uncomplicated ingredients without harsh chemicals. The perfumes’ scents feel fresh, calm and easy to wear and are earth-friendly, extreme-



ly effective and baking soda-free. These solid perfumes are seeking something gentle yet refreshing, especially for daytime or office environments. Top picks include Rose & Jasmine with soft floral charm and old-school elegance,

Citrus Woods blending bright citrus with grounding woody notes, and Musk Whisper offering light musk with soft warmth. They provide luxury on a budget and glides smoothly for all-day subtle sophistication without irritation.

Jess Cartner-Morley on fashion: 2026 will be the year of the skirt – and no, it doesn’t have to be short



I never stopped wearing skirts, I just sort of stopped thinking about them. They were a plus-one, not the main event. For the past few years I have planned my outfits around my obsession with pleated trousers, or my latest experimental jean shape. Or I have worn dresses. Sometimes I have ended up in a skirt, but the skirt was kind of an afterthought. For instance, at one point last year when it was chilly and I needed to look smart as well as cosy, I picked out a sweater and a pair of knee-high boots, and then slotted in a plain midi in satin or wool, just something to sit in between.

Things could be about to change. I’ve got a feeling that 2026 could be the year that skirts get main character energy again. For a start: hemlines are getting shorter again,

which makes skirts more attention-grabbing. If you left the house with your eyes open at any point in 2025, you will have noticed this happening: generation Z and Alpha wear very, very short skirts – she says, trying and failing not to sound about 150 years old – but the trend for above-the-knee hemlines crosses all generations. Adult women with their legs out was very much a feature of the pre-Christmas party season. But what is noticeable is that the mini renaissance is much more about a skirt, than it is about a dress. A short skirt feels cooler; more about your style and less about your body than a minidress. When the Fashion Museum Bath named Miu Miu’s buttock-skimming micro-kilt as their “dress of the year” for 2022, it felt quite confusing. How can a skirt be the



dress of the year? With hindsight, it is clear that they were on to something. Separates are the stars of the modern wardrobe. Even the Princess of Wales has started wearing tailored suits, instead of tailored dresses. And as a fast-moving, hot-potato conversation topic, jean silhouettes are right up there with mortgage rates. I wonder if this shift from dresses to separates is partly because as we try to shop less and focus on restyling what we already have, we lean into the enhanced scope for layering that comes with choosing mix-and-match separates over one-and-done dresses. The MVP skirt doesn’t have to be mini. The knee-length pencil skirt is poised for a comeback. And just before Christmas, I wrote about how A Little Bit Of Lace has become a formula for glamour, and name-checked my favourite White Company satin skirt, which has a lace band at its calf-length hem. Wear it with a polo neck sweater, thick wool tights, and flat boots. What stops most of us wearing miniskirts is that most brands cut them very short. This is what the kids want (as already discussed) and also what looks great on a mannequin in a shop window.

But call me an old fuddy-duddy: when I’m walking up a tube escalator, I don’t actually want to show my pants to the world. Whistles are a good source of cool short-but-not tiny skirts. This season, their A-line leather skirts and side-buckled wool ones (a nod to kilts, but more wearable) measure 44cm from waistband to hem. By contrast, most of Zara’s miniskirts measure between 33 and 39cm. That’s a big difference – although I did buy a leopard mini at Zara a couple of summers ago, having spotted that it had a generous hem I could let down, which I have worn loads. I find that tight minis can feel a bit wiggly, and A-line ones a bit childish. A floppy-hem silhouette, which hugs your hips but kicks out at the top of your thighs, is my top tip. My favourite is from Reiss (£88), and I have written about it before. Next’s Boucle Flippy Mini Skirt (£38) is similar. A fun hemline, a flippy shape, a buttery leather: what gives your skirt the main character energy is up to you. But after a few years on the sidelines, this category is setting the agenda again. Who’s wearing the trousers? Probably the lady in the skirt.

Why The Future Of Children’s Health Begins On The Plate

Conversations around children’s health often focus on outcomes, weight, fitness levels, or lab numbers rather than the systems quietly shaping those outcomes every day. Yet one of the most powerful long-term interventions doesn’t sit in a clinic or a classroom. It sits at the dining table. According to Dr. Vanita Rahman, an internal medicine physician associated with the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, improving children’s long-term health begins with improving diet quality, specifically through plant-based, minimally processed foods. The evidence is clear: children who grow up with healthful eating patterns are more likely to carry those habits into adulthood, lowering their lifetime risk of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic conditions. What complicates this seemingly simple truth is the modern food environment. Children today are growing up surrounded by aggressive marketing of foods high in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats. These products are engineered not just for convenience, but for preference shaping taste buds early and normalising ultra-processed snacks as everyday staples. Over time, this environment doesn’t just influence what children eat; it influences what they want to eat. The hopeful counterpoint, Dr. Rahman notes, is that taste preferences are not fixed. They are learned and they can be re-learned. Diets rich in fibre from fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; protein from legumes; and healthy fats from nuts and seeds do more than provide nutrients. They support gut health, improve satiety, and gradually reduce cravings for heavily processed foods. When children are regularly exposed to these foods, their palates adapt, often without resistance or force. Crucially, this shift works best when it avoids the language of restriction. Weight-focused messaging and “diet talk” can harm body image and disrupt a child’s relationship with food, sometimes laying the groundwork for disordered eating patterns later in life. Instead, Dr Rahman advocates for positive reinforcement framing nourishing food as enjoyable, satisfying, and empowering rather than corrective or punitive. Practical changes matter more than perfection. Prioritising plant-forward meals, dals, sabzis, whole grains, fruits, nuts, and seeds creates a foundation of nourishment without labelling foods as “good” or “bad.” Replacing packaged snacks with simple, home-prepared options reduces reliance on ultra-processed foods while preserving familiarity. Involving children in grocery shopping and cooking builds autonomy, curiosity, and confidence, helping them understand food as something they participate in, not just consume. Ultimately, improving children’s diets is less about control and more about environment, exposure, and example. When homes prioritise wholesome, plant-forward foods and remove the moral weight from eating, healthier choices begin to feel natural rather than imposed. The result is not just better nutrition today, but a generation equipped with habits that quietly protect their health for decades to come.



ENTERTAINMENT

Rimi Sen’s Decision to Quit Bollywood

Mumbai: After becoming well-known in the early 2000s for roles in movies like Hungama, Dhoom, Golmaal, Phir Hera Pheri, and Johnny Gaddar, Rimi Sen eventually left the Hindi cinema industry. Her on-screen appearances decreased with time, and she eventually gave up acting. After changing her job to real estate in Dubai, Rimi is already making headlines again. In an interview with a podcast, she revealed that she decided to leave Bollywood because she believed that women in the field had short professional lifespans. “I feel like the career timeline in the film industry isn’t long, especially for women,” Rimi stated. Because it’s a male-dominated industry, men typically control it. Salman Khan and Shah Rukh Khan are still in power today, as evidenced by their raj karte hain wahan pe itne saalon se. About 25 to 30 years have passed.”And



the same females who collaborated with them are now either portraying their mothers or supporting roles. Rimi continued, “So I had previously planned to work in the industry, do events

and films, make as much money as possible, and then venture into production.” “I produced Budhia Singh (2016), which won a National Award,” she continued. However, I imme-

diately started a business. I no longer have to worry about wasting time or being in front of the camera, and I feel safer. You ultimately seek freedom and financial stability. Rimi last appeared in the 2011 action film Sha-gird, directed by Tigmanshu Dhulia.Thanks to her advertisement with Aamir Khan and her frequent appearances in movies like Hungama, Dhoom, Golmaal, Phir Hera Pheri, Johnny Gaddar, and many more, Rimi Sen rose to fame in the early 2000s. Rimi’s on-screen presence progressively declined, much like that of many other actors in the Hindi cinema business. She eventually moved out of the spotlight. After shifting her job to the real estate industry in Dubai, she is once again in the news.In a recent interview, Rimi Sen talked about how Dubai has been friendly and how she has established herself in the competitive real estate industry.

Krushna Abhishek Responds to Govinda’s Alleged “Forced” Insult



Mumbai: For a while now, Govinda and his spouse, Sunita Ahuja, have been the subject of divorce rumors. Sunita disclosed in an earlier interview that her husband allegedly had an affair with an actress who sought money from the star.

Govinda broke his silence on the subject and asserted that his loved ones and wife were part of a “big conspiracy” against him.Actor-comedian Krushna Abhishek, Govinda’s nephew, was also involved. The 62-year-old said that Krushna was

“forced” to make fun of him on TV. Krushna has now responded to the statement. During a talk, Krushna declared, “I respect and love Govinda mama.” He has extraordinary ideas and is a legend. Perhaps this explains why he perceives things differently. Different people may interpret the same statement as caustic or favorable. I interpret it positively. In an interview with the news agency ANI, Govinda gave his version of events.“Recently, I’ve noticed that when we don’t talk, we can come across as weak or as the issue itself. I’m answering today. He told the media source, “I was told that people in my family might be unknowingly involved and they won’t realize they are being used in the early stages of a big conspiracy.”

“Even if you watch Krushna Abhishek’s TV shows, you will notice how writers would make him say things that would insult me,” Govinda continued. I warned him to be wary of being used as a means of insulting me. Sunita would become agitated when I warned Krushna. Furthermore, I’m not sure when these individuals would become angry with one another and when they would get along.Finally, the actor asked his relatives to abstain from speaking in public.”I would want to ask that you not put me in situations that will suffocate me. I especially ask my own family to do this,” he remarked.Since 1987, Govinda and Sunita Ahuja have been wed. The couple is pleased to have a son named Yashvardhan and a daughter named Tina.

Priyanka Chopra’s popular Teri Dulhan Instagram trend gets a dosa twist from Nick Jonas

Mumbai: Once again, American music sensation Nick Jonas supported his wife Priyanka Chopra by applauding her 2005 hit song Teri Dulhan Sajaungi, which also included actress Bipasha Basu.Nick posted a humorous video of himself eating a dosa on Instagram along with the caption, “When they have dosa at the breakfast buffet.” He was seen dancing to Teri Dulhan Sajaungi from the 2005 movie Barsaat in the video.He put, “This song hits.” as the caption.Priyanka reposted the video to her Instagram stories, naming her husband and adding a skull and laughing emoji. Regarding the movie, Suneel Darshan is the director of Barsaat. Bobby Deol, Priyanka Chopra, and Bipasha Basu are the main actors. The 2002 American film Sweet Home Alabama

served as a loose inspiration for the movie’s plot. Alka Yagnik, Kailash Kher, and Priyanka Chopra have crooned the Teri Dulhan Sajaungi song, which was composed by Nadeem Saifi and Shravan Rathod. Sameer has contributed the song’s lyrics.At the Vanity Fair Oscars afterparty, Nick first got to know Priyanka and confessed his emotions for the Indian actress. The two made their first public appearance together at the Met Gala, and rumors of Priyanka and Nick’s love involvement began to circulate online in 2018. In July 2018, on Priyanka’s birthday in London, Nick finally asked her to marry him. The actress instantly accepted. The couple tied the knot in traditional Hindu and Christian rituals at Jodhpur’s Umaid Bhawan Palace in December 2018.



Speaking of her film career, Priyanka is presently in Hyderabad filming her next project, which is directed by SS Rajamouli and stars South star Mahesh Babu.In the next movie, Priyanka—who has won two National Film Awards and a Padma Shri—will appear on screen alongside Mahesh Babu for the first time.Furthermore, Hrithik Roshan has been cast as a director for the most recent film in

the well-known Krish 4 franchise. In the upcoming swashbuckler action drama The Bluff, the 42-year-old Miss World 2000 pageant winner will also play a 19th-century Caribbean pirate.Her most recent film appearance was in Ilya Naishtuller’s Heads of State. Idris Elba plays the prime minister of the United Kingdom, while John Cena plays the president of the United States.

In Varanasi, Bengali actor Hiraan Chatterjee marries a model

Mumbai: Hiraan Chatterjee, also known as Hiranmoy Chattopadhyaya, is a politician and actor from Bengal who recently got married for the second time. After his previous wife openly questioned the marriage’s morality and legality, the Varanasi wedding has generated a lot of debate.According to reports, Hiraan Chatterjee wed in Varanasi. Hiraan wore a yellow kurta, while Ritika Giri, the bride, wore a traditional red Banarasi saree, according to widely shared wedding photos. Hiraan personally confirmed the news by posting pictures from the wedding on his Facebook page. But soon after, the post was removed. The actor-politician had

kept a low profile in both politics and movies in recent months, and rumors concerning changes in his personal life were reportedly making the rounds in the business.Interestingly, Hiraan chose Varanasi, which is far from his hometown, for the event rather than Kolkata.In an interview, Anindita, Hiraan Chatterjee’s first wife, expressed strong disapproval of the union.”We are facing enormous challenges as a family,” Anindita stated. “I have stated this earlier as well.” The harm that has been done to us, particularly to my daughter, is difficult to describe. She has been severely impacted, and we are still seeing physicians since she is still having health problems. It is devastating. ”As far as



I am concerned, this marriage is illegal,” she responded when asked if the second marriage was lawful. She also claimed that the actor’s second wife was to blame for their family’s disintegration.According to reports, Hiraan and Anindita are not legally separated or divorced. Their daughter is currently 19 years old. According

to reports, Hiraan has been apart from his daughter for approximately a year, spending a significant amount of time in Kharagpur due to political obligations. Regarding the allegations made by his first wife and the legal issues surrounding his second marriage, the actor has not released a public remark.

Abhishek Bachchan and Vijay Deverakonda are being considered for cameos



Mumbai: Sudha Kongara, the director of Parasakthi, has revealed the reasoning behind the cameo appearances in the movie. Basil Joseph, Rana Daggubati, and Dhananjaya, who represent Malayalam, Telugu, and Kannada cinema, respectively, make special appearances in this historical drama, which stars Sivakarthekeyan. According to Sudha Kongara, her original plan called for performers from several language industries to play significant historical characters connected to the anti-Hindi campaign shown in Parasakthi. She even made contact with Abhishek Bachchan as part of this scheme.Pakistan. In important roles, Akshaye Khanna, Sanjay Dutt, Arjun

Rampal, and R Madhavan are also included. March 2026 will see the theatrical premiere of the second installment. ”I originally intended for the historical personalities in the movie to be portrayed by actors speaking the corresponding languages. We intended to include several of these individuals who were involved in the anti-Hindi struggle back then. I even asked Abhishek Bachchan if he would be open to making one of these cameos in the movie. But as the script developed, the crew realized that allowing too many appearances could weaken the story. Eventually, the concept was simplified to guarantee that the narrative stayed on course while respecting the linguistic and

historical diversity at the core of the movie.Sudha also disclosed that Rana Daggubati was ultimately chosen for a significant appearance, while Vijay Deverakonda was initially her top option. “Long back, I asked Vijay Deverakonda for Rana Daggubati’s Michael Reddy cameo, but he was busy with the Kingdom shoot,” she explained. Sudha was pleased with how the final cameos turned out, despite the lost possibilities.At first, it was anticipated that Parasakthi would face off against Vijay’s Jana Nayagan during the Pongal season. However, once Jana Nayagan was postponed because of certification concerns, the box office confrontation did not take place.

Yuzvendra Chahal and RJ Mahvash unfollow one another following relationship rumors

Mumbai: Cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal and RJ Mahvash have unfollowed each other on Instagram, which has sparked new allegations about their relationship months after they were the target of a social media storm due to trolling and widespread dating rumors.After it was discovered that Chahal and RJ Mahvash had unfollowed one another on Instagram, social media went crazy. The decision was made months after they both had refuted persistent dating rumors.A quick look at their profiles revealed that they no longer follow one another, even though neither has responded



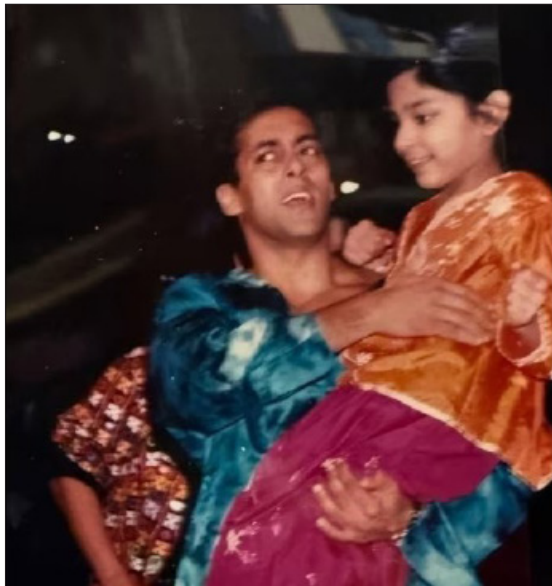
to the most recent development. Screenshots show that they are not in each other’s lists of followers. It has rekindled rumors regarding their relationship’s current state. The topic has gained attention on a number of social media sites, including Reddit.It has appeared

everywhere on Instagram. This seems like a difficult time for Yuzi, first because of his breakup with Dhanshree Verma and then with RJ Mahvash.Since the cricket player’s much-discussed divorce with Dhanashree Verma, Chahal and Mahvash have remained in the public eye. Chahal was spotted with Mahvash shortly after his divorce was finalized; Mahvash would support him at IPL games and go out with him. The two consistently insisted that they were not romantically engaged, despite growing rumors about their relationship. In an interview with Raj Shamani on his

podcast last year, Chahal addressed the rumors. “No, there’s nothing,” Chahal stated in response to a question about Mahvash or anyone else. When I was initially spotted with someone, people immediately began to connect us. It was really difficult for her, even though she explained it. They referred to her as a homewrecker. Really terrible things were uttered. I felt awful. We were unable to go out together,” he continued.In 2020, Chahal wed reality show star and choreographer Dhanashree Verma. Their divorce was finalized last year after they split up in 2024.

Tia Bhatia, a Canadian actor, shares nostalgic moments with Salman Khan and Aishwarya Rai

Mumbai: The internet erupted earlier today when Canadian actor Tia Bhatia, the daughter of Toronto Raptors superfan Nav Bhatia, tweeted old photos of Bollywood actors Salman Khan, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Akshay Kumar, Shah Rukh Khan, Sanjay Dutt, and Hrithik Roshan.With a young Tia Bhatia posing with the stars, it was a journey down memory lane. She was seated next to Aishwarya Rai in the first picture in the Instagram carousel.Tia was seen posing with Bobby Deol, Sonali Bendre, and Saif Ali Khan in a number of more photos.One photo showed Salman Khan cradling a young Tia in his arms, while another showed Shah Rukh Khan performing onstage. More featured Tia and her father posing with the celebs. Social media could not stop gushing over the lovely throwback pictures. One person commented, “Such priceless moments, Tia. Did you have a favourite moment from meeting



them?”Someone else wrote, “This is such a dream!”Another internet user said, “We need some tea... who was the nicest?”Other comments read,



“Iconic” and “major flex!” Toronto native Tia Bhatia attended the Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute in New York.At the age of 17, she started

studying as an actress for movies and television. Dr. Cabbie and Anatomy of Violence are two of her well-known works.

A report on the “unsafe” “genocide victim camp” for Kashmiri Pandits in J&K is requested by a rights body



New Delhi, Jan 22:The focus has shifted back to Jagti Township, which is close to Jammu, as the Kashmiri Pandit community marks 36 years of exile from the Valley due to terrorism and targeted violence. Many families claim that “rehabilitation” has gradually devolved into yet another agonizing tragedy.After determining that previous official responses did not adequately address the complaint, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) made a significant move by ordering the Jammu & Kashmir administration to submit a new, comprehensive, issue-specific report on claims of deteriorating housing, malfunctioning civic services, and dangerous access roads in the Jagti migrant settlement. The proceedings are the result of a complaint that Jagti resident and advocate Vishva Ranjan Pandita

filed with the Commission, claiming that the living circumstances in the settlement had declined to what he refers to as a daily violation of dignity. A grim picture is painted by the complaint, which was filed under an online diary and included more than 100 photos: apartments in “complete disrepair,” protracted administrative indifference, and a road system so damaged that locals claim it is now a question of life or death. Pandita claims that citizens are being neglected slowly and grindingly in one of the most pointed lines in his complaint. He claims that ending their lives “at once” would be “more humane” than continuing what he refers to as “daily suffering” through inaction. It is said that the apartments given to displaced families, which they had lived in permanently for years, are now dangerous. Residents have been pointing out the need for repairs for over five years, according to Pandita, but every appeal is met with the same obstacle: the government’s assertion that there isn’t a separate budget for renovations. In addition to the residences, the lawsuit focuses on the infrastructure outside the settlement, including the Nagrota, Jagti

road, which he claims has continued to have potholes despite numerous requests for macadamization. According to Pandita, the neighborhood lost “6-8 residents” in accidents over the year as a result of the road’s neglect, which compels many families to travel longer routes along the highway even for basic groceries and necessities. The Commission observes that its Bench had previously requested an Action Taken Report from the relevant authorities in accordance with the Protection of Human Rights Act of 1993. However, the NHRC has now demanded a more straightforward and thorough response after examining the information on file, including the complainant’s later extensive comments. The NHRC letter summarizes the rejoinder and lists additional complaints that were brought before it. These include the complainant’s claim that, despite rising living expenses, assistance has not been updated in years; that community infrastructure, including parks, halls, and other facilities, is still insufficient; and that residents experience an annual water crisis that lasts for months, forcing families to rely on private tankers.

I-PAC received a loan of Rs 13.5 crore from a nonexistent company



New Delhi, Jan 22: Following revelations in its financial filings that it received an unsecured loan of Rs 13.5 crore in 2021 from a company based in Rohtak, Haryana, that, according to official public records, had ceased to exist years earlier, political consulting firm Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC) has come under fire.I-PAC identified the lender as Ramasetu Infrastructure India (P) Limited in its financial statements.

Nevertheless, no such business can be found in the official database, according to a review of documents from the Registrar of Companies, a central government agency. Only Ramsetu Infrastructure India Private Limited, a firm with the same name, has incorporation paperwork

available. Ramsetu Infrastructure India Private Limited was established on December 18, 2013, as a non-government private business involved in real estate activities, with an authorized share capital of Rs 5 lakh, according to corporate data aggregator Zauba Corp.

On October 18, 2013, Vijendar and Vikram were named as the company’s two directors.

According to official records, on August 18, 2018, the business was struck off in accordance with Section 248(1) of the Companies Act, 2013. The strike-off shows that the Registrar took action because the firm did not meet statutory compliance criteria and either failed to start business or halted operations for two consecutive fiscal years. In spite of this, according to I-PAC’s documents, the loan was obtained in 2021, almost three years after the company’s dissolution.

The person who answered the phone when NDTV called Ram Setu Infrastructure India Private Limited’s internet number identified himself as Mukesh from

Yamuna Nagar, Haryana, and denied any connection to the business. He added that he was unaware of the reason his number was placed as the company’s contact.

A similar-named company used to operate at the same address that I-PAC stated, but it was shut down some years prior to the loan being allegedly extended, according to additional research into public records. Previously listed shareholders of the corporation that was knocked off have denied any affiliation with I-PAC or involvement in lending money to the organization.I-PAC has paid back some of the Rs 13.5 crore loan in recent quarters, according to financial filings, but a sizable percentage is still owed.

The exact identification and operational state of the lending organization mentioned in the firm’s disclosures, however, have not been made public.I-PAC has not yet provided a thorough explanation for the disparities between its filings and formal business records, raising concerns regarding the source of the funding and the veracity of the reports.

Targeting 15 Years of Trinamool Rule, Nitin Nabin Unveils His Bengal Strategy

New Delhi, Jan 22: Nitin Nabin, the recently chosen national president of the Bharatiya Janata Party, has not wasted any time in outlining his priorities. He called his first significant organizational meeting with West Bengal leaders and election-focused employees to create a comprehensive plan for the impending assembly elections.According to sources, the meeting’s main focus was on the state’s governance shortcomings and developing a constituency-based campaign that specifically targets the Trinamool Congress’s fifteen-year record. The BJP’s argument centered on West Bengal’s economic hardship during the strategy discussion. Party officials pointed out that even though the state has abundant natural and human resources, per capita income is still among the lowest in the nation. Those in attendance reported that the leadership emphasized the need to explain this paradox to voters, portraying it as a direct result of what the party characterizes as the TMC government’s mismanagement and policy stagnation.Another significant issue that surfaced was health infrastructure. BJP officials pointed to a severe dearth of doctors in government hospitals, a near collapse of basic health centers, a paucity of medications, and unsanitary conditions. The meeting recognized that these concerns need to be brought to light through persistent local efforts because they have caused significant discontent at the grassroots level,



particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. The leadership brought up what it called a “systematic decline in standards and opportunities for students” during a lengthy discussion of the educational system.The party emphasized women’s safety, citing an increase in crimes and purported administrative indifference as reasons why West Bengal is becoming more dangerous for women. Leaders concurred that this problem needed to be handled sensitively and consistently because it affects a wide range of demographics.The discussions also included issues pertaining to migrant workers and the difficulties they encounter both inside and outside the state. With frequent allusions to what the BJP refers to as “jungle raj conditions,” law and order was said to be in a state of disintegration. The party also restated

its long-standing accusation that the current administration is engaging in minority appeasement politics, claiming that this has exacerbated societal divisions and undermined government.

In terms of political messaging, the BJP made the decision to approach voters with a firm pledge to find and expel illegal infiltrators. According to sources, the leadership thinks this topic is popular in both metropolitan areas and border districts and will be a major campaign pillar. The creation of a comprehensive chargesheet for each West Bengal assembly constituency is a major organizational choice made under Nitin Nabin’s direction. These documents will enumerate the TMC government’s shortcomings at the local level, ranging from municipal problems to infrastructure deficiencies.

These chargesheets would be made public by senior BJP leaders in the state during rallies, and then copies will be distributed to homes through door-to-door outreach. According to insiders, the goal is to directly hold each current MLA accountable and portray them as liable for the state of their constituencies throughout the last fifteen years. According to the leadership’s view, the party needs to harness the anger that is already evident against a number of local MPs into a coherent political narrative. The BJP intends to localize the election and turn discontent into votes by focusing on specific MLAs rather than general government shortcomings.

Lonar Lake in Maharashtra Has 20 Feet of Water Rising



New Delhi, Jan 22: A startling increase in the water levels of the renowned Lonar Lake in the Buldhana region of Maharashtra has been reported. The Bombay High Court’s Nagpur Bench has mandated the filing of a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in response to the lake’s biodiversity being seriously threatened by the rising water.

Since last September, there has been a noticeable rise in the water level. The lake’s water level is thought to have increased by 15 to 20 feet due to constant input from the four main perennial springs. Numerous historic Shiva temples along the banks have been submerged due to the rising water level. The world-famous

Kamalja Devi Temple’s sanctum sanctorum has also been flooded. Previously completely visible, the “Deepstambh” (light tower) in front of the temple is now partially underwater. According to scientists, this could endanger biodiversity. Lonar is a saline lake, as environmentalists point out. But over the past three to four months, freshwater from springs has been continuously mixed, endangering its distinct saltness. Fish have unexpectedly begun to appear in the water, which may be harmful to this saltwater lake’s natural ecological structure. Advocate Mohit Khajanchi has been designated as “Amicus Curiae” (Friend of the Court) by a bench made up of Justices Anil Kilar and Raj Wakode, and he has been instructed to present a comprehensive PIL within the next seven days.Tehsildar Bhushan Patil and groundwater specialist Professor Ashok Tejankar from Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar examined the lake per government directives. Experts have emphasized the need for extensive research because the precise scientific cause of the water level rise is yet unknown.

Lonar Lake, which was formed by a meteorite impact, is important for scientific study worldwide and draws researchers and visitors from all over the world. Environmental lovers have generally applauded the High Court’s strong stance to preserve this natural asset.

The head of the Bangladesh Cricket Board responds to the ICC’s denial of the T20 World Cup request



New Delhi: After the International Cricket Council (ICC) denied the request to move their T20 World Cup 2026 matches away from India, Aminul Islam, head of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), is waiting for a “miracle.” The BCB was given a 24-hour window on Wednesday to determine whether or not to participate in the competition. If Bangladesh chooses to continue to their position of not visiting India, Scotland would most likely take their place. Aminul requested additional time to discuss the current issue with the Bangladeshi authorities, according to an ESPNcricinfo report.“I asked the ICC board for time to talk to my government for one last time,” Aminul stated. “They gave me 24 or 48 hours to respond to them and stated that was a valid point. I’m not interested in

pressuring the government. We are aware that we are not safe in India. We continue to take the position we wish to play in Sri Lanka. We will speak with the administration once more, even though I am aware that the ICC rejected us. I’ll let the ICC know what the administration has to say,” he continued.The players want to compete in the World Cup, but the government will make the final decision, according to Aminul, who stated that the BCB is hoping for a “miracle” in this regard.“I am expecting that the ICC will do a miracle. Who wouldn’t want to participate in the World Cup?”

“The players from Bangladesh wish to compete in the World Cup. Bangladesh’s administration wants the country to compete in the World Cup. However,

we don’t believe that our players are safe in India. When making a choice, a government takes into account everyone, not just the participants,” he stated.

The ICC had already declared that the World Cup matches will go ahead as planned since there was no real risk to the security of Bangladeshi players, officials, or spectators at any of the tournament locations in India. The BCB voiced concerns and requested a venue change, so the ICC Board conducted a video conference to review the situation and make the decision.“The ICC Board noted that relocating matches under the present circumstances could jeopardise the sanctity of ICC events and undermine the organisation’s neutrality as a global governing body,” the International Cricket Council said in a statement.

According to Shashi Tharoor, Gautam Gambhir has the “hardest job after PM”

New Delhi: Following a meeting on Wednesday, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor praised India’s head coach Gautam Gambhir as “The man with the toughest job after PM.” Gautam Gambhir hailed the well-known author for his kind words of gratitude for his position as squad manager, which many view as a thankless profession. After visiting the former India batter in Nagpur prior to the first Twenty20 International of the five-match series against New Zealand on Wednesday at the New VCA Stadium in Nagpur, Tharoor expressed his gratitude to Gambhir for the harsh scrutiny he receives. Tharoor highlighted the intense scrutiny that comes with heading the Indian cricket team by describing Gambhir as a man entrusted with one of the most difficult tasks in the nation and post-



ing a picture of their meeting on the social media platform X. He referred to Gambhir as an old friend as well.“I had a nice and honest conversation in Nagpur with my old friend Gautam Gambhir, who has the hardest job in India after the PM’s!” In his post, Tharoor wrote.The senior lawmaker noted that Gambhir is constantly under public scrutiny and acknowledged the

burden the former Indian opener faces. Tharoor praised Gambhir’s composure in the face of pressure, saying, “He is being second-guessed by millions every day but stays calm and walks on undaunted.” As India embarks on a pivotal period in their white-ball calendar, Tharoor also praised Gambhir’s leadership style, characterizing it as quietly resolute and successful, and wished him well. “A note of gratitude for his capable leadership and calm resolve. I’m wishing him every success, beginning today,” he continued.

Team India’s preparation for the forthcoming T20 World Cup 2026, which is set to begin on February 7, will be greatly aided by the five-match T20I series against New Zealand. India won by 48 runs on Wednesday to begin the series.

Madison Keys advances to the third round of the Australian Open, primed by Novak Djokovic and Jannik Sinner



New Delhi: In her defense of the Australian Open, where men’s champion Jannik Sinner will also compete later, an unpredictable Madison Keys managed to advance to the third round on Thursday. Another well-known player attending Melbourne Park on day five is Novak Djokovic, who is

once again vying for a record 25th Grand Slam victory.Before defeating fellow American Ashlyn Krueger 6-1, 7-5, Keys blew hot and cold. Keys, who defeated Aryna Sabalenka in the previous year’s final, acknowledged that she was nervous and “too timid” following her difficult first-round vic-

tory. On John Cain Arena, the 29-year-old broke free from the shackles in the first set against the 92nd-ranked Krueger, winning it in just 23 minutes before having to overcome a 2-5 deficit in the second.“I started really well and Ash a little slowly,” Keys, who was eliminated in the quarterfinals at Adelaide and Brisbane to start her season, said.“I completely anticipated that she would improve, and she did. It escaped me a little.

She will next face either Indonesian prospect Janice Tjen or Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic.The sixth-seeded Jessica Pegula defeated McCartney Kessler 6-0, 6-2 in another all-American match. However, Spain’s 25th-seeded

Paula Badosa, who was defeated 6-4 6-4 by Russia’s 101st-ranked Oksana Selekhmeteva last year, is eliminated after losing to Sabalenka in the semifinals. Later, Iga Swiatek, the second seed, will take on Marie Bouzkova of the Czech Republic.

Swiatek has won six major titles but has never triumphed in Melbourne.Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan, ranked fifth, and Amanda Anisimova of the United States, ranked fourth, will also compete in the second round.Naomi Osaka, a two-time former champion, will take on Sorana Cirstea of Romania. Osaka made a spectacular debut on Tuesday wearing a dress inspired by jellyfish.

Sunil Gavaskar Explains Abhishek Sharma’s Valour in Twenty20I

New Delhi: Following the first Twenty20 International against New Zealand in Nagpur, former India captain Sunil Gavaskar had a playful moment with rookie batsman Abhishek Sharma. India defeated New Zealand by 48 runs to grab a 1-0 lead in the five-match series thanks to a 35-ball 84 from the 25-year-old Abhishek. He reached his sixth half-century in the format with just 22 balls. Admiring Abhishek’s gutsy striking, the famous batsman emphasized the sharp contrast between his generation’s batting style and that of recent ones.“He needs the same number of balls to get a half-century as I used to. After the game, Gavaskar stated on Star Sports, “There is a huge difference.” Abhishek said that his high-strike-rate strategy is intentional “intent” rather than careless back on his knock.“We are simply adhering to the plan that we had from the beginning. I’ve discovered that you need to have intent if you want to hit every ball or strike at 200. Every team has a strategy for me. It has to do with how I prepared. I will follow my gut. I wouldn’t argue that this is my comfort zone because I don’t think my role is high-risk. However, I’ve been working on going big in the first six. Range-hitting is something I never do. I need to observe the ball and adjust to the conditions since I’m more of a timing hitter.

Real Madrid lead football rich list, Liverpool surge strongly amid global financial power rankings

London: Real Madrid stayed top of football's rich list as Liverpool outstripped their English rivals for the first time, according to Deloitte's Money League study on Thursday. Spanish giants Madrid generated nearly 1.2 billion euros (\$1.4 billion) in revenue in the 2024/25 season despite failing to win a major trophy. The refurbishment of the club's Santiago Bernabeu stadium into a multi-purpose venue continues to pay rich dividends -- Madrid's 594 million euros of commercial revenues alone would be enough for a place in the top 10. Barcelona climbed back into second place in Deloitte's table (975 million euros) despite delays forcing them to play the whole season away from the Camp Nou, which is still being redeveloped. Bayern Munich were third on the list (861 million euros), marginally ahead of Paris Saint-Germain, whose income was boosted by winning the Champions League for the first time.

The rest of the top 10 is dominated by Premier League clubs, with Liverpool leading the English contingent for the first time. An expansion of Anfield plus a return to the Champions League and winning the Premier League title boosted the Reds' revenue to 836 million euros. Manchester City and Manchester United both slipped down the list. Pep Guardiola's City fell from second to sixth after an early exit from the Champions League and a third-placed Premier League finish following four consecutive titles. United dropped behind Arsenal to eighth after missing out on the Champions League



and finishing 15th in the Premier League.

Together, the 20 top-earning clubs in Europe reported an 11 percent increase in revenues to 12.4 billion euros. It is no coincidence that the clubs in the top half of the ranking are those with the ability to focus on commercial revenue development, particularly as domestic broadcast rights plateau," said Tim Bridge, lead partner in the Deloitte Sports Business Group. There is a pivotal shift in some club business models with an increased focus on maximising the impact of their brand and their stadium assets. The presence of on-site breweries, hotels and restaurants is now commonplace and illustrates a strategic move to diversify income and create year-round entertainment destinations." The first 32-team Club World Cup had an impact, helping lift Bayern into the top three for the first time since 2020/21, while Benfica, in 19th spot on the 20-team list, are the first entrant outside the traditional "big five" leagues of England, Spain, Germany, Italy and France in four years. Arsenal were the highest-earning women's team for the first time after winning the Champions League. Pep Guardiola's City fell from second to sixth after an early exit from the Champions League and a third-placed Premier League finish following four consecutive titles. "There is a pivotal shift in some club business models with an increased focus on maximising the impact of their brand and their stadium assets. Arsenal were the highest-earning women's team for the first time after winning the Champions League.

Barcelona, Bayern and Liverpool regain form as Champions League Round of 16 battle heats up

Barcelona, Bayern, Liverpool victories reshape playoffs

New Delhi: Europe's traditional heavyweights responded in style as the UEFA Champions League league phase resumed, with Barcelona, Bayern Munich and Liverpool all recording vital wins to keep their campaigns firmly on track. With the Round of 16 race tightening, the latest round offered both momentum for contenders and clarity for those running out of road. As the competition edges closer to its decisive stages, margins are becoming thinner. Several clubs strengthened their chances of a direct route to the round of 16, others secured at least a playoff berth, while a handful saw their European journeys officially come to an end. Barcelona boosted their chances of avoiding the playoff round with a hard-fought win away at Slavia Prague, driven by a standout display from Fernn Lopez.



Playing in sub-zero conditions, Barca were forced to respond after conceding early, but showed composure and quality at key moments. Lopez struck twice in the first half to swing the momentum in Barcelona's favour, though Slavia clawed back to level terms before the break following an unfortunate own goal involving Robert Lewandowski. Despite the setback, Barcelona asserted control after halftime, dictating possession and territory. Hansi Flick's substitutions proved

decisive. Dani Olmo restored the lead with a superb long-range finish, before Marcus Rashford teed up Lewandowski for a fourth, sealing the contest. The win eliminated Slavia Prague and lifted Barcelona into ninth, leaving them needing a victory in their final fixture to push for a top-eight finish. Bayern Munich secured their place in the Champions League round of 16 with a measured 2-0 win over Union Saint-Gilloise. While many expected a routine Evening, the Belgian side

made Bayern work with disciplined defending and compact organisation.

Harry Kane provided the breakthrough with two goals in quick succession after the interval, ending a brief scoring drought in Europe and underlining his importance once again. Even after Kim Min-jae's dismissal and a missed penalty from Kane, Bayern remained in control.

The victory confirmed Bayern's progression and strengthened their push for a top-two finish, keeping them clear of the playoff route heading into the final round. Liverpool moved closer to a top-eight finish with a commanding 3-0 away win over Marseille, extending their strong unbeaten run. Mohamed Salah returned to the starting XI, but it was Dominik Szoboszlai who set the tone. Newcastle United set up decisive finale Neastle Have guaranteed.

Real Madrid lead football rich list, Liverpool surge impressively amid global financial power rankings

Arshdeep Singh emphasizes enjoyment over selection pressure

Nagpur: India's preparations for the upcoming T20 World Cup began on a commanding note in Nagpur, and amid the dominant series-opening win over New Zealand, Arshdeep Singh made it clear that selection pressure is the last thing on his mind. The left-arm pacer stressed that his focus remains firmly on enjoying the game and delivering whenever the team management calls upon him. Speaking after India's 48-run victory in the first T20I, Arshdeep underlined that he does not concern himself with uncertainties surrounding the Playing XI. Addressing the media at the post-match press conference, the 26-year-old said his approach has been to stay prepared at all times and control only what lies within his reach. The left-arm pacer also offered a light-hearted take on the challenge of bowling on flat batting surfaces, a recurring theme in modern T20 cricket. Reflecting on conditions in Nagpur, Arshdeep quipped, "First of all, I take God's name. Wicket flat lag rahi hai bhagwanji, aaj thoda bacha lena (the wicket



ties surrounding the Playing XI. Addressing the media at the post-match press conference, the 26-year-old said his approach has been to stay prepared at all times and control only what lies within his reach. The left-arm pacer also offered a light-hearted take on the challenge of bowling on flat batting surfaces, a recurring theme in modern T20 cricket. Reflecting on conditions in Nagpur, Arshdeep quipped, "First of all, I take God's name. Wicket flat lag rahi hai bhagwanji, aaj thoda bacha lena (the wicket

is looking flat God, please save me today)." Arshdeep's comments come against the backdrop of an on-and-off role across India's white-ball formats. While he has enjoyed a relatively more consistent run in T20Is, his place in the ODI setup has often been uncertain, fueling discussions among fans and critics alike. However, his overall numbers in the shortest format underline his growing stature, with Arshdeep having picked up 240 wickets across 180 T20 matches at an economy rate of 8.73. Despite rotation and

competition, Arshdeep has continued to make an impact whenever given opportunities. In India's previous T20I series against South Africa, he claimed five wickets across four matches, albeit on demanding batting tracks, conceding runs at an economy of 9.14. The competition for places has further intensified with the presence of Harshit Rana, whose selection has often been attributed to his batting depth and the team management's preference for all-round options.

Yet, Arshdeep's credentials in pressure situations remain difficult to overlook. He was a key figure in India's triumphant T20 World Cup 2024 campaign, finishing as the tournament's leading wicket-taker with 17 scalps in eight innings. Bowling alongside Jasprit Bumrah, he 2/20 in the final that swung the momentum India's way during the death overs.

Indonesia Masters: Sindhu, Lakshya advance confidently into thrilling quarterfinals stage



Jakarta: India's two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu made it to the quarterfinals of the ongoing Indonesia Masters on Thursday. Sindhu earned a straight games win, outclassing Denmark's Line Hojmark Kjarsfeldt with a close-fought 21-19, 21-18 scoreline. Her next challenge in the quarterfinals tomorrow would be Chen Yu Fei of China, the top seed in the tournament, a world number four and Tokyo Olympics 2020 gold medalist, as per ESPN. Sindhu's record against her Danish opponent has improved to 6-1. It was 5-0 at one point before a loss last year. Sindhu led at 11-7 and 15-11 in the first game. Despite Line fighting her way back to make it 15-15, Sindhu held her nerves and won the first game. Line started off the second game with a 9-7 lead, but four successive points left Sindhu leading at the interval, and it increased to 14-9. Line tried her level

best to fight back, but was no match for Sindhu's skill.

Also in the men's competition, Lakshya Sen also made it to the quarterfinals of this Badminton World Federation (BWF) Super 500 tournament, defeating Jason Gunawan in straight games by 21-10, 21-11. This marks Lakshya's second QF appearance in his third tournament and his most dominant performance, with his next challenge set to be Thailand's Panitchapon Teeraratasakul. (ANI) (This content is sourced from a syndicated feed and is published as received. The Tribune assumes no responsibility or liability for its accuracy, completeness, or content.) PV Sindhu came up with a dominant performance at the iconic Istora on Thursday, beating Line Hojmark Kjarsfeldt of Denmark in the prequarterfinals of the Indonesia Masters Super 500 tournament. Sindhu's stellar show came after Lakshya Sen decimated his men's singles second-round opponent and booked a place in the quarterfinals.

Sindhu, who was stretched by unseeded Manami Suizu of Japan in the opening round, looked in complete control against Line Hojmark, outclassing the Danish shuttler 21-19, 21-18 in 43 minutes. This was Sindhu's fifth win

over the Dane in their six clashes so far. With the win on Thursday, Sindhu also became the sixth women's singles shuttler to complete 500 match wins in her career and the first Indian to do so. On the BWF tour, Sindhu has a win-loss record of 456-227. It was Sindhu's second quarterfinal appearance in three tournaments in 2026 after her run to the semifinals in the Malaysia Open Super 1000. Sindhu seems to have put behind the disappointment of facing a first-round exit at the India Open last week to stitch an impressive run in Indonesia. Sindhu, ranked 13 in the world, will next be up against top seed and World No. 4 Chen Yu Fei of China. Sindhu and Fei have faced each other 13 times so far and the latter holds a slight edge at 7-6 in the overall record. The Indian's last win over Fei came back in 2019 and she would be eager to improve that record.

Meanwhile, 7th seed Lakshya decimated World no. 42 Jason Gunawan of Hong Kong 21-10, 21-11 in 33 minutes to lay down a marker in the draw. Lakshya showed signs of returning to form last week in the India Open, becoming the only Indian shuttler to reach the last-eight round in New Delhi. but four successive points left Sindhu.

Australian Open: Bhambri eliminated

Melbourne: India's Yuki Bhambri and his American partner Nicole Melichar-Martinez crashed out of the mixed doubles competition in the Australian Open after losing to the German-Chinese duo of Tim Putz and Zhang Shuai here on Thursday. Bhambri and Melichar-Martinez lost 6-3 1-6 (10-6) to the sixth seeded pairing of Putz and Shuai. Bhambri's campaign in the year's first Grand Slam is, however, not over yet as he remains in fray in the men's doubles event. On Wednesday, Yuki and his Swedish partner Andre Goransson stormed into the second round of the men's doubles competition, defeating local wildcards James Duckworth and Cruz Hewitt 6-3 6-4. The 33-year-old Bhambri's best performance at the Australian Open came in 2014, when he reached the third round alongside New Zealand's Michael Venus. His best showing at a Grand Slam came last year, when the pair made a run to the semi-finals at the US Open. India's Niki Poonacha and his Thai partner Pruchya Isaro had, however, exited the men's doubles event after suffering a straight Munar.

Babar Azam returns home for national duty after disappointing BBL campaign



Karachi: Former Pakistan captain Babar Azam's forgettable first-ever stint in the Big Bash League (BBL) has ended with him returning home before Sydney Sixers' eliminator match against Hobart Hurricanes on Friday. The Sixers management announced that Babar would return home because of his national team commitments. In a video posted on social media platforms, Babar thanked Sydney Sixers and his supporters for making his BBL appearance a memorable one. However, Babar endured a rough time in this edition of the league scoring just 202 runs in 11 matches with just two half-centuries. His strike-rate was a poor 103 and averaged a mere 22. His abrupt return from the league coincides with demands by some former Australian players, including Mark Waugh, that the Sixers should drop him for the eliminator.

But, initially, it was announced by Cricket Australia and the Pakistan Cricket Board that Babar would play the entire tournament which ends on January 25. The home series against Australia starts from January 29 and it has raised questions

over the timing of his return. Babar's appearance in the league also sparked a controversy when his partner Steve Smith refused a single to him while the former was batting on 47 from 58 balls. Smith later completed a hundred at a strike-rate of 238. Babar's and former T20 opening partner, Muhammad Rizwan also had a forgettable Big Bash scoring just 188 in 10 innings at a strike rate of 102 and in one match was recalled from batting by Melbourne Renegades because of his slow pace. Pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi, who returned home midway because of an injury, too had a mediocre BBL season.

All three Pakistan cricketers were appearing in the Big Bash for the first time. Sydney Sixers star Steve Smith Admitted that Babar

Azam "wasn't too happy" after he denied the former Pakistan captain a single during Saturday's Big Bash League clash against Sydney Thunder, as per reports.

The bold move, made on the final ball of the 11th over to maximise the Power Surge, allowed Smith to plunder 32 runs off Ryan Hadley—the most in a single over in BBL history. Smith, who finished with a breath-taking 100 off 42 balls, told Channel 7: "I was like, 'Nah, give it one over. I want to hit to the short boundary. I don't want to screw up the first over. I'll try to get 30 off that over'. [I] think we got 32, so it was a good result. Not sure Babar was too happy with me knocking back that single." The incident sparked visible frustration on the field, with Babar walking Off After scoring 47

off 39 balls and smashing the fielding cushions. According to a Code Sports report, the tension spilled into the Sixers' dressing room, where Babar told teammates he felt "disrespected" by Smith's tactical call.

Holding onto strike during the Power Surge proved decisive: Smith added another 11 runs in three balls of the 12th over before Babar was dismissed on the first ball back on strike. The Sixers chased 190 in 17.2 overs with five wickets to spare. Despite the tension, Babar has been named in the playing XI for Sunday's clash against Brisbane Heat. His struggles in the BBL continue, with 201 runs at an average of 28.71 and a strike rate of 107.48. According to Australian media, Babar was nowhere to be seen after the match, and Smith skipped the post-match press conference, likely to avoid further questions about the controversy. His strike-rate was a poor 103 and averaged a mere 22. His abrupt return from the league coincides with demands by some former Australian players, including Mark Waugh, that the Sixers should drop him for the eliminator.

Aston Villa, Lyon, Midtjylland chase Europa League away victories



Istanbul: The Europa League returns after a break with a leading trio of Aston Villa, Lyon and Midtjylland seeking away wins to close on automatic qualification to the round of 16 on Thursday. The three are tied on points from five wins and a loss with two games to go in the league phase. Like in the Champions League, the top eight finishers advance automatically after eight rounds. Villa may have the toughest encounter by traveling to Istanbul to meet Fenerbahce that is near to the top eight spots in 12th. The unlikely title challenger in the Premier League will miss injured captain John McGinn as it hopes to recover from a surprise 1-0 defeat to Everton at Villa Park on Sunday, a first home loss since Aug. 31. Lyon plays Young Boys in Bern while Midtjylland is at Norwegian side Brann in Bergen. The hosts are 21st and 22nd in the table, respectively.

The teams placed from nine to 24 enter a two-leg playoff to progress. Among other matches, Nottingham Forest at 11th is away at seventh-placed Braga while Roma (10th) and Stuttgart (ninth) who are tied on points meet at Stadio Olimpico in Rome. Manchester City and Aston Villa missed the chance to make significant inroads into Arsenal's Premier League lead on Wednesday as managerless Manchester United were held at lowly Burnley. Elsewhere on a frantic night

of action, 10-man Chelsea went down 2-1 at Fulham in front of new boss Liam Rosenior and Antoine Semenyo scored a fairytale winner for Bournemouth against Tottenham. Erling Haaland scored his 150th City goal from the penalty spot to put Pep Guardiola's team ahead at the Etihad but Kaoru Mitoma made it 1-1 in the second half. Norway forward Haaland has reached 150 goals in all competitions in his 173rd appearance -- 28 games faster than any other Premier League player. But he and his teammates squandered a succession of chances as they drew a third game in a row. City are now on 43 points, five behind Arsenal, who can go eight clear with a home win against Liverpool on Thursday. Villa are level on points with City following a costly goalless draw at Crystal Palace. City boss Guardiola bemoaned his team's profligacy in front of goal. I love a lot the way we played, we did many good things, but we don't score goals," he said. "There are too many clear chances." Chelsea's new head coach Rosenior watched his charges from the stands at Craven Cottage. The Englishman, who replaced the departed Enzo Maresca this week, will be in the dug-out for the first time at second-tier Charlton in the FA Cup third round on Saturday.

The former Strasbourg boss said before kick-off that the team "need to hit the ground running for the rest of the season". But, still under the interim leadership of Calum McFarlane, they were reduced to 10 men midway through the first half when Marc Cucurella was shown a straight red card for hauling down Harry Wilson. Liam Delap cancelled out Raul Jimenez's opener but Wilson scored what proved to be the winner from the edge of the area. Bournemouth beat Troubled Tottenham ted moments whistle.