

Meghalaya Wangala Festival begins in Garo Hills

Tura, Nov 07: Chief Minister, Conrad K. Sangma, today, attended the opening day of the three-days 49th Hundred Drums Wangala Festival at Wangala A'dam, Chibagre, in West Garo Hills. The programme was also attended by MLA of Gambegre Mehtab Chandee Agitok Sangma, Superintendent of Police (West Garo Hills) Abraham T. Sangma, Chief Secretary Dr. Shakil Ahammed and other dignitaries. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister thanking the various contingents from different places in Garo Hills for participating in the 100 drums festival said that such culmination of the Garo community from different places is a blessing of the Almighty and also expressed his gratitude to the Organising Committee for upholding the culture and tradition of the Garos for about five decades. "People from different parts of the country and the world assembly every year to soak in our culture and tradition and this beautiful tradition has also been featured in the Indigo inflight magazine of November 2025. This 3 page article is not a paid article but our festival is showcased because it is unique and requires promotion and people from all over come to learn, understand and witness our culture," he said. The Chief Minister said the works towards the approach road to Wangala A'dam, the venue of the festival for which 20 Cr has been sanctioned has already started. "With the completion of this road the approach to the venue will be smoother facilitating more crowd and tourists to the festival," he said. "Next year which is the Gold-

en Jubilee of the 100 Drums Wangala Festival the government will support to make the event bigger and grander," and suggested that a State Level Committee is constituted to organise the event and added that with the government machinery involved and with coordination and collaboration in the festival the Golden Jubilee will be a big and grand event. "Late P A Sangma had envisioned the festival to be upscaled to 1000 Drums Wangala Festival. It should be our endeavour to make the upcoming golden jubilee celebration more grandeur with the involvement of key government departments in the celebration. I am positive that the golden jubilee celebrations will be grand a great success," he said. He also requested the cooperation and the collaboration of the organising committee and other civil society bodies for the larger interest of the Garo community and the preservation, conservation and promotion of the Garo tradition and culture. The Chief Minister also informed that the state government has taken various initiatives to promote research on culture and our heritage and highlighted the Chief Minister's Research Grant through which culture, music and tradition of the people are being researched and documented. "Going forward, we want to introduce more intervention to support research for cultural preservation. Not just writing and preservation through books but through video documentation," he added.

He further informed that training on indigenous and age old tradition and practices will be a way ahead for the



youth to learn and understand and to conserve the age old traditions and rich cultural heritage of the state. The Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma today said that a committee has been constituted to document the journey of the Garos from Tibet. "We have constituted a committee, to research on the tribes of Meghalaya and document their migration from Tibet for the Garos, Vietnam and Cambodia for the Khasi and Jaintia community. The committee has met to discuss their way forward and is chalking out plans to begin documentation of the journey", he said.

He also informed that a preliminary research indicate various similarities in culture, language and tradition between the Garos and the people of Tibet. Meanwhile, Chief Secretary Dr. Shakil Ahammed, in his address, emphasized the importance of protecting culture and tradition in an increasingly modern world. He urged the youth to remain rooted in their identity and

called upon the youth to conserve, preserve and protect culture as well nature. Dr. Ahammed further highlighted the State Government's commitment to environmental sustainability, stating that Meghalaya has taken notable steps towards green planning and climate resilience. "We are among the few states that have introduced green budgeting and long-term planning to adapt to climate change and sustainably manage our resources for the next seventy years," he added. Earlier, the programme began with prayers by Rev. Dilseng M. Sangma, Rev. Fr. Januarius S. Sangma and Dr. Imnanunshi Imsong, Principal of H.T.C, followed by a welcome address from Sri Ronald Rikman Sangma, Chairman of the Hundred Drums Wangala Festival Committee (HDWFC) and the Garo Hills Volunteers Corps (GHV). The Chief Minister and dignitaries were presented with mementos as a token of appreciation. Students

from NEHU, Tura, performed a special dance and the highlight of the day was the spectacular "Hundred Drums Wangala" — a traditional performance featuring drummers, flute players, and women. The day also featured a slow food cooking competition, the inauguration of the handloom and handicraft exhibition, and various indigenous games. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Salgira Sangma, Secretary of the Hundred Drums Wangala Festival Committee (HDWFC).

The Wangala Festival is celebrated annually after the harvest season. Organized by the Hundred Drums Wangala Festival Committee (HDWFC) in collaboration with the Department of Tourism, Government of Meghalaya, the three-day festivities feature traditional dances, drum performances, and rituals that showcase the rich cultural legacy of the Garo people.

In Brief

Meghalaya CM inaugurates 49th Wangala Festival

Shillong: The 49th edition of the Wangala Festival, celebrated by the Garo community in Meghalaya, commenced today at Chibragre Wangala A'dam near Tura, inaugurated by Chief Minister Conrad Sangma. Known as the "100 Drums Festival," it honors Saljong, the Sun God of fertility and prosperity, celebrating the conclusion of the agricultural season and expressing gratitude for the harvest while marking the onset of winter in the Garo Hills. The festival, typically lasting two days or extending to a week, starts with the "Ragula" ritual at the village chief's house, followed by the "Kakkat" ceremony. Participants don traditional attire and feathered headgear to perform the Wangala dance, characterized by movements in parallel lines to the beats of long oval-shaped drums, gongs, and buffalo-horn flutes. The vibrant rhythm of the 100 drums fosters a spirit of joy and unity, while the festival also serves as a platform for preserving Garo traditions, music, and rituals, highlighting the community's rich cultural heritage and the tribal diversity of Meghalaya, attracting attention from across the Northeast.

Tribute

Kokrajhar: On the 14th anniversary of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika's death, a tribute event was held at the Govt HS&MP School playground in Kokrajhar, organized by the district administration. Key figures including BTC chief Hagrama Mohilary, Cabinet Minister Urkhao Gwra Brahma, and MLA Lawrence Islay participated in the event, singing Hazarika's iconic song 'Manuhe Manuhor Babe', which highlights human solidarity. Over 5,000 students and community members formed a human chain, symbolizing unity amidst political differences. Mohilary praised Hazarika's extraordinary contributions and committed to preserving his and Zubeen Garg's legacies, thanking Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma for facilitating tribute events across districts, asserting that his efforts greatly honored Hazarika's memory.

Mission 'Return Ticket'

Guwahati: Assam Police and the Border Security Force (BSF) successfully deported 19 Bangladeshi nationals early on November 6, as part of "Mission 'Return Ticket'." Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced the operation on social media, highlighting that the deportees included 14 individuals from Sribhumi and 5 from Cachar, who were returned via the Mahishasan Border Outpost. The Chief Minister praised the efficiency of security forces during the operation, which underscores the government's strict zero-tolerance policy towards illegal immigration. Assam, sharing a 267.5 km border with Bangladesh across multiple districts, maintains three Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) to regulate cross-border movement and trade. Authorities also reaffirmed their dedication to preventing unlawful entries while ensuring safe return for Indian passport holders stranded in Bangladesh through designated entry points.

Mock bomb threat drill held at Imphal airport

Imphal, Nov 07: In a significant security initiative, a bomb threat mock exercise was conducted at Bir Tikendrajit International Airport in Imphal, Manipur, involving the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and various stakeholders. The drill assessed emergency response capabilities, showcasing coordination among multiple agencies including the CISF, Dog Squad, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, Bureau of Immigration, local police, airlines, and airport staff. The CISF emphasized that the exercise confirmed rapid response protocols and enhanced inter-agency cooperation for managing bomb threat scenarios effectively. Future mock exercises are planned across 17 operational airports in the Northeastern states, where CISF personnel are deployed extensively.

16 countries to take part in Manipur's MANITEX 2025

Imphal: After a two-year hiatus, the Manipur International Textile Expo (MANITEX) will return from November 8 to 12 at Urban Haat, Imphal, featuring participants from 16 countries. Organized by the Directorate of Handlooms & Textiles, the expo aims to connect traditional weaving practices with international fashion under the theme "Weaving a Sustainable Future: Manipur's Handloom Heritage to Global Fashion."

Darjeeling MP Raju Bista hails move for alternative highway to ease NH-110 congestion

Guwahati, Nov 07: To ease traffic congestion in the hill town of Darjeeling, the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL) has announced the initiation of the process to hire consultants for conducting a feasibility study, preparing a detailed project report (DPR), and completing pre-construction activities for an alternative highway to Darjeeling. The existing National Highway-110 (NH-110), connecting Siliguri to Darjeeling, has been facing severe congestion for years. Carrying over 15,000 vehicles daily, it operates at more than twice its designed capacity. The traffic situation in Darjeeling has deteriorated during peak hours and



tourist seasons, causing significant delays. Raju Bista, the local MP, praised government officials for prioritizing the development of an alternative highway, a matter he has raised in Parliament and meetings. The NHIDCL has invited tenders for consultancy services to conduct feasibility studies and prepare necessary documents, with proposals due by December 16, 2025, following a timeline that started with document downloads on October 31, 2025.

Meghalaya CM Conrad Sangma inaugurates 49th Wangala Festival at Chibragre

Shillong, Nov 07: The 49th edition of the Wangala Festival, Meghalaya's most celebrated cultural event of the Garo community, kicked off today at Chibragre Wangala A'dam near Tura. Chief Minister Conrad Sangma graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, officially inaugurating the vibrant festivities. Known as the "100 Drums Festival," Wangala is a traditional harvest celebration honoring Saljong, the Sun God of fertility and prosperity. The festival marks the end of the

agricultural season, expresses gratitude for a bountiful harvest, and heralds the onset of winter in the Garo Hills. The two-day festival—or sometimes extended to a week—begins with the "Ragula" ritual in the village chief's residence, followed by the "Kakkat" ceremony. Men and women don traditional attire and feathered headgear to perform the iconic Wangala dance, moving in two parallel lines to the resonant beats of long oval-shaped drums, gongs, and buffalo-horn

flutes. The powerful rhythm of the 100 drums fills the hills, creating an atmosphere of joy, unity, and cultural pride. Beyond celebrating the harvest, Wangala is a platform for preserving and promoting Garo traditions, music, and rituals, showcasing the community's rich cultural heritage. The festival serves as a living testament to Meghalaya's tribal diversity and enduring heritage, drawing attention from across the Northeast.

Manipur BJP MLA calls for fresh polls if government formation fails

Imphal, Nov 07: Manipur BJP MLA L Rameshwor Meetei said that if the Central leadership fails to facilitate the formation of a government in the state soon, fresh elections should be held.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a programme, the Keirao legislator warned that the BJP's position in Manipur could weaken if the political impasse continues.

"There are like-minded BJP legislators among us who have chosen Speaker Thokchom Satyabrata to lead in government formation. We are also prepared to convey this to the Governor to stake claim for forming the

government, but have been waiting for a favourable time," Meetei said.

He asserted that both hill and valley legislators are ready to support the move for government formation. Expressing concern over prolonged uncertainty, he added, "I think if the government is not formed in November, the party's position will not be favourable. If a government cannot be formed, fresh elections should be held."

Meetei's remarks come amid growing speculation within political circles about internal divisions in the BJP's Manipur unit following months of administrative limbo in the state.

Darjeeling MP Raju Bista hails interlocutor appointment, calls for united effort to address regional issues

Guwahati, Nov 07: Darjeeling Member of Parliament Raju Bista today said that there is a great importance of dialogue and cooperation following the recent appointment of a central government interlocutor to address the longstanding political and administrative concerns of the Darjeeling hills, Terai, and Dooars regions. Speaking after a meeting of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its alliance partners, Bista said the session focused on the outcomes of the interlocutor's appointment and its potential role in continuing meaningful

dialogue with all stakeholders. The meeting was attended by senior party leaders, elected representatives, and alliance members from the three regions. "The appointment of the interlocutor is a positive and constructive step toward finding a constitutional solution that respects the identity and aspirations of the people of Darjeeling, Terai, and Dooars," Bista said.

He added that the regions have their own unique geographical, historical, cultural, and socio-economic characteristics, which require sensitive

and inclusive approaches for any political solution. Alliance members reiterated their commitment to collaborate with the central government to maintain political stability in the region.

They planned an all-party meeting to effectively communicate regional aspirations and scheduled regular consultations among partners. Bista and the alliance urged all stakeholders, including local governments, to support these efforts, emphasizing that unity, dialogue, and patience are crucial for addressing the community's interests.

Curtain-raiser workshops of Assam Physiocon 2025 held at RGU

Physiotherapist from AIIMS New Delhi presents evidence-based methodologies at RGU

Guwahati, Nov 07: The Department of Physiotherapy, Royal School of Medical and Allied Sciences (RSMAS), under The Assam Royal Global University (RGU), has successfully hosted two Pre-Conference Workshops as a curtain-raiser to Assam Physiocon 2025—a prestigious national conference organized by the Assam Association of Physiotherapy from 8th to 9th November 2025. About 200 delegates, including faculty members, postgraduate students, and clinicians from reputed institutions across India, have participated in today's event. The two parallel workshops provided participants with hands-on experience in advanced manual therapy and neurorehabilitation techniques. The session on "Craniosacral Ther-



apy" was led by Dr. K. Pearson, Emeritus Professor, Founder-FIMT, and Director, Shree Saradha Academy, while Dr. Prabhat Ranjan, Physiotherapist, Department of Neurology, AIIMS, New Delhi, conducted a workshop on "Neurodevelopmental Technique in Hemiplegics." Focused on bridging theoretical insights with practical applications, both sessions reflected the confer-

ence theme — "Bridging Science and Practice: Healthy Ageing in a Digital World." Addressing the gathering, Dr. (Prof.) Abhijit Dutta, Organising Chairman of Assam Physiocon and Dean, RSMAS, underscored RGU's commitment to promoting skill-based learning, clinical excellence, and digital innovation in allied health sciences. He noted that the workshops offer

● The Department of Physiotherapy at the Assam Royal Global University successfully hosted two Pre-Conference Workshops as a precursor to the Assam Physiocon 2025, attracting around 200 delegates from esteemed institutions.

valuable hands-on learning and foster collaboration in physiotherapy education and research. Both Dr. Pearson and Dr. Ranjan presented evidence-based methodologies essential for enhancing functional recovery in patients with neurological and musculoskeletal disorders. Participants engaged enthusiastically in case demonstrations, interactive discussions, and practical modules that significantly enriched their clinical expertise.

NATIONAL

Tamil Nadu parties get together to create a SOP for the HC order’s political rallies

Chennai, Nov 07: The Tamil Nadu government held a consultative meeting on a Thursday to establish a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for political campaigns, following a Madras high court mandate after a tragic stampede in Karur that resulted in 41 fatalities. This initiative is particularly crucial as the state prepares for assembly elections in the upcoming year. The meeting, convened by senior DMK ministers including K N Nehru (Municipal Administration), S Regupathy (Law), and M Subramanian (Health), involved representatives from all recognized political parties, including the ruling DMK and the main opposition AIADMK, along with some parties with representation in the Parliament and State Assembly. DMK’s organising secretary R S Bharathi and AIADMK’s representatives D Jayakumar and Rajya Sabha

The High Court directed the state government to submit a draft Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in response to a petition from actor Vijay’s Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK), following a stampede that resulted in 41 fatalities at a rally in Karur on September 27. The SOP is intended to prevent future tragedies.

MP I S Inbadurai were present, along with Congress’ Tamil Nadu president K Selvaperunthagai, reflecting a broad consensus on this issue. A participant noted that the proposed guidelines would not restrict the authorities’ powers at the district and police levels. One recommendation included a refundable security deposit based on the anticipated size of the crowds at political events, although the government has yet to disclose the draft

SOP. This SOP initiative stemmed from a directive by the high court in response to a plea from actor Vijay’s Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK), following the unfortunate stampede during their rally on September 27. The SOP’s objective is to prevent any recurrence of such incidents. The Tamil Nadu government plans to present the draft SOP to Chief Justice M M Shrivastava and Justice G Arul Murugan by November 11, adhering to a 10-day deadline set by the bench during an October 26 hearing. TVK had called for uniform conditions for public rallies. Concurrently, Vijay has publicly criticized the state police for imposing restrictions on him that are not faced by other political figures in India. In anticipation of potential non-compliance with the court’s deadline, the high court warned of imposing its own SOP.

Mumbai BJP chief reiterates his post-Zohran Mamdani victory statement

Mumbai, Nov 07: Amid significant controversy, Mumbai BJP chief Ameet Satam has reiterated his stance on preserving Mumbai’s identity, stating that the city should not be “painted on the basis of religion or colour.” His remarks follow the election of Zohran Mamdani, a Muslim, as New York’s mayor, prompting Satam to express concerns about potential religious imposition in Mumbai. He had previously asserted that the city would not tolerate the “imposition” of a ‘Khan’ and affirmed that Mumbai’s identity is rooted in its diversity and unity, rather than in religious or political divisions.



Satam’s comments sparked backlash, with opponents from the Uddhav Sena questioning his mental state and mocking his statements, citing them as bizarre. Satam later took to social media to draw parallels between Mamdani’s election and potential political changes in Mumbai, warning against the imposition of a

‘Khan’ in local governance. He emphasized the need to remain vigilant in light of upcoming municipal elections, set for December 2, where he predicted a Marathi Hindu would emerge victorious. Uddhav Sena leader Anand Dubey criticized Satam’s views, asserting that the BJP’s rhetoric promotes division

● In response to Zohran Mamdani’s election victory in NYC, Mumbai BJP chief Ameet Satam expressed concerns about preserving the city’s identity, asserting that it would not accept the “imposition” of a Khan and rejecting any characterization based on religion or color.

along Hindu-Muslim lines. He expressed confidence that the upcoming municipal elections would end with the saffron flag being raised and a Marathi Hindu mayor elected. The controversy highlights political tensions in Maharashtra as local elections approach.

Sugarcane farmers protest in Karnataka

Bengaluru, Nov 07: Protests by sugarcane farmers in northern Karnataka have entered their second week, with demands for a price of ₹3,500 per tonne for their crop. This agitation, which grew from a sit-in at Belagavi’s Gurlapur Cross, has faced attention from state and central governments as farmers argue that current prices do not cover their production costs and debts. Accusations against sugar factories include heavy deductions for harvesting and transport, which reduce farmers’ income. Farmer leaders have stated they will cease protests only if a higher price is announced by Thursday evening, while tensions have escalated with incidents such as throwing slippers at a minister’s car and blocking roads. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah clarified that the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) is set by the Central Government, asserting that the state can only implement these decisions. He indicated the current FRP is ₹3,550 per tonne based on a 10.25% recovery rate. Discussions are planned between the Chief Minister, sugar mill owners, and farmer leaders to seek a resolution. Political tensions have arisen, with accusations exchanged between the Congress-led state government and the BJP-led Centre. Farmers maintain their stance that they will only withdraw protests if the higher price is guaranteed or if the state covers the difference if sugar mills fail to comply.

Ernakulam–Bengaluru Vande Bharat to launch on Nov 8

Bengaluru, Nov 07: The Ernakulam–Bengaluru Vande Bharat Express will be inaugurated on November 8, reducing travel time between the cities to 8 hours and 40 minutes. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will oversee the flag-off from Varanasi, concurrently launching three other trains. This service is the first inter-state Vande Bharat for Kerala, connecting it with Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. It will serve key cities including Thrissur, Coimbatore, and Erode, and aims to benefit professionals, students, and tourists. Live-streaming of the inauguration will occur at various stations along the route. The train will operate with specific departure and arrival times: KSR Bengaluru at 5:10 am and Ernakulam at 1:50 pm, with the reverse departure scheduled at 2:20 pm from Ernakulam, arriving in Bengaluru at 11 pm.

In Bhadohi, a man posing as a police officer deceives the parents of a missing girl

Bhadohi, Nov 07: A case has been registered in the Bhadohi district of Uttar Pradesh against a man named Sanjay Yadav for allegedly impersonating a police officer and defrauding the parents of a missing 17-year-old girl out of ₹12,000. This incident occurred within the context of a kidnapping case involving the girl, who was reportedly abducted on October 27 while heading to a coaching center. The girl’s family filed a First Information Report (FIR) on November 1, and the investigation is ongoing. Superintendent of Police Abhimanyu Manglik revealed that after the FIR, the girl’s family received distressing videos of their daughter, which were sent under duress to her mother’s phone. The impersonator, posing as a crime branch officer, contacted the family claiming their daughter had been found. He demanded a payment of ₹12,000 for a supposed medical examination, which was paid by her husband. Unfortunately, the girl remains untraced as of the last report. SP Manglik noted that the girl’s mother approached him on Thursday to explain the entire situation and sought assistance in locating her daughter and recovering the money lost to the impersonator.



Based on her complaint, a case was registered at the Cyber Crime Police Station under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the IT Act on Thursday evening, the officer said. The girl’s family has also alleged that Sanjay Yadav’s father, Suryabhan Yadav, is employed as a Home Guard at the Gyanpur police station and that local police may be influenced, causing delays in recovering their daughter. The SP informed that both the Cyber Crime Police Station and Gyanpur Police Station have been instructed to investigate the case thoroughly and ensure the safe recovery of the girl. “Strict action will be taken against whoever is found guilty,” he added.

On the plea against the SIT of Hindu and Muslim officers in the riot case, the SC renders a divided decision

New Delhi, Nov 07: The Supreme Court issued a split verdict on a review plea regarding the establishment of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate an assault on a Muslim boy during the 2013 Akola communal riots in Maharashtra. Justices Sanjay Kumar and Satish Chandra Sharma disagreed on the necessity to revisit the initial September 11 order for the SIT, which was composed of both Hindu and Muslim police officers. Justice Kumar argued for the order’s necessity due to police negligence in registering a criminal

case on the boy’s complaint. Conversely, Justice Sharma expressed concerns over the religious composition of the SIT and scheduled an open court hearing in two weeks, referring the matter to the Chief Justice for consideration by a larger bench. Kumar criticized the state for its failure in duty and the “dubious” practice of simultaneous mentioning of the plea by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who represented Maharashtra. Mehta voiced concern that such orders could lead to demands for benches composed along religious lines. The



case stemmed from a riot ignited by a controversial social media post, during which the boy and an auto rickshaw driver were assault-

ed; the police did not believe the boy’s account and failed to register a case. Citing the Code of Criminal Pro-

■ Two judges have referred the Maharashtra government’s review plea against the September 11 order to the Chief Justice of India for consideration by a larger bench.

cedure, the court mandated action against the officers involved in the complaint’s mishandling and emphasized that police officers should act without personal biases. The court directed the establishment of an SIT to investigate within three months and initiated disciplinary measures against the negligent police officials while reinforcing police duty protocols.

Priority attention to the matter with ATC and DIAL Delhi airport statement on glitch

New Delhi, Nov 07: Delhi’s Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) announced on Friday that it is prioritizing the resolution of significant flight delays affecting over 100 flights due to a technical failure in the Air Traffic Control (ATC) system. The airport is coordinating with ATC, DIAL, and other involved parties to address the situation. Passengers have been encouraged to consult their airlines for the latest updates on flight schedules amidst the disruption. In an official message



posted on X, the Delhi Airport expressed regret for the inconvenience caused by the ATC technical issue, indicating ongoing efforts to rectify the situation

promptly. The airport is advising passengers to seek information directly from airlines to stay informed about potential changes in their travel plans. One af-

fected passenger from Jaipur, Yogesh, expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of communication regarding flight delays. He mentioned receiving no updates regarding his upcoming travel to Switzerland and highlighted that information displays within the airport were unhelpful. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has indicated that specialized teams are engaged in restoring the Automatic Message Switching System (AMSS), which is essential for managing Air Traffic Control data. Currently, flight plans

are being processed manually by controllers, which is intensifying the delays. AAI reiterated this in a separate communication on X, acknowledging the operational challenges faced at Delhi Airport due to the AMSS issue and emphasizing the importance of passenger understanding during this time. In response to the disruptions, several airlines, including Air India, IndiGo, and SpiceJet, have issued advisories to alert travelers about the likelihood of further delays connected to the ongoing issues at IGIA.

30-year-old man dies during cricket match in Jhansi

Jhansi, Nov 07: Ravindra Ahirwar, a 30-year-old Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) development officer from Nalganj, Jhansi, tragically collapsed and died shortly after taking a break during a cricket match. On the morning of the incident, he had been in good health, sharing tea with his father before heading to the Government Inter College ground, where he was participating in the match. While bowling, he began to feel unwell and stopped to hydrate with water. Following this, he reportedly vomited and then fell unconscious. His brother Arvind noted that Ravindra had been healthy just prior to leaving for the match, emphasizing his passion for both his work and cricket. Initially, teammates suspected dehydration as the cause of his distress until they realized the gravity of the situation when he failed to respond. Medical experts, including Dr. Sachin Mahor, Chief Medical Superintendent of Maharani Laxmi Bai Medical College, suggested that the cause of death might be cardiac arrest, although a definitive cause would only be determined through an autopsy. Despite being rushed for medical assistance, Ravindra unfortunately could not be saved. Witnesses indicated that the abruptness of his health decline was shocking, particularly given his previous state of well-being.



claimed the demolition occurred unlawfully in January, breaching constitutional and statutory protections. The petition also alleged violations of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, the Waqf Act, and land acquisition regulations, asserting that compensation was incorrectly granted to encroachers to fabricate a false acquisition claim. The high court had previously dismissed these allegations, determining that both the mosque and the land were lawfully obtained for the redevelopment of the Mahakal Lok complex in relation to the Mahakaleswar Temple, which is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas. It referred to legal precedent, reinforcing that the right to practice religion does not neces-

sarily attach to physical structures, emphasizing that land acquisition does not infringe upon Article 25 as long as the fundamental freedom to practice the religion remains intact. The high court noted compensation was evaluated and awarded by the relevant land acquisition officer. In its dismissal, the Supreme Court opted not to address any factual disputes or reevaluate the validity of the land acquisition, reiterating that the petitioners retain the option to seek further legal remedies. Hence, the demolition stands and the site continues to be included in the larger redevelopment and parking expansion efforts surrounding the Mahakaleswar Temple.

PM at the “Vande Mataram” event: “India is both a protector and a destroyer in service of humanity”

New Delhi, Nov 07: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during an event commemorating the 150th anniversary of the national song ‘Vande Mataram’ in New Delhi, emphasized India’s transformation from a service-oriented nation to one of strength in the face of security threats, likening it to the goddess Durga. He referenced the Pahalgam terrorist attack and ‘Operation Sindoor’ to illustrate India’s resilience against terrorism. Modi connected these sentiments to the civilizational portrayal of the nation as a mother, a concept deeply embedded



in India’s Vedic traditions. He discussed the historical significance of ‘Vande

Mataram,’ noting that it emerged during India’s colonial oppression under the British, serving as a symbol of independence and hope for a prosperous future despite dire circumstances. Modi highlighted how the song refuted colonial narratives deeming India inferior and backward, stating that its lines represented a vision of independence. He quoted Rabindranath Tagore, affirming ‘Vande Mataram’ as not just a novel creation but as a dream reflective of an independent India, relevant across eras. The Prime Minister articulated that the

essence of ‘Vande Mataram’ stems from a profound emotional and philosophical understanding of India’s identity, asserting that the song symbolizes India’s enduring history and the collective resolve for independence, marking a pivotal declaration that would lead to the nation’s self-determined destiny. Modi concluded by underlining the core emotion of the song as one of gratitude and resilience, celebrating India as a nation that has weathered trials and emerged immortal. Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Modi referred to the national song ‘Vande

Mataram’ as “a mantra, energy, dream and resolve” that inspires citizens. He inaugurated a year-long commemoration marking 150 years since its composition, which will last until November 7, 2026. The program featured the release of a commemorative stamp and coin, the launch of a digital portal, and a nationwide mass singing of the complete song. Notable attendees included Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, and Delhi chief minister Rekha Gupta.

Mission ‘Return Ticket’

19 illegal Bangladeshis deported from Assam’s Shribumi and Cachar

■ Assam Police and the Border Security Force (BSF) successfully deported 19 Bangladeshi nationals back to their country on November 6, with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announcing the operation via social media.



Guwahati, Nov 07: Assam Police and the Border Security Force (BSF) successfully pushed back 19 Bangladeshi nationals to their country in the early hours of Thursday, November 6. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced the operation on social media platform X, writing, “Mission ‘Return Ticket’ completed before sunrise! At 2:15 AM, 19 Bangladeshi nationals (14 from Sribhumi and 5 from

Cachar) were escorted back home via Mahishasan Border Outpost — courtesy of Assam Police and BSF’s teamwork.” The Chief Minister lauded the prompt and efficient action of security forces in Sribhumi and Cachar districts, noting that the operation reflects the government’s zero-tolerance stance against illegal infiltration. “Every such illegal immigrant caught in Assam is being deported swiftly and lawfully,” Sarma said.

Assam shares a 267.5 km international border with Bangladesh through the districts of Sribhumi, Cachar, Dhubri, and South Salmara-Mankachar. The state also houses one of the three Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) in the North-east along the India-Bangladesh border — located at Sutarkandi in Sribhumi. The other two ICPs are situated at Dawki in Meghalaya and Akhaura in Tripura. Additionally, an ICP at Darranga in Assam

facilitates trade and movement along the India-Bhutan border. Earlier, Assam Police had reiterated its commitment to preventing any unlawful entry of non-Indians into the state following last year’s political unrest in Bangladesh. However, authorities clarified that all Indian passport holders stranded in the neighbouring nation would be permitted to return safely through designated entry points.

Nagaland’s Tokhü Emong Festival kicks off in Wokha, celebrate Lotha culture and community spirit

Kohima, Nov 07: The Tokhü Emong Mini Hornbill Festival, a vibrant post-harvest celebration of the Lotha Naga community, commenced on Wednesday at the Public Ground in Wokha. The inaugural programme was graced by Achumbemo Kikon MLA, who served as the special guest, alongside SDPDB Chairman Bhandari. Tokhü Emong, observed annually in the first week of November, marks the end of the agricultural season and is a time of thanksgiving, reconciliation, and renewal of social bonds among families and villages. The festival is traditionally celebrated with feasting, folk songs, dances, and gift exchanges, reflecting the rich cultural heritage and communal harmony of the Lothas. Addressing the gathering, Achumbemo highlighted the importance of responsibility, critical thinking, and collective action as foundations for community growth



and prosperity. He emphasized the historical significance of Tokhü Emong in fostering unity and urged citizens to adopt a mindset focused on social transformation, sanitation, and sustainable development. The MLA inaugurated the festival’s Tokhü stalls and officially opened the Traditional Competition, which featured events such as traditional weaving and folk song performances. In the

weaving demonstration— from cotton processing to cloth making—the N. Longdang Women Cultural Troupe emerged as the winner, with Wokha Town Akuk Women Cultural Troupe and Wokha Village as first and second runners-up. In the folk song competitions, the men’s category was won by Wokha Town Akuk Cultural Troupe, while the women’s category top prize went to

Wokha Town Women Cultural Troupe. In the youth segment, Thithanro Von was declared the winner. The programme was chaired by Lotha Students’ Union President Lirhonhung Kithan, with a welcome address by the advisor of Lotha Hoho, and featured a special folk song performance by Wokha Town Mekokla Ekhung, adding color and melody to the festive occasion.

Meghalaya government clarifies position on truckers’ strike, calls blockade illegal

Shillong, Nov 07: The East Jaintia Hills District Administration has issued a detailed clarification regarding the ongoing strike by the Meghalaya Commercial Truck Owners and Drivers Association (MCTODA) against cement companies operating in the region. Authorities have termed the continued blockade along National Highway-6 as “illegal” and warned that no group will be allowed to take the law into its own hands. Following the strike call on October 27, 2025, officials initiated a series of meetings to resolve the dispute through dialogue. The first coordination meeting, held on 30 October at the Deputy Commissioner’s office in Khliehriat, included representatives from the Jaintia Hills Cement Manufacturers Association (JHCMA), Jaintia Hills Truck Owners Association (JHTOA), and East Jaintia Hills Truck Owners and Transporters Association (EJHTOTA). Despite being invited, MCTODA refused to attend the meeting. The other two associations confirmed they were operating normally with ce-



ment plants and had no involvement in the strike. Written submissions from these groups reaffirmed their commitment to continue transportation activities without disruption. Further discussions between MCTODA and the JHCMA were chaired by the Deputy Commissioner on 31 October and 3 November to address the truckers’ demands. MCTODA had sought enforcement of freight rates, prevention of overloading, priority loading for local trucks, parking facilities, timely payments, and

adherence to labour regulations. The JHCMA clarified that government-notified freight rates for intra-state transportation were already being followed by all cement plants. However, MCTODA’s insistence on applying the same rates to interstate transport was deemed unlawful. The administration stated that the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, does not authorise any state government to fix rates for inter-state transport, as these are determined by market factors and mutual agreements.

Despite progress on several of their other demands, MCTODA continued the strike, allegedly obstructing the movement of trucks carrying cement and clinker. The blockade has disrupted both transport and public movement along NH-6, with reports of vehicle damage and harassment of non-participating drivers. Police have since taken steps to clear the blockades and restore traffic. Representatives from JHTOA and EJHTOTA expressed concern that their members’ livelihoods were being affected by the strike, urging the administration to ensure safe passage for their vehicles and inclusion in future consultations on freight matters. The Deputy Commissioner reiterated the government’s stance that while associations may voice genuine concerns, no one will be permitted to block highways or disrupt essential services. The administration reaffirmed its commitment to continue dialogue with all stakeholders to ensure lawful resolution, maintain order, and protect the livelihoods of transport workers across East Jaintia Hills.

Mock bomb threat drill held at Imphal airport

Imphal, Nov 07: In a significant security initiative, a bomb threat mock exercise was conducted at Bir Tikendrajit International Airport in Imphal, Manipur, involving the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and various stakeholders. The drill assessed emergency response capabilities, showcasing coordination among multiple agencies including the CISF, Dog Squad, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, Bureau of Immigration, local police, airlines, and airport staff. The CISF emphasized that the exercise confirmed rapid response protocols and enhanced inter-agency cooperation for managing bomb threat scenarios effectively. Future mock exercises are planned across 17 operational airports in the North-eastern states, where CISF personnel are deployed extensively.

Dhubri gets Lachit Borphukan Military Station

Dhubri, Nov 07: In a significant step towards enhancing regional security and fostering civil-military cooperation, the Lachit Borphukan Military Station was officially inaugurated on Thursday at Bamunigaon in Dhubri district. Spread across 196 bighas of land in Sapotgram under the Bilasipara Revenue Circle, the new military station is expected to bolster operational preparedness and maintain peace in Assam’s lower region. The establishment is strategically positioned to improve border vigilance, rapid deployment, and area domination, especially along the sensitive frontier adjoining West Bengal and Bangladesh. The inauguration ceremony was led by Lieutenant General R. C. Tiwari, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Command, who highlighted the installation’s importance for national defense and regional stability. Senior officials from both military and civil administration, including Lt Gen Gambhir Singh, AVSM, YSM, GOC Gajraj Corps; Vivek Raj Singh, IGP (Assam Police); Dibakar Nath, IAS, Deputy Commissioner, Dhubri; and Debasish Borah, APS, Superintendent of Police, Dhubri, attended the event, reflecting strong civil-military synergy. Addressing the gathering, Lt Gen Tiwari said the station would “go a long way in ensuring peace and security in the region,” reaffirming the Army’s commitment to safeguarding borders and maintaining harmony in western Assam. The base is named after Lachit Borphukan, the celebrated 17th-century Ahom general renowned for his valor during the Battle of Saraighat, paying tribute to Assam’s rich martial heritage. Officials noted that the naming symbolizes the Army’s respect for the state’s historical heroes and enduring warrior spirit.

Assam govt issues prohibitory order ahead of MPSC examination in Guwahati

Guwahati, Nov 07: The Office of the Commissioner of Police, Guwahati, has issued a prohibitory order under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 to ensure the smooth and transparent conduct of the Manipur Public Service Commission (MPSC) Combined Competitive (Main) Examination, 2022, scheduled for November 7, 8, and 9. The examination will be held simultaneously at the Office of the Assam Public Service Commission (APSC) in Guwahati and the Imphal Centre in Manipur. According to the order, a total of 199 candidates are set to appear for the exam in Guwahati. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Administration) Imdad Ali, APS, issued the order on Wednesday, prohibiting the entry of any person within 100 meters of the APSC examination cen-

tre except for candidates with valid admit cards, examination officials, police personnel on duty, and authorised government representatives. The prohibitory order will remain in force during the examination hours — from 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon and 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM on November 8 and 9. The measure aims to prevent any law and order issues and to plug potential malpractices, particularly the misuse of mobile applications and social media during the exam. The order cited previous instances of unfair means and interference by outsiders in similar recruitment tests, stressing the government’s commitment to maintaining a free, fair, and transparent selection process. Violation of the order will invite action under Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023.

Mizoram BJP ramps up Dampa by-election campaign, MLA Beichhua promises ‘real development’

● The Meghalaya High Court has referred a dispute over the Mawjymbuin cave in Mawsynram, East Khasi Hills, to a single judge for mediation.

Aizawl, Nov 07: With the Dampa Assembly by-election approaching, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Mizoram unit has intensified its campaign activities across the constituency. On Thursday, State BJP President and MLA Dr. K. Beichhua held an interaction meeting with party workers at Ailawng village to boost morale and reinforce the party’s vision for progress. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Beichhua expressed confidence in BJP’s prospects in Dampa, promising “real development” if the party comes to power. “As we prepare for the Dampa Assembly Constituency by-election, I firmly believe that once the BJP wins, we will witness meaningful development in the region,” he said, urging party work-



ers to mobilize support and focus on the welfare of the constituency. Dr. Beichhua also highlighted the strong backing of the BJP central leadership for Mizoram, emphasizing the state unit’s importance within the party’s national framework. He underscored the need for effective implementation of Central Government schemes and called on the state administration to cooperate for smooth

execution of development projects. Urging voters to prioritize genuine progress over political rhetoric, Dr. Beichhua said, “We must work sincerely, without fear, and with dedication to bring real development to Mizoram.” He further announced that Union Ministers would visit Dampa to support the party candidate, reinforcing the BJP’s commitment to the constituency.

Tribute

Kokrajhar, Nov 07: On the 14th anniversary of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika’s death, a tribute event was held at the Govt HS&MP School playground in Kokrajhar, organized by the district administration. Key figures including BTC chief Hagrama Mohilary, Cabinet Minister Urkhao Gwra Brahmad, and MLA Lawrence Islary participated in the event, singing Hazarika’s iconic song ‘Manuhe Manuhor Babe’, which high-

lights human solidarity. Over 5,000 students and community members formed a human chain, symbolizing unity amidst political differences. Mohilary praised Hazarika’s extraordinary contributions and committed to preserving his and Zubeen Garg’s legacies, thanking Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma for facilitating tribute events across districts, asserting that his efforts greatly honored Hazarika’s memory.

6,000 Tripura farmers to get aid under ARC potato scheme



Agartala, Nov 07: In a bid to boost potato production and strengthen agricultural self-reliance, the Tripura government has announced substantial financial and material support for farmers adopting the Aeroponic Rooted Cutting (ARC) method of cultivation. Addressing the media at the Secretariat, Agriculture Minister Ratan Lal Nath said that a total of 6,000 farmers will benefit under the scheme this year. Each farmer will receive Rs 2,000 in direct financial support, along with agricultural materials worth Rs 1,000, bringing the total government expenditure to Rs 1.8 crore. Currently, around 23,700 farmers cultivate potatoes across 47,341 kanis of land in the state. Traditionally, yields ranged from 2,500–3,000 kg per kani, but the ARC method has significantly increased production to 9,000–10,000 kg per kani, reducing reliance on imports and improving farmer incomes. Minister Nath emphasized that by 2028–29, Tripura aims to achieve self-sufficiency in seed potato production, and by 2029–30, full self-reliance in table potato production. The ARC method was piloted in 2023 with 100 farmers and expanded to 400 farmers in 2024, producing promising results. This year, 4,000 farmers will be supported through the RKBY project and 2,000 farmers under the Watershed Management Project.

Adil Hussain appointed festival ambassador for Arunachal Rang Mahotsav 2025

Itanagar, Nov 07: National award-winning actor and theatre veteran Adil Hussain has been named the Festival Ambassador for Arunachal Rang Mahotsav 2025, the state’s premier celebration of performing arts and cultural heritage. The announcement comes as the festival gears up to showcase the Northeast’s

rich tradition in theatre, music, and dance, attracting visitors from across India. A native of Goalpara, Assam, Hussain has earned acclaim for his remarkable versatility on stage and screen. He has appeared in films like Ishqiya, English Vinglish, Lootera, and Mukti Bhawan, as well as international productions

such as Life of Pi, The Reluctant Fundamentalist, and What Will People Say. His performances have been celebrated at major film festivals including Venice, Toronto, and Berlin. Hussain received a Special Mention at the National Film Awards for Mukti Bhawan and the Best Actor Award at the Nordic International Film

Festival for Maj Rati Keteki. He advocates for conscious cinema and mentors at various institutions. As the festival ambassador for the Arunachal Rang Mahotsav 2025, he will enhance the event’s profile and focus on blending traditional narratives with contemporary artistry, showcasing the region’s cultural richness.

Suzlon shares Anand Rathi sees up to 44% upside over record

Suzlon Energy, a leading Indian wind turbine manufacturer, continues to see robust growth momentum, according to Anand Rathi Share & Stock Brokers, which sees up to 44% upside in it.

New Delhi: ,Suzlon Energy, a leading Indian wind turbine manufacturer, continues to see robust growth momentum, according to Anand Rathi Share & Stock Brokers which sees company is supported by a record 6.2GW order book as installations in the industry are expected to increase by 9-10GW annually by FY28. Quoting the brokerage report, “we expect the company to deliver 2.6/3.4/3.9GW in FY26/27/28.” The report

highlights Suzlon’s consistent performance and sectoral advantages. Anand Rathi stated, “Given its consistent delivery and strong sector tailwinds, we maintain a BUY rating on the stock, valuing it at 40x Sep’27 EPS.” This confidence is based on a strong execution pipeline and nearly 7GW of land under development, reinforcing the company’s ability to meet future commitments. Suzlon delivered a record quarterly performance in Q2 FY26, with revenue, EBITDA, and PAT increasing 84%, 145%, and 166% year-on-year to Rs38.7bn, Rs7.2bn, and Rs5.6bn respectively, beating analyst expectations.

As noted in the report, “Revenue/EBITDA/PAT rose 84%/145%/166% y/y to Rs38.7/7.2/5.6bn; ahead of estimates; (vs. AR of Rs29.7/5.3/2.9bn and Ce of Rs30.9/4.8/2.9bn), largely due to higher WTD deliveries (565MW vs. year-on-year increase in net profit to Rs 1,278 crore for the September 2025 quarter. Revenue from operations rose 85 per cent year-on-year to Rs 3,870 crore. Ebitda climbed 145 per cent to Rs 720 crore, with margins improving to 18.6 per cent, up by 460 basis points for the quarter ended September 30, 2025. Deliveries for the period stood at 565 MW, the highest ever for the company.

Star Cement stock Brokerages raise price targets, see up to 37% upside Q2 results

Mumbai: Star Cement shares were in focus on Friday after the company reported a stellar set of numbers for the quarter ended September 30, 2025. The cement maker’s consolidated net profit surged 1,169 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 72 crore, a sharp jump from Rs 6 crore in the same quarter last year The robust earnings prompted upbeat views from analysts. Axis Securities and JM Financial both reiterated their ‘Buy’ calls on the stock and raised their price targets, projecting an upside of up to 37 per cent. The brokerage expects cement demand in Star Cement’s key markets—East and Northeast India—to remain robust, supported by strong government-led infrastructure spending and housing projects. It also raised its PAT estimates by 23 per cent for expectations and maintained its ‘Buy’ rating, while lifting its target price to Rs 310 from Rs 300 — implying a 26 per cent upside. The brokerage highlighted that the company maintained its volume guidance of 5.5 million tonnes for FY26 and reported a strong incentive income of Rs 556 million during the quarter. Star Cement’s outlook



remains upbeat, supported by its ongoing capacity expansion. The company’s Silchar grinding unit is expected to be commissioned by Q4FY26, which will boost total capacity to 9.7 MTPA from the current 7.7 MTPA. Star Cement’s bottom-line growth was driven by higher volumes, improved operational efficiency and cost control. Revenue from operations rose 26 per cent YoY to Rs 811

crore in Q2FY26. EBITDA climbed 99 per cent YoY to Rs 190 crore, supported by a 20 per cent YoY increase in sales volumes to 1.17 million tonnes. Calling the results a beat on all fronts, Axis Securities retained its ‘Buy’ rating and hiked its target price to Rs 335 from Rs 325, implying a 37 per cent potential upside from current levels.

Can Adani Ports shares surpass a record high after outperforming Sensex returns in 2025

Mumbai: Shares of Adani Ports & Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) have approached their 52-week high reached in June this year. The Adani stock, which hit a 52-week high of Rs 1,493.85 on June 10 rose to a high of Rs 1,464 in the afternoon session today. However, the stock is still down 10% from its record high of Rs 1621.40 reached on June 3, 2024. The Adani Group stock seems to be in a bull run surpassing returns of its benchmark Sensex this year. Another brokerage Jefferies has a buy call on Adani Ports with a price target of Rs 1880. The brokerage said Q2 EBITDA beat its estimates by 5%, boosted by domestic ports margin surprise (+178 bps YoY) and 3.4x YoY rise in Marine business revenue. Implied organic volume growth (domestic) was muted at 3% YoY (vs

12% reported) with weak power demand growth (+1% YoY). The company’s strategy is to drive absolute EBITDA growth (vs. pure volume driven growth) remains, led by integrated logistics solutions. Capital allocation also remains a focus area, added Jefferies. Another brokerage Nuvama has a buy call on the Adani Ports stock with a price target of Rs 1900. Consolidated revenue/EBITDA/PAT rose 30%/26%/27% YoY in Q2FY26 which was 1–3% above Nuvama’s estimates. APSEZ reported an improvement in Return on Capital Employed profile across assets notwithstanding ongoing trade disruption, the brokerage mentioned reiterating its FY26/30 guidance across parameters. Adani Ports stock has gained 20% in 2025 against returns

of 6% delivered by the 30 stock index. The rally in the Adani Group stock comes on the back of strong quarterly earnings of India’s largest port operator. Over the last five years, the company logged a healthy net profit CAGR of 24%. Global brokerage HSBC has a buy call on the Adani Group stock with a price target of Rs 1700. Q2 marked another quarter of continued improvement in Return on Capital Employed (ROCE) across major businesses, notably in international ports, said HSBC. Robust underlying demand, market share gains and overseas expansion will support its 1,000 mmt robust cargo volume growth ambition for 2030, the brokerage mentioned adding that the strategic pivot to focus on ROCE improvement should drive rerating for the stock.

PFC Q2 earnings Net profit rises to Rs 4,462 cr

New Delhi: Power Finance Corporation Ltd. (PFC) released its September quarter financials on Friday, reporting a year-on-year net profit growth of 2% to ₹4,462 crore compared to ₹4,370 crore in the previous year. The company also recorded a 20% increase in its Net Interest Income (NII) to ₹5,290 crore from ₹4,407 crore a year ago. Shares of PFC ended the day 1.44% lower at Rs 380.45. Market cap of the firm stood at Rs 1.25 lakh crore. In its notes to account, PFC stated that it has classified another loan account, with a total exposure of ₹263 crore, as “fraud.” The company confirmed that “100% provisioning has been done on the said account.” This step underscores PFC’s approach to risk management and compliance with regulatory requirements. The announcement follows earlier efforts by PFC to address asset quality concerns and reflects the company’s ongoing efforts towards transparency.

GST rules from Nov 2025 3-day registration, 3-year filing limit

New Delhi: Starting November 1, 2025, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) framework in India has undergone significant updates aimed at easing compliance for small businesses while tightening timelines for return filings and corrections. The most notable change is the introduction of a simplified GST registration scheme for small and low-risk businesses, promising faster approvals and reduced paperwork. Under the new system, eligible applicants will receive GST registration within three working days. The scheme, approved by the GST Council in its September 3 meeting, applies to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that either: Another critical reform, effective from April 2025, is the three-year filing and correction cutoff rule. Under this provision, GST returns older than three years cannot be filed or revised, even by chartered accountants or auditors. Kaushik emphasised that this move targets habitual late filers and aims to promote timely compliance and transparency. “Once the window closes, not even your CA can amend those returns,” he



cautioned, adding that businesses must now adopt robust internal accounting systems to avoid penalties or revenue loss. Are identified by the GST system’s data analytics engine as low-risk, or self-assess that their monthly output tax liability will not exceed ₹2.5 lakh (including CGST, SGST/UTGST, and IGST). The scheme is voluntary, allowing businesses to opt in or withdraw at any time. According to tax expert CA Nitin Kaushik, this reform “will make it significantly easier for small entrepreneurs to start and scale without getting buried under red tape.” He explained that the initiative is part of a broader shift in GST administration — one that combines data-driven scrutiny with trust-based facilitation for compliant taxpayers.

Toyota, Honda turn India into car production hub pivot away China

New Delhi: Toyota, Honda and Suzuki are spending billions of dollars to build new cars and factories in India, a sign of the country’s growing importance as a manufacturing hub as Japanese automakers redraw global supply chains to reduce dependence on China. Toyota, the world’s largest carmaker, and Suzuki, the leader in the Indian market with almost a 40% share, have separately announced investments totalling \$11 billion to beef up manufacturing and export capabilities in the world’s third-largest auto market. Honda said last week it will make India a production and export base for one of its planned electric cars. The Japanese automaker plans to launch 15 new and refreshed models in India by the end of the decade and deepen its rural network, Reuters reported last week. It aims to have 10%

of the passenger car market before the end of the decade, from 8% now. “The Indian market is extremely important and is set to grow in the future,” Toyota President Koji Sato told reporters at last week’s Japan Mobility Show, noting many other automakers were also paying attention to the market. Last year Toyota announced more than \$3 billion in investment to expand production at its existing factory in southern India by some 100,000 vehicles a year and build a new plant in western Maharashtra state that is expected to begin production before 2030. That is expected to take Toyota’s Indian production capacity to more than 1 million vehicles. India’s low costs and vast labour pool have long been an attraction for manufacturers. Now, Japanese automakers are stepping up operations as they pivot

away from China, both as a market and a manufacturing base, multiple industry executives said. Another benefit: India remains all but closed to Chinese EVs, so Japan’s carmakers - at least for now - won’t face bruising competition from BYD and others there. A brutal price war among Chinese EV makers has made it difficult to turn a profit in China. Adding to the pain, Chinese carmakers are now expanding overseas and snatching market share from Japanese rivals in Southeast Asia. “India is a good choice as a replacement market for China,” said Julie Boote, autos analyst at Pelham Smithers Associates in London, citing low profit margins in China. “For the time being, the Japanese think it’s a much better market because they don’t have to deal with the Chinese competitors,” she said.

Other draws include the improved quality of India’s manufactured goods, and incentives from Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government, executives say. Toyota and Suzuki each have majority ownership of their India units. Honda owns 100% of its business there. Japan’s annual direct investment in the Indian transport sector, which includes automakers, jumped more than sevenfold between 2021 and 2024, hitting 294 billion yen (\$2 billion) last year. As Japanese automakers revved up investment in India, they cooled on China: direct investment in China’s transport sector saw an 83% decrease over the same period, to 46 billion yen last year. Toyota is working with Japanese and Indian vendors to lower costs and expand production of hybrid components.

Shutdown fears, tariff doubts spur renewed investor demand Gold hovers around \$4,000

Mumbai: Gold prices edged higher on Thursday, supported by a weaker U.S. dollar and renewed safe-haven demand as investors weighed the impact of a possible prolonged government shutdown and fresh doubts over the legality of U.S. President Donald Trump’s tariff measures. Spot gold rose 0.2% to \$3,989.91 per ounce by 1:40 p.m. ET (1840 GMT), while US gold futures for December delivery settled almost unchanged at \$3,991. The dollar retreated 0.5% after touching a four-month high in the previous session, making gold more affordable for foreign investors. “With the U.S. government shutdown and skepticism from Supreme Court justices on the tariff case, we’re seeing a revival of the haven bid,” said Peter Grant, vice president and senior metals strategist at Zaner Metals. “Gold is on track for a fairly decent close to the year. A year-end target in the \$4,300–\$4,400 per ounce range seems reasonable.”

In India, gold prices have mirrored global fluctuations. After hitting an all-time high in early October at around Rs 132,770 per 10 grams (24K), prices have since corrected. As of November 7, 2025, 24-carat gold was priced at Rs 12,202 per gram, down Rs 55 from the previous day. The 22-carat variety stood



at Rs 11,185 per gram (down Rs 50), while 18-carat gold traded at Rs 9,152 per gram (down Rs 41). For larger quantities, the downward adjustment was sharper. A 100-gram bar of 24K gold fell by Rs 5,500 from yesterday’s rate, with similar drops observed across 22K and 18K segments. Despite the decline, analysts say persistent inflation fears and global uncertainty could keep gold supported in the near term. Gold’s appeal as a store of value tends to grow during economic or political instability. The metal also benefits in lower interest rate environments, as it offers no yield of its own.

The US Federal Reserve cut interest rates for the second time this year last week, and markets now see a 72% chance of another rate cut in December. However,

Fed Bank of Cleveland President Beth Hammack cautioned that stubbornly high inflation argues against easing policy further. The global equity rally may appear steady, but beneath the surface lies fragility and fear. According to Richard Harris, CEO of Port Shelter Investment, investors are underestimating the risks from US political uncertainty, elevated valuations, and potential external shocks. “Yes, there’s a glimmer of hope on tariffs, but let’s be realistic,” Harris told ET Now. “Even if the US Supreme Court moves to unwind emergency orders, Trump still has multiple ways to keep tariffs in place. The bigger issue is credibility — this back-and-forth damages confidence and adds uncertainty.”

HSBC sees Sensex at 94,000 by December 2026 3 key reasons

Mumbai: While retaining its bullish view on the Indian equity market, HSBC believes that the benchmark equity index—BSE Sensex—may touch the 94,000-mark by December 2026. This shows an upside of 13% against the current levels of 83,176. The global financial services firm believes that earnings recovery, valuations and foreign inflows will support the market in the coming months. On a year-to-date basis, Sensex and Nifty50 have gained 6.6% and 7.89%, respectively, till November 6. HSBC, in a report, said that earnings have bottomed in India, and it may see a broad-based recovery in calendar year 2026. “Consensus has pencilled in EPS growth of 15% for the calendar year 2026, with reduced risks of downgrades compared to 2025. Banks were a large drag on growth this year, but as time deposits are rolled over, margins should expand in the coming quarters,” HSBC said.

The overseas firm also added that encouraging management commentary suggests a positive outlook for tech companies. Consumer names, including autos, should benefit from GST cuts, weaker inflation and lower interest rates, although the sustainability of the tax cut impact remains to be seen. On the valuations front, HSBC highlighted that valuations are not as much of a headwind as they were a year ago. They have come off after recent underperformance, both against India’s own history but also relative to other major Asian peers. “India now offers value versus Chinese equities,” it said. HSBC also thinks that the country should see incremental foreign inflows in the coming months. Data available with Ace Equity showed that FIIs have sold shares worth Rs 1.49 lakh crore so far in 2025. “Foreign investors have heavily gravitated towards AI names in Asia in recent months, and some of that was funded by cutting their exposure to India. As a result, India is now the biggest underweight in GEM portfolios and only a quarter of the funds we track are overweight India vs their benchmark. We see India as a



good AI hedge and provides diversification for those who feel uncomfortable with the AI rally. India will be an out-sized beneficiary of any additional money coming into the EM region,” HSBC, in a report, said that earnings have bottomed in India, and it may see a broad-based recovery in calendar year 2026. “Consensus has pencilled in EPS growth of 15% for the calendar year 2026, with reduced risks of downgrades compared to 2025. While retaining its bullish view on the Indian equity market, HSBC believes that the benchmark equity index—BSE Sensex—may touch the 94,000-mark by December 2026. This shows an upside of 13% against the current levels of 83,176. The global financial services firm believes that earnings recovery, valuations and foreign inflows will support the market in the coming months. On a year-to-date basis, Sensex and Nifty50 have gained 6.6% and 7.89%, respectively, till November 6.

Dipika details cancer treatment journey



Mumbai: Dipika Kakar underwent an intensive treatment earlier this year following her liver cancer. In a recent podcast with Bharti Singh and Haarsh Limbachiyaa, she talked openly about her treatment, the mental stamina it required, and how her family’s unfailing love and support helped her stay optimistic throughout it. During the conversation, Dipika shared that this week, she will get her FAPI scan again. She explained that a FAPI scan is similar to a CT scan, however it is designed specifically to detect cancer cells in the body. It helps doctors determine how far the cancer has spread before beginning surgery or treatment. She added that it was good for her that the cancer was limited to the tumour itself. Her last FAPI scan revealed no cancer cells anywhere else in my body.

Salma Khan’s Heartwarming Moment: Cuddles With Grandkids, Arpita Khan Declares Her ‘Favourite Person’

Mumbai: Bollywood superstar Salman Khan’s sister Arpita Khan Sharma treated fans to a heartwarming family moment as she shared a picture of their mother, Salma Khan, lovingly cuddling with her grandchildren Ahil Sharma and Ayat Sharma. Arpita took to Instagram, where she shared a picture of Salma Khan lying comfortably on a bed, smiling warmly as Ahil and Ayat cuddled close to her. Calling her mother her “best friend,” Arpita wrote: “Counting my blessings for the memories my babies get to create spending time with their nani... mom my best friend & my most favourite person in the whole wide world.” Have a look at the post here: Arpita, who is the youngest sister of Salman, married actor Aayush Sharma in 2014. They welcomed their son Ahil in 2016 and their daughter Ayat in 2019. Talking about Aayush, he made his debut in Bollywood in 2018 with the lead role in Salman Khan’s pro-



duction Loveyatri opposite newcomer Warina Hussain. In 2020, he and Saice Manjrekar were seen in the music video Manjha by Vishal Mishra. His breakthrough came in 2021 when he portrayed a gangster alongside Salman in Antim. He is next set to appear in the actioner Kwatha with Isabelle Kaif, a film delayed since 2019. Aayush was last seen in Ruslaan, an action film directed by Karan Lalit Butani. It stars Aayush Sharma,

alongside Sushri Shreya Mishraa, Jagapathi Babu and Vidya Malvade. The film follows Ruslaan, the son of a terrorist, who is adopted by ATS officer Sameer Singh. Ruslaan, in order to clear his stigma of being a terrorist’s son, joins RAW without Sameer’s knowledge. Ruslaan’s intense urge to do the right thing often leads him into complex and dangerous situations. Talking about Salman, he is currently seen as the host of Bigg

Boss 19 and will next be seen in the film, The Battle of Galwan. The film is based on the Galwan stand-off between India and China on June 15, 2020, during the thick of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in India. The post immediately drew attention from fans and well-wishers across social media, who flooded the comments section with heart emojis and warm messages for the grandmother and the Khan family.

Forget Fine Dining: Ishaan Khatter Opts for a Cookie-Only Diet in New York City

Agency: Ishaan Khatter landed in New York City and shared glimpses of his travels with the fans. The homebound actor took to Instagram to share a video of himself, looking charming as always. However, this time, it was his snacks that caught the attention of fans. In the video, Ishaan was seen wearing a navy blue sweatshirt and a pair of black sunglasses. He looked at the camera and showed a half-eaten cookie. “Made it to NYC; at this point surviving on cookies...” he wrote. The actor also shared a selfie from this car journey where he

flaunted a subtle smile. “Resigned smile of a traveller,” he stated in the caption. The actor has recently been making headlines for his film Homebound. Although director Neeraj Ghaywan’s film received praise at various international film festivals, it performed below expectations at the box office. During an interview with PTI, Ishaan reflected on the film and shared, “I don’t think this film is a failure. I think films have different journeys. As far as the box office is concerned, I think this film is going to have a long life.” He further added, “This is not coming

from a place of... I’m not trying to be deluded or in denial about the box office. I know the numbers very well. Our hope is to have it reach as many people as possible. And I’m not going to let up in my efforts.” Homebound premiered at this year’s Cannes Film Festival and was nominated in the Un Certain Regard category. The film also made a powerful impact at the Toronto International Film Festival, earning a standing ovation. Produced by Karan Johar, Homebound features Vishal Jethwa and Janhvi Kapoor in leading roles. The film has been selected as the Indian



entry for the Best International Feature Film for the 98th Academy Awards. Following the success of the Ishaan Khatter and Bhumi Pednekar-starrer series The Royals, the actor is all set to appear in season 2, which was renewed by Netflix earlier this year.

Previously, the streaming giant confirmed the news by sharing, “Old money, new blood, and a new season are in the works.” As per reports, the upcoming season is currently under production, and no further details have been revealed yet.

Veteran Playback Singer, Actor Sulakshana Pandit Passes Away

Mumbai: Veteran playback singer and actress Sulakshana Pandit passed away on Thursday evening after a prolonged illness, her family said. She was 71. More details regarding her demise are awaited. Sulakshana, sister of popular music composer duo Jatin-Lalit and yesteryear actor Vijayta Pandit, is best known for crooning ‘Bekrar Dil Tu Gaye Ja’, and ‘Somwar Ko Hum Mile Mangalwar Ko Nain’ with legendary Kishore Kumar. Her track ‘Pardesiya Tere Desh Mein’ with music icon Mohammed Rafi was also loved by many. The duo together created several musical gems such as Sona Re Tujhe Kaise Miloon, Yeh Pyara Lage Tera Chehra, Jab Aati Hogi Yaad Meri and Yeh Pyar Kiya Hai. And no one can forget her ‘Saat Samundar Paar’ duet with legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar. Also, In 1976, she received a Filmfare Award for the song ‘Tu Hi Sagar Tu Hi Kinara’ from the film Sankalp. Sulakshana began her cine-



matic journey with the 1975 release Uljhan, where she starred opposite the legendary Sanjeev Kumar. The duo reportedly shared a warm and close rapport during the shoot. Coincidentally, November 6 also marks the 40th death anniversary of Sanjeev Kumar, a cherished icon of Indian cinema. Sulakshana was also featured in Hera Pheri (1976), Dharam Kanta (1982), Do Waqt Ki Roti (1988), and Goraa (1987), among others.

SRK, Aamir, Deepika, Ranveer-Alia attend Ranbir’s emotional birthday

Mumbai: Karan Johar is the one person in the entire Hindi film industry who gets along with almost every actor. In fact, several Bollywood stars have often said that he is genuinely a good friend to most. As such, when he shared a photo of himself with Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan, Deepika Padukone, Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt and Ranveer Singh in the same frame, he broke the internet. Now, Karan has revealed how the stars managed to take the “blockbuster” photo.



During an appearance on Sania Mirza’s podcast, Serving It Up With Sania, Karan revealed, “This was Ranbir’s birthday, right before the pandemic. I think it was an emotional day due to reasons to do with his dad’s health (late Rishi Kapoor). But it was also his birthday and we just landed up to wish him and everybody whom we called, they just came.” “Because it was also an emotional day. And then we took this picture,

and it went fully viral. Just look at the cast it has. It is a mega cast. I don’t think so actors like this can ever come together. I think so after Ellen DeGeneres’ Oscar selfie, this is not a selfie, but it is one for the books,” the filmmaker shared. Back in 2018, when Karan had originally shared the photo on Instagram, he captioned it, “The biggest BLOCKBUSTER ever!!!!” The photo immediately went viral across social media platforms, and still continues to create buzz every time it resurfaces. In the picture, the stars looked super happy as they posed for the photo of the

year. Ranbir had his arms around Deepika and Ranveer, while Alia and Karan were twinning in red. Shah Rukh Khan held Alia Bhatt close, and Aamir Khan sat next to them, smiling brightly. In his signature goofy style, Ranveer Singh posed with one arm and one leg in the air. The image has around 875.4K likes today. Back then, many fans speculated in the comments and wondered if the stars were finalised as the cast of the Brahmastra trilogy. However, Karan Johar has revealed that they had gathered to show their love and support for Ranbir Kapoor in his time of duress.

Parineeti Chopra Congratulates Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal on Becoming Parents

Mumbai: Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal, one of Bollywood’s most loved couples, welcomed their first child, a baby boy, on November 7. The couple shared the delightful news on Instagram through a joint statement, and soon after, heartfelt wishes started pouring in. A number of Bollywood celebrities including Kiara Advani, Sidharth Malhotra, Kareena Kapoor Khan and others congratulated the new parents. Parineeti Chopra also joined the celebrities in celebrating Katrina and Vicky’s newborn son! Having welcomed her own baby boy with Raghav Chadha just last month, Parineeti

Chopra sent love to Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal, stating that their play dates have a new member. Soon after Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal announced the arrival of their baby boy, Parineeti Chopra took to her Instagram stories to congratulate them. She re-shared Katrina and Vicky’s announcement post, and expressed her excitement by writing, “Play dates just got their newest member! Congratss mamma and papa @katrinakaif @vickykaushal09.” Check it out below! Meanwhile, Kiara Advani also showered love on Katrina and Vicky. She shared their announcement post on her



Instagram Story and wrote, “Heartiest congratulations mama and papa! #ClassOf2025.” Kiara’s husband and actor Sidharth Malhotra also congratulated the couple, and wrote, “Congratulations Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif. Welcome to the parenthood club.” On Friday morning, Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif shared a joint announcement post on Instagram that read, “Our bundle of joy has arrived. With immense love and gratitude, we welcome our baby boy. 7th November 2025. Katrina & Vicky.” Celebs like Priyanka Chopra, Sonam Kapoor, Samantha Ruth Prabhu, Ananya Panday,

Janhvi Kapoor and Varun Dhawan sent love to the couple. Vicky and Katrina tied the knot on December 9, 2021, in a traditional Hindu ceremony at Six Senses Resort, Fort Barwara in Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan. In September 2025, the couple officially announced that they are expecting their first child together. They shared a black and white Polaroid picture of themselves grinning from ear to ear. The actress was seen cradling her baby bump while Vicky lovingly caressed her belly. “On our way to start the best chapter of our lives with hearts full of joy and gratitude,” the caption read.

Pranit More returns to Bigg Boss

Mumbai: In the upcoming episode of “Bigg Boss 19”, housemate Pranit More, who had left the show due to health reasons, will be seen making a comeback. A new promo by the channel was shared on Instagram and was captioned: “Sabke chehre pe hai khauf, Bigg Boss ke ghar mein kuch toh ajeeb ho raha hai!” The promo begins with Neelam Giri entering the storeroom and getting scared after noticing someone hiding inside one of the cabinets. She is heard saying: “Kaun hai? Kaun hai usme? Koi hai. Koi leta hua hai yaar.” All the housemates run to the storeroom to check. Kunickaa Sadnanad, who is in the kitchen area, asks Neelam if she’s trying to scare people. Gaurav Khanna, who is lying in bed, says: “Ruk jaa.” Farrhana Bhatt goes to check, and then soon Mridul Tiwari and Ashnoor Kaur scream in excitement, looking at Pranit hiding in the cabinet.

‘Baramulla’ Review: Psychological Horror Meets Tragic Political History

Agency: When depicting different milieus and their tragedies, does an insider’s perspective and lived-in experience help achieve authenticity? Or can a filmmaker tell those stories regardless of their backgrounds? It’s a complex debate. But what knowledge acquired from personal history and identity can help with is portraying objectivity. And Aditya Dhar’s Baramulla bears a testament to the same. His voice as a Kashmiri Pandit finds an echo in this tale that’s gut-wrenching, spine-chilling and mythical in equal measures. In 2016, the director-producer penned a short story on the Kashmiri Pandit community that had to leave their home behind during the catastrophic exodus of the 1990s. And now, it has found its way to the screen. The human story, laced with Aditya Suhas Jambhale’s vision, gave birth to Baramulla which has supernatural motifs peppered all over it. Set in 2016, it centres around DSP Ridwaan Shafi Sayyed and his family, who’ve recently moved to Baramulla from Reasi. A hostage situation and an accidental gunshot death in a public school back in Reasi has Ridwaan and his daughter Noorie battling PTSD. Now, in Baramulla, Ridwaan starts inspecting the disappearance of Shoaib, a child, during a magic show. Soon, a series of such events unfold, endangering Ridwaan’s family and the otherwise peaceful town. But there’s more to these kidnappings than what meets the eye. While hunting down the terrorist outfit re-



sponsible, Ridwaan encounters some supernatural events. His wife, Gulnaar, and children, Noorie and Ayaan, notice an eerie presence in their new home. But this supernaturalism is more than just paranormal. It leads the Sayyeds to come to terms with their own demons. But in a more tangible shape, they begin to see the spirits of a family of Kashmiri Pandits, who had suffered inhuman atrocities in the same house years ago. And it is through this intermingling of the worldly and the otherworldly that Dhar and Jambhale make a commentary on and attempt to portray the suffering and struggles that Kashmiri Pandits went through. And interestingly, it’s a Muslim family that helps them avenge their miserable deaths and attain salvation. The radicalism and extremist ideologies of terrorist outfits spare no one, they remind us. Hindus, Muslims, women, men, children – everyone suffers. And it is while helping them avenge their miseries that Ridwaan is also able to rescue a bunch of young children taken in and indoctrinated by anarchists using their dogmatic philosophies.

Onir Honoured with Icon Award on ISAFF Red Carpet in Vancouver

Agency: National award-winning filmmaker Onir was recently presented with the Icon Award at the International South Asian Film Festival (iSAFF) Red Carpet Gala this year. For those unaware, the prestigious award is given to individuals whose work has left a significant mark on cinema and culture. As per the awards committee, “Onir who has been the leading voice for years has directed landmark queer themed films such as My Brother Nikhil and I Am and has consistently created cinema that pushes boundaries, highlights underrepresented voices, and sparks dialogue around issues often left outside the mainstream.”



This year’s festival also hosted the screening of Onir’s latest upcoming film, the queer love drama We Are Faheem and Karun. The movie has already been screened in several film festivals, including the Dharamshala International Film Festival. During an exclusive interview with Filmfare, Onir had opened up about the response he received at several film festivals. “For me, the first international screening was at BFI Flare: London LGBTQIA+ Film Festival, which is one of the largest queer film festivals. Within the first two days, both the shows were totally sold out. It was really overwhelming. There’s a lot of love that I found from the audience, he noted. Speaking about



the recent honour, Onir said, “Receiving the Icon Award at iSAFF is deeply motivating for me. This year marks 20 years of me being a film director in the Hindi film industry. It’s been a long journey from being born at a time when one was not aware of one’s own identity and the word gay, to recognising... accepting one’s identity, then coming to terms with the fact that one was criminalised by law in one’s own country, to using one’s craft as an artist to bring our stories to the audience, to push for acceptance and resisting invisibility, to receiving the Nation Award and finally becoming decriminalised in 2018. But the fight continues for equal

rights, marriage equality, rights to parenthood... basically to be treated as equal. Also to be a voice for all those living in countries where homosexuality is still criminalised by law. Receiving the ICON award is empowering as it validates one’s journey. To also have We Are Faheem and Karun screened here, at a festival that values inclusion and dialogue, makes this recognition all the more special. I feel both humbled and inspired to continue creating work that reflects the world we live in and the world we aspire towards.” The event celebrated Onir’s filmmaking journey and the impact his work has had on cinema.

TRAVEL & HEALTH

A ‘hike for everyone’: The 300km route shining a spotlight on Sri Lanka’s tea history

The sun is bright and harsh on my face when I stop to admire the view – okay, to catch my breath – at the top of the steep path. How is it that just 20 minutes ago, the skies were grey and moody with the threat of an imminent downpour? In Sri Lanka’s central highlands, the weather may be capricious but what remains unchanged is the sprawling expanse of tea estates in every direction. This region is where the bulk of soothing Ceylon tea comes from. And the recently opened Pekoe Trail, Sri Lanka’s first long-distance hiking trail that runs for more than 300km through tea plantations, villages and forests, tells the story of Sri Lanka’s complex and chequered tea history. This hiking trail, divided into 22 stages, begins in Sri Lanka’s second largest city of Kandy, close to the area where Scotsman James Taylor first planted tea in the country in the mid-1800s. After a long and circuitous route, it finally ends in the hill town of Nuwara Eliya, whose cool climes and misty slopes are said to have reminded the British colonisers of Blighty (Britain). The trail has existed in patches since those initial days of tea cultivation in Sri Lanka, beginning as basic mud tracks that were used to transport the leaves to factories and then onward to domestic markets and Colombo port for export. For Pekoe Trail founder and sustainable tourism consultant Miguel Cunat, creating this multi-stage, multi-day hike was a labour of love, involving nearly 10 years of research and exploration. “My initial objective was to promote Sri Lanka as a world-class hiking destination,” says the Spaniard and long-time Sri Lanka resident, who was keen to put the small island back on the tourism map after a disastrous spell with Covid and the subsequent economic crisis. His efforts came to fruition with the official opening of the Pekoe Trail in late 2023, with initial funding from the European Union and USAID. “The trails are fairly easy, at low elevation and open all through the year. In that sense, this hike is for everyone,” he explains. That means everyone, including novice hikers such as myself, have the option to stay in a hotel near the trail and go out on exploratory day hikes within a single stage. I also come to understand later from my trail guides that most visitors choose to do this instead of attempting the trail in its entirety. And although tea is the common thread stitching this story together, each stage has its own unique elements – a colonial-era cricket club here, a seasonal waterfall there, statues of brightly coloured village deities, Anglican churches with brilliant stained-glass windows, distant views of a sharp peak or clusters of wildflowers blooming in the



midst of a barren stretch. Cathy Cruse, a 62-year-old Australian hiker who recently set a record by completing the entire trail in seven days, agrees, saying, “You’ve got the tea plantations and then you’re going into thick jungle and then pine forests, and then at one stage I thought I was walking through Australia, with all the tall eucalyptus trees.” Cunat’s objective was also to bring tourist attention and money into the hinterlands and hill towns located away from the popular coastal destinations of Sri Lanka’s south or the Buddhist Cultural Triangle of Anuradhapura, Sigiriya and Dambulla. Cruse, who is married to a Sri Lankan, says that she has visited Kandy and Nuwara Eliya several times but never had a chance – or indeed, a reason – to explore the more interior parts of the tea country. As Cunat walked along the various trails, he also began to see a larger picture emerging from the network of villages and communities along the way. “Along with nature, there is so much history and living heritage, with local fairs and festivals, and opportunities to see how [rural Sri Lankans] live and work,” he says. And it is this aspect I most enjoy about my hikes – I am never too far from civilisation, be it a local temple or a tea factory, and I get to have regular interactions with friendly plantation workers and

curious children everywhere. It is perhaps why Cruse stresses how safe the trail is for solo or women hikers. “When I pick a trail, I’m looking for somewhere safe that a woman can tackle on her own and not feel intimidated. Not once did I ever feel nervous of my surroundings or my guides on the Pekoe Trail,” she says. The history of tea in Sri Lanka is inextricably linked with the Indian-Tamil plantation workers brought by the British. Their descendants – mostly women – still form the backbone of the lowest levels of tea production. Dressed in frayed button-down shirts and thick long skirts to protect from leeches, they spend their lives picking the finest leaves from the bushes. I see them walking up and down the tea estates, their hands nimble with years of practice, their necks bent with the load of the bamboo baskets tied to their heads, into which they carefully toss the leaves. The women beam in delight when I speak to them in Tamil. “Tell me about India,” third-generation tea picker Sathyavathy demands, when I stop to chat with her group during their mid-morning tea break in the Bogawantalawa area, known as the “Golden Valley” due to its fine quality of tea. “Is it beautiful?” Like many of her peers, she has distant family back in the small towns of Tamil Nadu in South India but has nev-

er visited the country. My initial hikes take me

heart of the tea country, dotted with old factories that still process tea using dated technology, and boutique hotels repurposed from massive bungalows once meant for estate managers. My guide here is Dharsharuban Rathnasingham, a young man whose grandparents and mother used to work in these very tea plantations. Ruban – as he likes being called – is passionate about sharing the stories of his people, Indian Tamils who populate the villages and towns around the various stages of the Pekoe Trail. As we walk, he stops to point out the elements distinctive to tea plantation life, like the “line rooms”, cramped barrack-style quarters where large families lived together (and still do, in some places); and the statues of fierce Tamil protector deities placed at major crossroads or beneath trees, often depicted riding a horse or wielding a scythe. From Hattton, I take the famed Colombo to Badulla train to Ella, from where I attempt to tackle stages 15 and 16 over the next several days, taking in the viewpoint known as Ella Rock and the picturesque nine-arch railway bridge. Here, the tea goes in and out of view, with some stretches taking me over active railway tracks and others on paths shaded by tall eucalyptus and pine trees. The Pekoe Trail may be long and even tough in parts, but it is never boring or monotonous. As Cruse says, “There were just so many ‘wow’ moments during the hike, where you come around a corner, and the whole valley would just be laid out below



through stages seven and eight near Hattton in the and I would have to stop and just stare.”

All You Need To Know About Self-Check-In Key Boxes And Overtourism In Italy



In a bid to deal with overtourism, Florence’s local government is understood to have come up with an order instructing owners of holiday rental properties to remove self-check-in key boxes by February 25. It has been learnt that the move is seen as an endeavour to control the thriving short-term rental market and tackle various concerns raised by the residents and business owners. Overtourism is a phenomenon that causes an excessive surge of people at a particular famous spot building up pressure on the local communities and infrastructure. A report published by news agency Reuters claimed that fines of up to 400 euros (\$417.20) will be pressed against owners who fail to comply with the order, as per the city council’s decision. Needless to say, the move has triggered a huge uproar and resulted in a series of serious discussions. Following this, a lot has been said and written about multiple details about the self-check-in key boxes. These key boxes are primarily used by short-term rental property platforms and enable visitors or tourists to enter the said properties without even having to meet the hosts in person. These key boxes do

offer benefits to both guests and owners but many fear that it may result in security threats. It is even perceived that excessive use of the self-check-in key boxes may also lead to aesthetic pollution in the city of Florence, the Italian Renaissance city. “Next week we will go ... to check where the ban on keyboxes is not respected, and then we will remove them,” Florence Mayor Sara Funaro told a local television channel on Wednesday, as per Reuters. But Florence is not the only city that is facing such an issue. Reuters stated that other Italian travel spots like Rome and Venice also took measured steps to curb tourist numbers. The move comes after locals protested against the lack of affordable accommodation. Tourism is known to promote international harmony and it offers an exchange of cultures. But at the same time, it has to be noted that a proper and calculated strategy is needed to deal with the threats posed by the issue of over-tourism. These steps may include actions such as regulation and developing awareness amongst the tourists to defend the local heritage.



Mediterranean diet could help lower cancer risk in obesity

Obesity is a factor that can influence many areas of health, including cancer risk. Obesity can increase the risk Trusted Source for several cancer types, including liver, kidney, and thyroid cancer. A study published in JAMA Network Open Trusted Source examined how following the Mediterranean diet impacted the risk for obesity-linked cancer. It included over 450,000 participants and found that high adherence to a Mediterranean diet decreased the risk for obesity-linked cancer by 6% compared to low adherence to a Mediterranean diet. The results suggest that this risk reduction was independent of having overweight or obesity. The authors of this research note that previous evidence has found that the Mediterranean diet may help improve obesity and offer protection against some types of cancer. For this study, researchers sought to see how following the Mediterranean diet affected the risk for obesity-linked cancer. They also wanted to explore “the mediating role of body mass index (BMI) and waist-to-hip ratio in the association.” Researchers used European Prospective Investigation Into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC) study information. The EPIC study included participants between the ages of thirty-five and seventy from ten countries. For the current study, they excluded some participants, such as those with cancer at baseline and those with extreme energy intake. In all, they included 450,111 participants in their analysis. Researchers looked at participants’ diets, focusing on 14 key food groups and nutrients, such as participants’ intake of fish, vegetables, and legumes. They then estimated how much participants consumed each component daily and their total energy intake. Researchers also considered data regarding participants’ lifestyles, such as smoking and education level, and body measurements, such as height and weight. BMI was the main indicator for general obesity, and researchers



used the waist-to-hip ratio to indicate abdominal obesity. To see how closely participants adhered to the Mediterranean diet, they used a version of a tool called the MedDiet score. A higher score indicated a higher adherence to the Mediterranean diet, and researchers divided participants into groups of low, medium, and high adherence. They also calculated another measurement, the relative MedDiet score, which considers olive oil consumption and uses a different scoring method. Participants were scored as having a higher adherence to the Mediterranean diet if they had moderate alcohol consumption. Researchers performed data analyses, including looking at results without the alcohol component of the scoring. They also looked at how much of the risk reduction in obesity-linked cancer could be explained by BMI and waist-to-hip ratio. The results revealed distinct benefits for participants who had high adherence to the Mediterranean diet compared to those who had low adherence. Through the participant follow-up time, which had a median of about 15 years, 4.9% of participants developed obesity-linked cancer. The rates were lowest for the group with the highest Mediterranean diet adherence. Overall, high adherence to the Mediterranean diet was

associated with a 6% risk reduction in obesity-linked cancer. Researchers also examined specific types of obesity-linked cancer. High adherence to the Mediterranean diet was associated with a lower risk for colorectal, liver, and kidney cancers. Medium adherence was associated with a lower risk for esophageal cancer. Following the Mediterranean diet appeared to offer distinct risk reduction for participants who were former or current smokers. Among women, researchers did not identify an association between the Mediterranean diet and risk for postmenopausal breast cancer, endometrial cancer, or ovarian cancer. When looking at men and women separately, they found that only medium adherence to the Mediterranean diet compared to low adherence was associated with a decreased risk for obesity-linked cancer. The results also suggested that the observed risk reductions were “not mediated by BMI or waist-to-hip ratio.” This indicates that more research is needed to understand the underlying mechanisms involved. The study results do have limitations. For one, the study included participants from European countries who were in a specific age range at enrollment, so the results cannot be generalized to other populations. Data from additional countries

and populations could be helpful in future research. Dietary data and other components were from participant reports, which are not always correct. Some countries also had participants self-report components like height and weight, which could introduce bias. Additionally, diet and potential confounders were only evaluated once, and it is possible that changes could have happened throughout the follow-up timeframe. The authors further admit that the scoring they used might not totally reflect the Mediterranean lifestyle pattern, but this is more likely to increase bias toward underestimation. The MedDiet score system also has the problem of treating the nutritional components like they are all equally important and then noting if someone consumes more or less than a particular measurement. About 70% of the participants were women, so including more men in future analyses might be helpful. More research may be required to explore the reasons for the associations that the study authors observed. Researchers acknowledge a few possible reasons for why they did not find BMI or waist-to-hip ratio mediated the benefits of the Mediterranean diet, and one is that the cohort had a low prevalence of obesity. The other possibility was “the distinct contribution of general vs. abdominal obesity to metabolic disruptions.” Overall, more research and follow-up may be helpful in this area. Even with all these caveats, the current study emphasizes a potential long-term benefit of following the Mediterranean diet. Anton Bilchik, MD, PhD, a surgical oncologist, chief of medicine, and Director of the Gastrointestinal and Hepatobiliary Program at Providence Saint John’s Cancer Institute in Santa Monica, CA, who was not involved in the study, told MNT that this research “provides further evidence [of] how important a healthy diet low in fat, high in protein and vegetables [and] eliminating processed food is in reducing the risk of getting cancer.”

Why now is the time to explore outer East London

East London. Two words that, if you know anything about the UK’s capital, often conjure up opposing opinions. There are those who mourn its supposedly waning hip factor – regaling stories of 1980s warehouse art shows or squat parties – while deploring the rampant commercialism of its super-charged epicentre, Shoreditch. Others, meanwhile, will rave about new independent galleries or small-plate restaurants in nearby Dalston, Bethnal Green or Hackney. Yet, the general consensus is that East London’s long-buzzing arts and food scenes are continuing to move ever further out, driven – as in other world cities – by the relentless search for affordability. But a few miles east of these oversubscribed neighbourhoods are two boroughs that are lesser known to visitors and have been quietly emerging as London’s next artsy enclave: Waltham Forest and Newham. Stretching north from Stratford up to Leyton and Walthamstow, this once-unfashionable outer area hasn’t always matched East London’s brand of cool. And yet in spring 2025, it’s witnessing a cultural explosion, with new museums, theatres and bars and some of the city’s biggest arts openings that are putting this under-the-radar corner of London on the map. The catalyst for these boroughs’ rise was the 2012 London Olympics, which transformed the area’s scrapyards and brownfield land into the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park – an oasis of rivers, canals and water meadows bordered by Stratford, Leyton and Hackney. “The Olympics brought a huge amount of investment in infrastructure, transport links and housing,” said Britannia Morton, co-chief executive of Sadler’s Wells, the world-famous Islington-based dance theatre founded in the 18th Century. “The Olympic Park, where our new Sadler’s Wells East is based, was created converting marshland into this beautiful environment.” Sadler’s Wells East, which opened in February 2025, is located in East Bank, a £1.1bn new waterside cultural quarter in the Olympic Park. “[It was] formerly known as Fridge Mountain – a dumping ground for old electronic appliances,” said Morton. The first landmark to open here was the University of the Arts’ London College of Fashion in October 2023, which has galleries and a

cafe open to the public. Sadler’s Wells East was built in Italian red brick and houses a 550-seat state-of-the-art auditorium and six dance studios. “Whether you’re interested in ballet, hip-hop, kathak or contemporary, our eclectic programme brings the most innovative work created locally, nationally and internationally to Stratford,” said Morton. Visitors can enjoy free events in its public spaces, including lunchtime dance classes on the community dance floor, as well as a bar and restaurant. There are panoramic views from its rooftop over the London Aquatics Centre, Sir Anish Kapoor’s 114.5m ArcelorMittal Orbit (the UK’s largest sculpture) and the London Stadium. Across the park at the Here East innovation and tech campus (formerly the London Olympics Media Centre) is the glass-fronted V&A East Storehouse, opening 31 May 2025. It’s the first half of the new V&A East, whose South Kensington-based original is the world’s largest museum of applied arts, decorative arts and design, with more than 2.8 million objects in its permanent collection. This first instalment is essentially a new home for the V&A East’s reserve collection (hence the name “Storehouse”), and “a magical new behind-the-scenes museum experience”, according to its deputy director and COO Tim Reeve. With 100 curated mini displays, its half a million works range from the Glastonbury Festival Archive to Dior haute couture and mid-century furniture. Its world-first Order an Object experience allows anyone to book an appointment to view anything from Roman frescoes to Elton John’s costumes. It will also be home to the new David Bowie Centre, opening 13 September 2025, displaying the singer’s outfits, lyrics and archive. “It’s a new standard for access to national collections,” said Reeve. “We’re encouraging visitors to feel empowered to make their own journeys through the V&A’s global collections.” The second half, the five-storey V&A East Museum, is opening in East Bank in spring 2026. Its main exhibition hall will celebrate leading artists, designers and performers in major shows, and its galleries will narrate stories of East London’s creative and manufacturing heritage. Elsewhere in East Bank, BBC Music Studios, which will house the BBC Symphony

Orchestra and host recording sessions and live performances, is slated to open in late 2025 or early 2026. And that’s not all. A couple of miles north in Walthamstow, another major cultural opening is happening. While this diverse north-east London suburb has long been thriving – its pretty village centre, some of which dates to the 15th Century, is indeed a gentrification hotspot – the imposing new Soho Theatre Walthamstow will further raise the neighbourhood’s profile when it opens on 2 May 2025. A former cinema designed in 1930 by architect Cecil Masey, the distinctive building was inspired by the Moorish architecture of the 13th-Century Alhambra palace in Granada, Spain. In its mid-20th-Century heyday, it also hosted gigs by The Beatles, Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison, Dusty Springfield, Chuck Berry and the Rolling Stones – before closing in 2003. When it finally reopens, with its original Art Deco stylings revived, the Soho Theatre Walthamstow will have a 960-seat Grade II-listed auditorium, studio spaces, four bars and a restaurant. (In comparison, its current West End location has a capacity of just 240.) “This is the first time we’ve had a professional theatre in the area,” said executive assistant Annie Jones, who worked on the restoration project for more than five years. “The programme will list up to nine shows a night – a mix of comedy, cabaret and theatre all rooted in its community. Waltham Forest has always been welcoming, with its vibrancy, multiculturalism and openness, and its spirit has only grown.” Connecting Stratford, the Olympic Park and Walthamstow is Leyton. This once-maligned area is now home to one of the most up-and-coming strips in East London. Previously more synonymous with fly-tipping, Tilbury Road railway arches (a narrow alleyway opposite Leyton Midland Road station) has been transformed by new arrivals in the last year alone, including three bars, a bakery, a Caribbean restaurant and two soon-to-open artisan cafes. The opening of two popular microbreweries in the last few years on the same stretch sparked this sudden transformation: Gravity Well, nestled in the station arch itself, and the edgier Libertalia taproom, named after a mythical anarchist colony in the 17th Centu-

ry. For Leyton-raised Danny Saunders, owner of tropical cocktail bar Leyton Calling (which opened in summer 2024) and cosy candlelit pub Chop Shop Tavern (which opened in February 2025), it’s a personal coup, having known the area since the 1980s. “I’ve come full circle,” he said, with a smile. “My latest bar is in the actual arch where I set up my first car repair business back in the day.” Leyton’s rise as a whole has, however, been something of a slow-burn. Back in the mid-2010s, nearby Francis Road began to be taken over by independent creative businesses. “I opened here in 2017,” said Aimée Madill, who owns Phlox, a bookstore, cafe and wine bar. “It was risky as it was still a ‘less-developed’ part of London, but local indie bookshops are more than a business, they’re a sign of confidence in a community.” Pedestrianised in 2017, the tree-lined street has since blossomed with chic cafes and bars: two of the latest openings are vinyl store-cum-craft beer bar Dreamhouse Records and Loop Dining, a pop-up space launched in summer 2024 to host weekly residencies from buzzy up-and-coming chefs. “Unlike Stratford,” Madill said, “Leyton is characterised by small makers and creatives existing side by side with businesses who’ve been here decades. Most of us live here, so we’ve been able to revitalise, rather than reinvent, parts of the area – which adds to the sense of community.” So what’s next for outer East London? “Young people and families are now priced out of Hackney,” said Michaela Zelenanska, who runs natural wine bar Swirl, which opened in December 2024 on Tilbury Road. “Leyton and neighbouring Leytonstone seem a logical next big thing. It’s small businesses that make the place what it is.” Will London continue to move ever further east? “We’re already engaging with artists, audiences and community groups in Barking and Dagenham,” said Morton, referencing two outer London suburbs several miles from Leyton and Stratford. “East London has always been a creative crucible.” Stephen Emms is an East London resident who writes a weekly newsletter called Leytonstoner about the arts, food and drink scenes primarily in Leyton, Leytonstone, Stratford and Walthamstow.



The great conclave secret: What do would-be popes eat?

This past week, travellers in Rome may have spotted cardinals frequenting their favourite restaurants. Just before the last papal election in 2013, Italian media reported that many of these men were making the time to visit a particular neighbourhood favourite, Al Passetto di Borgo, a family-run eatery located 200m from Saint Peter’s Basilica, where Cardinal Donald William Wuerl is known to order the lasagna and Francesco Coccopalmerio (allegedly the most-voted Italian cardinal in 2013) likes the grilled squid. Cardinals may feel some urgency to get in a good meal or two because, during the conclave beginning on 7 May, in which 135 cardinals will hold a secret election for a new pope in the Vatican’s Sistine Chapel, they’ll be entirely secluded from the rest of the world for an indefinite period of time. Voting, sleeping and eating all take place in tightly controlled sequestration. Papal conclaves are notoriously secretive affairs. The cardinals are secured in a single shared space with no messages allowed in or out, except



for the smoke signalling whether a vote has been successful. White smoke signals a new pope and black means another vote is required to reach the two-thirds-plus-one consensus required to crown a new pontiff. What precisely occurs in these conclaves is unknown, but one thing is certain: the cardinals must eat over the days or weeks it takes to elect the new leader of the world’s 1.4 billion Catholics. But with provisions going in and out, how is the secrecy of the conclave maintained? How can the cardinals ensure the integrity of the vote, unaffected by outside opinion? Historically, food has presented a potential risk: a cardinal’s ravioli might be stuffed with an illicit message from the kitchen staff; or a cardinal could sneak a vote update to the outside world with a dirty napkin. However, communal eating is also one of the contexts in which furtive negotiations can take place. Recent pop culture representations have made the most of this, using conclave food culture to create a heightened sense of suspicion, intrigue

and control. Take the 2024 film Conclave, where almost all the plot points occur not in the voting chambers, but in the cafeteria. The noisy meals contrast with the almost entirely silent conclave proper, which proceeds without formal debates. The otherwise silent voting is only sparingly punctuated by moments of ritual speech, like the audible oath a cardinal takes as he drops his voting card into the ballot urn. Still, around the ceremonial silence is a great deal of communication, much of which happens with and via food. And while we can’t assume that the film faithfully depicts what happens behind closed doors, it is no doubt true that in papal food culture – as in culture more broadly – what you eat, how you eat and with whom you eat speaks volumes. The code of conclave secrecy goes back to 1274, when Pope Gregory X established the regulations that still partly dictate how papal elections are run today. As with the coronation of many popes, his was controversial. It also had the distinction of being by far the longest, taking almost three years (1268-1271) to reach the majority consensus required to appoint a new pope. According to Italian canonist Henricus de Segusio, who served in that conclave, local residents threatened to restrict the cardinals’ food to hasten a resolution. Pope Gregory X’s new rules included isolation of the conclave – a rule that is still in effect today – and rationing of the cardi-



nals’ food. After three days without consensus, the cardinals received only one daily meal; after eight days, only bread and water. In the mid-1300s, these rules were relaxed by Clement VI, who permitted three-course meals consisting of soup; a main dish of fish, meat or eggs; and dessert, which could include cheese or fruit. While the rationing didn’t stick, tight control over conclaves remains. The most detailed historical account of the food culture of papal conclaves comes from Bartolomeo Scappi, who was the Renaissance’s most famous chef (and arguably the world’s first celebrity chef) and served both Popes Pius IV and Pius V. His 1570 book, Opera Dell’Arte del Cucinare (The

Art of Cooking) – the first cookbook published by a practicing chef – catapulted him to fame. In it, he reveals the secrets of feeding the conclave that elected Pope Julius III, and the extreme practice of surveillance that remains to this day. According to Scappi, the cardinals’ daily meals were prepared in a communal kitchen by cooks and sommeliers, just two of the many domestic positions that kept a conclave functioning. He identifies that the kitchen was a space where illicit messages could be shared, and notes that guards were stationed there specifically to prevent this. Therefore, twice a day in an order determined by lottery, stewards would ceremoniously bring the food to the ruota.

SPORTS



The President congratulated the team on its historic achievement, saying the players had not only scripted history but also become role models for the younger generation.

President Murmu gives the Indian women's team a signed jersey

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu lauded the World Cup-winning Indian women's cricket team for its exemplary performance during a meeting with the players at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Thursday. She was also presented with a jersey signed by the entire squad India clinched its first global title in women's cricket, defeating South Africa by 52 runs in the ODI World Cup final in but also become role models for the younger generation. "Women Cricket team, winner of the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 called on President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan. The President congratulated the team and said that they have created history and have become role models for younger generation.

Azam Khan agrees with Suryakumar Yadav's no rivalry India Pakistan

New Delhi: Azam Khan, the wicketkeeper for Pakistan, concurs with Suryakumar Yadav's assertion that there is no rivalry between India and Pakistan in cricket. During the 2025 Asia Cup, the captain of India's Twenty20 international team boldly declared that there was no longer any rivalry between the two cricketing nations. A number of Pakistani cricket players took exception at the remarks and attacked Suryakumar harshly. However, considering India's dominant record against Pakistan in ICC competitions, Azam Khan believes that the India T20I captain wasn't incorrect to make the bold declaration.

A slow fourth Twenty20 International knock, the vice skipper was teased Shubman Gill's babarfication

New Delhi: After a slow knock in the fourth game of the five-game T20I series in Australia, Shubman Gill, the vice captain of India, was under increasing pressure to perform well. At the Gold Coast's Carrara Oval, Gill made 46 deliveries but consumed 39. Gill was able to amass on a day when the other hitters found it difficult to get going, but his strike rate served as fodder for social media criticism. Shubman Gill hit four boundaries and a six, but was not able to push on and convert his start into a substantial knock. Gill was dismissed in the 15th over, failing to connect with a back-of-the-hand slower delivery from Nathan Ellis. Gill was unable to accelerate at the top of the order even when Abhishek Sharma had an off day, struggling to find rhythm in the powerplay. Gill was 7 off 8 at the end of the first three overs, before he picked up pace and hit three boundaries, two of which came in the fourth over bowled by Ellis. India reached 49 at the end of the powerplay and Gill made 26 off 18 while the fielding restrictions were on. However, the star batter scored just 20 runs from his next 21 deliveries after the powerplay, struggling to make use of the time spent at the crease and put pressure back on the Australian bowlers. Abhishek had a rare failure as he fell for 28 off 21, hitting Adam Zampa's flighted delivery straight into the hands of

long-on in the first over after the powerplay. India promoted Shivam Dube to No. 3, but the big-hitter fell for 22 off 18 balls. Suryakumar Yadav was under pressure to go big from the first delivery he faced as India had made only 88 in the 12th over. The captain also fell for a quickfire 20 off 10 balls. Quite a few have already questioned the team management for making Shubman Gill open and affecting the balance of the side. Gill was brought back into the XI at the cost of an opening partnership between Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma, which had been breaking records at will. Samson was pushed to the middle order despite the Kerala wicketkeeper-batter scoring as many as three hundreds in the last 12 months

Fans slammed Gill and the team management after the sluggish knock in Gold Coast, comparing his struggles in T20Is to Pakistan's issues with Babar Azam, who has been guilty of scoring slowly in the shortest format of the game. "We are seeing the Babarfication of Shubman Gill. He has been pushed in a format that clearly not his strong suit. This will lead to fans resenting him high might affect his form and confidence in other formats as well, like it happened with Babar," a fan said, fearing for the star batter's form. Gill was brought back to T20I cricket after a year-long gap during the Asia Cup. The team management and selectors, who are projecting

Shubman for all-format captaincy, backed the star batter to settle into the format and made him vice-captain. However, Gill has struggled to adjust to the tempo of India's high-risk batting approach. Gill has now gone 14 innings without a fifty in the T20I format, which is in stark contrast to the form he displayed in his maiden stint as Test captain in England earlier this year. "Ever since Shubman Gill has made his way back into the T20 team, India have gone back from staying true to their brand of ultra attacking T20 cricket. We are again going to the 'play safe' mindset of the 2022 T20 World Cup times. He is clearly upsetting the balance," a fan wrote.

Arsenal, Bayern stay perfect, Liverpool beat Real Madrid UEFA Champions League

London: Premier League leaders Arsenal won 3-0 at Slavia Prague as rising star Max Dowman came off the bench to become the youngest player in the competition's history, at just 15 years and 308 days old. Leaders Bayern and second-placed Arsenal remain the only teams with a perfect record in the competition -- alongside Inter Milan, who play their fourth match on Wednesday against Kazakh newcomers Kairat Almaty. At Anfield, Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois produced a stellar performance to frustrate six-time champions Liverpool. In a performance reminiscent of his match-defining display in the



2022 final against the same opposition -- which the Spaniards won 1-0 -- Courtois produced eight saves to keep back the hosts. "He is a fantastic 'keeper -- we all know," Mac Allister told Amazon Prime. "But today I think we were better and deserved to win."

From MP village to Women's World Cup 'Those who taunted me are now applauding,' says Kranti Goud

Mumbai: "I didn't even know there was an Indian women's cricket team," said pacer Kranti Goud as she reminisced her journey from Madhya Pradesh's obscure Ghuwara village to the very top of the sport she picked up by chance. The 22-year-old, who contributed nine wickets at an average of 18.55 to India's maiden title-clinching run, including a player of the match-winning three-wicket haul against Pakistan, spoke to PTI Videos about her nascent but remarkable career so far. "I didn't even know there was a women's cricket team -- that's where my journey began," Goud said just before meeting President Droupadi Murmu here on Thursday. The felicitation at the Rashtrapati Bhawan followed an evening meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday, marking an unprecedented high for the youngster, who made her



debut for India only in May this year.

India Star Taken To Cleaners As Aus Make Fiery Start

Mumbai: Australia have made a superb start to their run chase against India in the fourth T20I in Queensland. Chasing a target of 168, Australia have reached 35/0 after 4 overs, with captain Mitchell Marsh and Matt Short opening the batting. Earlier, India posted a total of 167/8 in 20 overs in the fourth T20I against Australia in Queensland, with vice-captain Shubman Gill top-scoring with a knock of 46. Handy contributions were made by Abhishek Sharma (28), Shivam Dube (22), Axar Patel (21) and captain Suryakumar Yadav (20). However, India suffered a late mini-collapse, with Australia bowlers Nathan Ellis and Adam Zampa taking three

wickets each. With the series nicely poised at 1-1, the fourth T20I holds tremendous importance in the five-match series, as the winner of the game will ensure that they don't lose the series. Matt Short goes big again! SIX more! The right-hander rocks back and deposits Varun Chakravarthy's second ball into the stands over deep mid-wicket. This is an excellent start for Australia. Top edge goes for 4! Expensive over from Arshdeep, 15 off it. Sharp short delivery, Marsh goes for the pull, but the top edge goes over the keeper's head and behind for a boundary. Immediate bowling change from SKY, as he brings on Varun Chakravarthy.

FIDE World Cup 2025

Diptayan Ghosh upsets Ian Nepomniachthi with black

Mumbai: Grandmaster Diptayan Ghosh caused the biggest upset of the World Chess Cup by ousting former world championship challenger Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia with a win in the second game of the second round on Wednesday. In what was simply a one-sided affair, Ghosh did not give any chance to Nepomniachtchi who was rather erratic with his white pieces. The opening gave Ghosh an unclear position early and Nepomniachtchi missed a simple tactic early in the middle game which cost him a pawn. Once the technicalities arrived Ghosh was at the top of his game and kept on increasing pressure by exchanging pieces at regular intervals and soon it was a rook and pawns endgame



on board in no time. "This is certainly the biggest victory of my chess career, beating Nepo in a match," said Ghosh after his win. Earlier, Grandmaster P Harikrishna became the first Indian to advance to the third round, crushing Russian Arseniy Nesterov while world

junior champion V Pranav suffered a huge defeat against Arjun Tari of Norway. Highest rated Indian Arjun Erigaisi scored his second victory on the trot defeating Martin Petrov of Bulgaria and walked in to the last 64 stage in the USD two million prize money tournament.

Pat Cummins set for Test return in 2nd Ashes Test as injury

New Delhi: Australia captain Pat Cummins is likely to make his Test comeback in the second Ashes Test at the Gabba, Brisbane. The fast bowler has been sidelined since July 2025 due to a hotspot in his lower back and has been carefully managing his recovery in recent months. It has already been confirmed that Cummins will miss the opening Test in Perth. However, his availability for the remainder of the series remains uncertain, with team management reluctant to rush his return to full workload. Speaking to Channel 7, Cummins said that he was feeling positive about his progress but stressed that a final call on his participation would only be made closer to the second Test. "The good thing is that I'm pulling up well and the body feels great. We're trying to keep that second Test as a live option. I'll have a really good bowl in Perth, and by then I'll know where I'm at," Cummins said on November 6. While his return in Brisbane looks promising, it is understood that Cummins may not feature in all five matches of the series. Australia's packed schedule -- with only an eight-day break between



the second and third Tests and just four-day gaps between the remaining fixtures -- poses a significant challenge for the captain's workload management. "I'm pretty keen to play as much as I can. But realistically, if we have a big game and I bowl 40 or 50 overs, and then there's another match starting just a few days later, it might be a bridge too far," he said. "I'm trying to get right, and if I do, hopefully I can play most of the series."

India's U23 men will meet Thailand in a friendly match

Mumbai: The India n U23 men's team will travel to Bangkok to play a friendly match against Thailand U23 on November 15 during the FIFA International Match Window, as per the official website of All India Football Federation (AIFF). The Blue Colts will begin training in Kolkata on November 7 before departing for Thailand. The match will be played at the Thammasat Stadium in Pathum Thani on Saturday. India U23s have played six friendly matches earlier this season, travelling to Tajikistan in June to face the hosts and Kyrgyz Republic, followed by two games against Iraq in Malaysia in August before the AFC U23



November 15, 2025, during the FIFA International Match Window. The Blue Colts will begin training in Kolkata on November 7 before departing for Thailand. The match will be played at the Thammasat Stadium in Pathum Thani on Saturday, November 15 at 15:30 IST. India U23s have played six friendly matches earlier this season, travelling to Tajikistan in June to face the hosts and Kyrgyz Republic, followed by two games against Iraq in Malaysia in August before the AFC U23

Asian Cup Qualifiers. In the October window, the Blue Colts played two matches against Indonesia, winning 2-1 and drawing 1-1. India U23 men's list of 25 probabilities for Thailand friendly
Goalkeepers: Dipesh Chauhan, Kamaludheen AK, Mohanraj K, Priyansh Dubey. Defenders: Dippendu Biswas, Harsh Palande, Muhammed Saheef, Ricky Meetei Haobam, Roshan Singh Thangjam, Sanatomba Singh Yangleam, Sumit Sharma Brahmacharimayum.