

# NEWS BEARER

NEWS FROM NEAR & FAR

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## Renowned environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk visits Dima Hasao

**Halfong:** Renowned environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk visited Dima Hasao on Monday. Wangchuk met Debolal Gorlosa, Chief Executive Member of Dima Hasao Autonomous Council, the oldest Autonomous Council under sixth schedule of Indian Constitution in his official residence where Wangchuk was accorded a warm welcome by the CEM. This was followed by a meeting held at CEM's conference hall which provided an excellent platform to discuss matters close to people's hearts, in-



cluding the 6th Schedule and its role in preserving the autonomy and cultural heritage of the communities.

The meeting also discussed the immense potential that Dima Hasao holds in terms of natural beauty, and the

importance of preserving and promoting this unique environment. Wangchuk is a remarkable innovator and environmentalist whose dedication to sustainable development is truly inspiring. Wangchuk addressing the media explained the aim and objectives of his visit to Dima Hasao for acquiring knowledge about the sixth schedule under the Constitution of India. The meeting was attended by all the Executive Members and MACs including Chief Executive Member and Chairman.

## Ao Senden seeks police action over defamatory facebook post



**Kohima:** Ao Senden, the apex body of the Ao Naga tribe, has called for immediate police action against administrators and moderators of "The Patriotic Nagas" Facebook group over a defamatory post targeting the community. In a formal complaint submitted to the Director General of Police (DGP) Nagaland, Rupin Sharma, Ao Senden expressed strong disapproval of what it described as "insulting, outrageous, and despicable" content on the social media platform. The complaint was delivered on Tuesday by a delegation

led by Ao Senden President Marsanen Imsong, who met with DGP Sharma and other senior officials in Kohima. According to a press release by Ao Senden, the DGP assured the delegation that prompt action would be taken to address the issue. Expressing confidence in DGP Sharma's leadership, Ao Senden urged its members to remain calm and allow the law to handle the situation. However, the group also advised the Ao community to stay vigilant and prepared for any potential developments in the matter.

## ICR Police Introduce Menstrual Leave for Women Officers

**Itanagar :** The Itanagar Capital Region police introduced a new policy whereby special leave is given to women police officers during their periods. According to the new policy, women in the police will be permitted to be absent for one working day, either on the first or the second day of their menstrual cycle every month. According to ICR superintendent of police Rohit Rajbir Singh, "this special leave would be wholly treated as 'on duty' status. So there will be no impact on the officers' attendance or leave balance."

This practice, for which a memorandum has been issued in the office, is testimony to the intent of the ICR police department to make a place of employment that appreciates the special needs of its employees to place them in a position for better health. The move is believed to be an effort toward boosting the morale, productivity, and on-field operational preparedness of women officers as they might face special challenges in their service. Tasso Kato, divisional forest officer Piyush Gaikwad, deputy director of school education Hridar Phuntsok, apart from the representatives from state and central intelligence agencies. DSP Kato made a PowerPoint presentation in which he highlighted the efforts and strategies the police in the district were taking to tackle illicit drug trafficking. He underlined the importance of bazaar secretaries and gaon burghs in gathering information and hence urged them to share actively information that would help in nabbing local drug peddlers.

## Aaranyak trains Karbi women in mushroom cultivation for sustainable livelihood

**Guwahati:** The region's premier biodiversity conservation organization, Aaranyak, in collaboration with Chandrasingh Rongpi Memorial High School (CRM-HS), recently organized a daylong winter mushroom cultivation training programme at the Community Resource Centre in Chandrasingh Rongpi village in Assam's Karbi Anglong. Over twenty participants from the Kohora and Diring River Basin Women Collectives attended the training programme. Dr. Aparna Jyoti Rabha, founder of Rabha Agrotech, Tezpur, was invited as the resource person. An expert in mushroom cultivation and spawn production, she has been instrumental in supporting local communities' livelihood development. This training initiative seeks to empower women by imparting comprehensive skills and techniques in mushroom cultivation. The objective is to provide them with a sustainable and lucrative livelihood option, thereby enhancing their financial well-being and self-sufficiency. The training program incorporated both theoretical instruction and practical application, with a particular emphasis



on the construction of mushroom-growing cylinders. Participants gained knowledge on creating optimal growing conditions, preparing suitable substrates, and identifying various oyster mushroom species. The session included practical demonstrations where participants prepared cultivation bags, mixed spawn with substrate, and created ventilation holes in growing cylinders. The training delved into the fascinating world of mushrooms, exploring their biology, life cycles, and the numerous benefits they offer. Participants also learned about the high nutritional value of mushrooms and their potential to provide a profitable livelihood for small-scale farmers. "I have practiced mushroom cultivation before, but the results were not always fruitful. Attending this train-

ing programme has been an eye-opener for me, and I hope to have a good harvest this time," Rani Singnarpi from Sivoram Terang village of Diring said. Mirmili Kramsapi, student, CRMHS, stated, "Though I am new to this method of cultivation, I am looking forward to it with high hopes and positivity. Special thanks to Aparna Ma'am for her guidance and motivation, and thanks to Aaranyak for giving us a platform and opportunity to explore this new method of cultivation." Aaranyak is committed to conserving biodiversity and ecosystems by supporting indigenous communities in the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong and Manas Landscapes through sustainable livelihoods, education, and awareness programs. This initiative is supported by IUCN and KfW.

## Assam government launches 'Frames of the Brahmaputra' photography contest

**Guwahati:** The Assam Government has introduced the 'Frames of the Brahmaputra' photography contest, calling on residents to capture the beauty and diversity of Assam's waterways. Participants stand a chance to win cash prizes of up to ₹15,000. To join, photographers must submit their entries via email to: [assamaiw-cl@gmail.com](mailto:assamaiw-cl@gmail.com), along with their full name, contact information, and phone number. Additionally, participants are encouraged to support the contest on social media by following the Assam Inland Waterways Company Limited on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. Contestants should post their photos on social media with the hashtag #FramesOfBrahmaputra, tagging the company, and including their name, college, and district in the caption. Each participant can submit up to four photos in JPEG format, sized between



10 MB and 20 MB, with a resolution of 300 dpi and dimensions of 6000x4000 pixels. The contest is open exclusively to residents of Assam. Prizes include ₹7,000 for first place, ₹5,000 for second, and ₹3,000 for third. Additionally, five runners-up will receive certificates and features on social media. The contest themes—Nature & Wildlife, Culture, Daily Life, and Transport—invite photographers to showcase the charm of Assam's lifeline, the Brahmaputra River.



## Assam government identifies 206 water bodies for flood mitigation using NESAC study

**Guwahati:** The Assam government, in collaboration with the North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC), has identified 206 water bodies across 17 districts in Assam as part of a strategic initiative to reduce the frequency and impact of floods. Using advanced space technology, NESAC's study aims to harness these wetlands to absorb excess floodwater, potentially mitigating annual flood devastation in the region. Space Technology-Based Study for Flood Mitigation Assam, owing to its geographic and hydrological features, experiences severe floods each year, causing widespread damage to life and property. In a joint initiative between the Union and State governments, NESAC conducted a detailed study of



Assam's wetlands, identifying specific water bodies with potential for floodwater diversion and storage. The study focused on locating wetlands and oxbow lakes positioned in low to medium flood zones, using flood hazard maps prepared by the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC). The selected wetlands meet strict criteria: each exceeds 10 hectares in area, is located within

a 3.5 km buffer zone of a flood-prone river, and has the capacity for significant excavation and embankment work. The identified wetlands span 16,842 hectares, with a current volume capacity of 575 million cubic meters. As part of the flood mitigation project, these wetlands will be excavated to a depth of 2 meters, and surrounded by 2-meter-high embankments, effectively

increasing their volume to an estimated 1,291 million cubic meters. This increase in capacity is expected to significantly reduce flood occurrences, with projections indicating a potential flood frequency reduction of 20% to 80% in affected areas. The Assam government also plans to implement additional flood-control measures, including the construction of check dams, catchment treatment plans in upstream areas, and extensive land and water management projects aimed at sustainable flood management. The ambitious project reflects a combined Union-State commitment to addressing Assam's flood challenges through science-backed strategies, potentially bringing long-awaited relief to the region's flood-prone areas.

## Guwahati residents to face water supply disruption in 28 areas

**Guwahati :** The Guwahati Jal Board has informed residents that water supply will be temporarily suspended in 28 areas of the city from November 15 to November 17. This planned disruption is likely to inconvenience thousands of residents as essential maintenance work is carried out. The affected areas include Amiya Nagar, Chanmari, Rajgarh, Lachit Nagar, Ulubari, Rupnagar, Bora Service, Zoo Road, Anil Nagar, Nabin Nagar, Tarun Nagar, Sri Nagar, Bhaskar Nagar, MT Road, Geetanagar, Ambikagiri Nagar, Sundarpur, Manik Nagar, Hengrabari, Swaraj Nagar, Zakir Hussain

Road, Downtown, Baramto-ria, Ramchahil, Latasil, Silpukhuri, Panbazar, Kharguli, and additional nearby localities. In an official statement, the Guwahati Jal Board explained that the temporary suspension is necessary for the completion of a project aimed at facilitating the removal of pipeline loops and integrating new areas into the water supply network, with the goal of final commissioning by the end of November. Residents are advised to make necessary arrangements as the water supply is expected to resume as usual after the completion of the work on November 17.

## Total shutdown affects normal life in Imphal Valley

**Imphal :** Normal life was affected in Manipur's Imphal Valley on Wednesday due to a total shutdown called by 13 civil rights organisations to protest the alleged abduction of three women and children each by militants in the Jiribam district, officials said. Business establishments and educational institutions in the five Imphal Valley districts of Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal, Kakching, and Bishnupur were closed due to the shutdown which commenced at 6 pm on Tuesday. No untoward incident was reported in Imphal Valley during the shutdown. Two trucks carrying goods were, however, set ablaze allegedly by armed militants near Old Kaiphundai in the Naga-dominated Tamenglong district near Jiribam. Suspected hill-based militants stopped the trucks along NH 37 by firing several rounds in the air and then torched the trucks, an official said. Rongmei Naga Students Organisation, Manipur strongly condemned the incident and alleged Kuki militants were behind it. Also Read - 38-year-old achieves Lucknow's first saffron bloom The trucks were transporting rice, onions, and potatoes for Noney and Tamenglong districts, the students' body claimed in a statement.

The Manipur Police said 10 suspected militants were killed in a fierce gunfight with security forces on Monday after insurgents in camouflage uniforms, armed with sophisticated weapons, fired indiscriminately at the Borobekra police station and an adjacent CRPF camp at Jakuradhor in Jiribam district. Meanwhile, the state unit of the Congress called for the immediate release of the three women and children each, asserting that the Centre should intervene immediately to bring an end to the clash between the two warring communities in the state. "We are not a power-thirsty party but we want to stress that for a government, the priority is to protect peace," he added. "Why are Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah still silent even when it is clear that six innocent women and children have been abducted? Are we not humans? This is not a war between different states or countries but a clash between communities within a state. The Centre and the state should have long brought a solution," he said. We have earlier stressed that the Centre should enforce a ceasefire and then call the warring groups for discussions to bring peace. Legal actions should be taken against those engaging in violence on both sides," the former chief minister of Manipur said. Creating a conducive atmosphere before talks are initiated for a permanent solution is a must and the Centre has a big role to play in it, Singh added. More than 200 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kuki-Zo groups since May last year. Ethnically diverse Jiribam, which was largely untouched by the clashes in Imphal Valley and the adjoining hills, witnessed violence after the mutilated body of a farmer was found in a field in June this year.

## Dr. Tuliram Deal out Land Pattas in West Karbi

**Dongkamukam:** KAAC chief Dr Tuliram Ronghang said that the long-standing interstate border disputes that frequently arise between Assam and Meghalaya in the West Karbi Anglong district will be resolved. He said this while addressing as chief guest at free ceremonial patta distribution programme under No: 112 Amri LA constituency, at Boithalangso Serdihun Aklam, West Karbi Anglong. Not only with Meghalaya but tribals living in bordering State areas of Nagaland will get settled, he said. "It is a historic day for hills tribes, as we are receiving land document on the spot without spending a single pie," Dr Tuliram continued. He further said that the remaining patta will be given in a phased wise manner. Regarding PGR/VGR criticism by opposition, Dr Tuliram said that the day is not far away when everything will be crystal clear regarding our work. He also added that all major road connectivity to major towns area will be completed soon. In order to establish Autonomous State one day, he urged everyone to finally have faith in the Karbi Anglong team. MP Amarsingh Tisso in his address informed that presently its annual periodic khiraj patta and within a year conversion to medhi patta will be made. Altogether 10,000 pattas for ethnic tribals were distributed. Also "White Paper on PGR land of Kheroni" written by Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council was released by Dr Tuliram Ronghang.

## Manipur civil society organizations issue seven days ultimatum

**Imphal:** Civil society organisations in Manipur have issued a seven-day ultimatum to the government, demanding urgent action to address the ongoing conflict in the state. The organisations have threatened to withdraw support from national political parties and launch a mass movement against political leaders if their demands are not met. Representatives from thirteen organisations submitted a memorandum to the Governor of Manipur, outlining six key demands. The memorandum highlighted the growing frustration among the people of Manipur, who feel that national parties have shown a lack of commitment to the state's security and welfare. The current crisis in Manipur is characterised by ethnic violence, unchecked militant activity, and deteriorating law and order. Residents have been suffering due to armed militant aggression, forced blockades, and escalating attacks, which threaten their livelihood and security. Following the submission of the memorandum, Shanta Nahakpam, spokesperson for the collective of thirteen organisations, addressed



the media. Nahakpam stated that they have presented a memorandum with six demands related to the ongoing crisis. The urgent requests in the memorandum include the safe rescue of six hostages abducted by Kuki militants in Jiribam District, the implementation of legal and security measures to secure national highways, the establishment of a no-entry zone in vulnerable hill areas to protect farmers, and improved coordination among all security forces to ensure a unified response in sensitive areas. The collective of thirteen organisations includes the International Peace and Social Advancement (IPSA), Peoples' Action for National Democratic Movement (PAMDM), Kangleipak Lamjing Apunba Meira Paibi Lup (Kan-

glamei), All Club Organisation Association & Meira Paibi Lup (ACOAM-Lup), Kangleipak Students' Association (KSA), Indigenous People's Association of Kangleipak (IPAK), Chanura Lamchinglel KangJeipak (CLK), Kanglei Ima Lup (KIL), Loumee Yaipha Lup Kangleipak (LOYALUP), Educational and Rural Development Organisation (ERDO), Malem Ima Kanba Lup (MIKL), Struggling Women's Association (SWA), and Apunba Keithel Sinnaibi Lup (AKSIL). It is noteworthy that these organisations imposed a 24-hour shutdown starting from 6 pm yesterday, to protest the inadequate response from both state and central governments in protecting lives and property amid the ongoing crisis.



## Rupali Ganguly sends defamation notice to stepdaughter



**Mumbai:** Actor Rupali Ganguly has sent a legal notice to her stepdaughter, Esha Verma, for 'maliciously' her character and personal life. It was in response to Esha's 'false and damaging statements' and the step was taken to protect her reputation. The notice mentioned that Ganguly also seeks compensation of Rs 50 crore. The notice was sent by Ganguly's lawyer, Sana Raees Khan. In the notice, it has been mentioned that Rupali Ganguly underwent mental trauma because of which she had to seek medical assistance and that she was humiliated on set and lost professional opportunities. It is also stated that Ganguly wanted to maintain a 'dignified silence' but was compelled to initiate the

defamation notice because of how her and Ashwin Verma's 11-year-old son was dragged. Ganguly, through her lawyer, has claimed compensation of Rs 50 crore, which her stepdaughter is liable to pay. She has also asked for an unconditional public apology immediately, failing which Ganguly has threatened legal measures. In the notice, it was clarified that Rupali Ganguly was friends with Ashwin Verma for 12 years, before he separated from his second wife, Esha Verma's mother, in 2009. It was also said that Ganguly, along with Verma, tried to help Esha get a break into the entertainment industry, by providing opportunities for photoshoots and making special arrangements for auditions.

## Chandrashekhhar plans to invest \$135M in Hollywood for 'lady love'

**Staff Reporter:** Conman Suresh Chandrashekhhar, in prison for allegedly extorting ₹200 crore from an industrialist, has written to the new US President-elect Donald Trump congratulating him on his victory. Interestingly, Suresh, who claims to be in a relationship with Bollywood star Jacqueline Fernandez, has written that he plans to invest \$135 million (₹1130 crore) in a Los Angeles studio in dedication to his 'lady love'. Addressing Trump as 'big bro', Suresh congratulates the Republican President-elect on his victory over Kamala Harris in the US election. In the handwritten letter, a copy of which is with HT.com, Suresh writes, "I remember during our last meet, decade ago, you had given me an advice, 'Accept the World the way it is or see it the way you want it to be', those words ring loud in my ears once again today, love you Bro for always motivating me and not judging me during our meets." In the letter, he also



mentions that his company, LS Holdings and LS Gaming LLC, will increase their investment in the US to \$500 million (₹4200 crore) over the next two years. But the interesting aspect of the letter includes Suresh's reference to Jacqueline, the actor he claims he has been dating. "I remember your other advice to me, 'Treat your women always with dignity and make her always feel special', on that note, LS Holdings is buying stakes of 135 million USD, in a large studio producing shows and movies in Los Angeles. I have finalized this buy, for my lady love Jacqueline just like the advice you gave me, to 'make your women feel special', reads Suresh's letter.

# Mumbai police arrest Raipur lawyer for threatening Shah Rukh Khan

**Mumbai :** The Mumbai Police on Tuesday arrested a man in Chhattisgarh's Raipur for allegedly issuing death threats to actor Shah Rukh Khan. The Bandra police station last week received a call threatening Shah Rukh Khan and asking for ₹50 lakh. A case was registered by the police under sections 308(4) (extortion involving threats of death or serious injury) and 351(3) (4) (criminal intimidation) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against the caller.

The police zeroed in on a lawyer in Chhattisgarh, named Faizan Khan. The Raipur lawyer was summoned because the threat call was made using a phone number registered in his



name. He was arrested after he didn't appear before the police.

The Mumbai police had visited Raipur and summoned Faizan Khan, who lives within the limits of the Pandri police station. Superintendent of Police

(CSP- Civil Lines) Ajay Kumar told PTI last week that Faizan Khan said he had lost his phone and lodged a complaint at the Khamardih police station. Faizan told the media that the threat call made from his phone number was part of a conspiracy

against him. "My phone was stolen on November 2 and I complained. I told Mumbai police about it. They interrogated me for about two hours," he told the media. He, however, said he had lodged a complaint against Shah Rukh Khan over a dialogue in his movie 'Anjaam' (1994) over reference to deer hunting. "I hail from Rajasthan. The Bishnoi community (which is from Rajasthan) is my friend. It is in their religion to protect deer. So, if a Muslim says something like this about deer, it is condemnable. Therefore, I objected," he said. "Whoever has made a call from my phone, it seems intentional. I think it is a conspiracy against me," he added.

## Vidya Balan didn't rehearse for 'Ami Je Tomar' with Madhuri Dixit

**Agency:** Vidya Balan has had a topsy turvy career in these nearly two decades. With Parineeta and Lage Raho Munna Bhai, she proved to be a solid and reliable performer that had the charm and the screen presence to pull the characters off. With Heyy Babyy and Kismat Konnection, she went off the rails, only resurrecting herself with the delicious Ishqiya, the rollicking The Dirty Picture, and the gripping Kahaani. Oh yes, in between, there was this film called Bhool Bhulaiyaa! Who can forget her as Manjulika! She basically played the role of Avni, emphatic towards this gorgeous and mysterious woman whose spirit haunts the haveli all the idiosyncratic characters reside in. It's a film for the ages that has now bloomed into a franchise. She went missing in part two but returned with Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 that is quickly becoming the next blockbuster of the year. And Balan has all the reasons to be elated, jubilant, and proud. In an exclusive interview with Firstpost, the actress opened up on coming back as Manjulika, working with Madhuri Dixit and Anees Bazmee, how Ishqiya was the film that made her fall in love with her craft all over again, and the importance of box-office. (Laughs). Most



number of comebacks I believe. It feels great that I have comeback to Bhool Bhulaiyaa after 17 years, it's been fantastic, it's being loved and I'm basking in all the love. It was nostalgic that I had to reprise the song. They upped the challenge by saying 'Not only are you reprising the song but you are going to be doing it with Madhuri Dixit.' So I felt like it was a new twist but I enjoyed doing it. I worked hard towards it because I don't see myself as a dancer honestly. I enjoyed dancing with Madhuri maam and it was lovely; and the kind of love I have been receiving for the song oh my god. It's very nostalgic. I think it's the fact that it is not stagnant and the fact that it is moving forward. When you see part three, it is a step forward in so many ways. I don't want to give out any spoilers for all of those who have not seen the film, it has kept up

with the times. When people still watch it. If you talk about Bhool Bhulaiyaa, people still watch it on its many television reruns and also on OTT. Also, when you don't get bored while watching it. 17 years and it's still really fun. Not really, I think they are quite different. Avni was unaware of what was happening to her, Mallika seemed more in charge to me. She was like the woman of the world. There was no prep, we just landed on the sets together. Even for the song, we didn't rehearse together. She's a very kind and generous person and I've been in love with her forever. I was really excited and we just vibed. One of my fave scenes from the film is when she laughs and then I laugh. So many people have mentioned that to me and I'm so happy about it. It happened like that. We just did one rehearsal with all of us and that's it.

## Abhishek and Aishwarya's divorce rumours

**New Delhi:** While rumours of Aishwarya Rai and Abhishek Bachchan's divorce have been grabbing the headlines for quite some time, the speculations garnered limelight after none of the Bachchan family members wished Ash on her birthday, which was on 1st November. Nimrat Kaur's name has cropped up and now, the actress' video where she imitates a Punjabi woman has gone viral. The actress says in the viral video, "Friendship should be like this, when people see it, they should get jealous... jealous... Wow... wow... it should be like this..." While rumours of Aishwarya Rai and Abhishek Bachchan's divorce have been grabbing the headlines for quite some time, the speculations garnered limelight after none of the Bachchan family members wished Ash on her birthday, which was on 1st November. And if you can shut the chapter today, great! But neither fit into a rule book. There's no finality in looking at each day. You have to be open-minded about how you share your time together. It also means respecting and being sensitive to your partner," she added. While none of the Bachchan family members wished Ash on her 51st birthday, an old tweet of Big B recently went viral on Reddit, where the megastar not only thanked fans for their warm wishes for her daughter-in-law but also shared glimpses into how the family celebrated the big day.



## Apollo Cancer Conclave 2024 launches innovations

**Guwahati:** The 7th edition of the Apollo Cancer Conclave, held at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai from November 8-10, attracted over 2,000 oncologists and 450 global speakers, spotlighting the latest advancements in cancer treatment. The conclave emphasized a shift towards precision oncology, with expert-led sessions on breast, gastrointestinal, gynaecologic, haematolymphoid, and other cancers, alongside discussions on AI, robotic surgeries, and molecular profiling. India's growing cancer burden, expected to rise from 1.41 million new cases in 2022 to 2.69 million by 2050, underlined the conclave's focus on preventive strategies and the integration of innovative technologies. Industry leaders discussed breakthroughs like Robotic Nipple-Sparing Mastectomy and Proton Therapy, marking a new era in patient-centered care. In Guwahati, the adoption of precision oncology practices and advanced cancer care technologies is expected to grow, driven by increased awareness and improved healthcare infrastructure. Local healthcare professionals are eager to integrate global innovations into regional treatment offerings, ensuring better patient outcomes and access to world-class cancer therapies in Assam.

## Škoda Auto India reveals Kylaq: A new era for sub-4m SUVs with a starting price of INR 7.89 lakh

**Guwahati:** Škoda Auto India has officially launched the Kylaq, its first-ever sub-4m SUV, marking a significant entry into the highly competitive Indian SUV market. Priced at INR 7,89,000, the Kylaq will be available globally ahead of its official launch in January 2025. The compact SUV offers remarkable features, including a segment-leading 446-litre boot, six-way electric seats with ventilation, and over 25 active and passive safety features, including six airbags. Powered by a 1.0 TSI engine generating 85kW of power and 178Nm of torque, the Kylaq is offered with a six-speed manual or automatic transmission. This marks Škoda's commitment to producing India-centric models with high levels of localization, superior driving dynamics, and uncompromising safety. In Guwahati, the Kylaq's competitive pricing and premium features are expected



to capture the growing demand for compact SUVs. With its combination of spacious interiors and advanced safety features, the Kylaq is well-positioned to appeal to the region's increasing number of urban buyers looking for an affordable yet stylish SUV.

## NSDC and TCS iON join forces to bridge

**Guwahati:** In a landmark move to address the growing employability gap in India, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and TCS iON have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to launch the National Proficiency Tests (NPTs). This collaboration aims to provide industry-recognized certifications to enhance skills and improve job prospects for youth across the nation. The NPTs, powered by TCS iON, will serve as a nationwide platform for students, job seekers, and professionals to validate their skills in diverse sectors such as IT, BFSI, Manufacturing, Healthcare, and more. These assessments, conducted monthly, will include a unique two-part test: Test of Knowledge and Test of Application. Participants will receive a Proficiency Score, demonstrating their capabilities to potential employers and boosting their chances of securing better job opportunities. Shri Ved Mani Tiwari, CEO of NSDC, highlighted that this partnership will play a crucial role in bridging the employability gap in India, enabling youth to align their skills with industry standards. "Empowering youth with relevant skills and certifications is essential for fostering a robust economy," he said. In Guwahati, the NPTs are expected to benefit the local market by providing qualified candidates for sectors such as IT and healthcare, industries witnessing steady demand in the region. Local employers will now have access to a pool of pre-certified candidates, streamlining the hiring process and reducing recruitment time.

## ICICI Foundation enhances healthcare access across Northeast India



**Shillong/Kohima:** ICICI Foundation, the CSR arm of ICICI Bank, has significantly boosted healthcare services across India's North Eastern region, benefitting over 9,100 patients since 2023. The foundation's efforts span Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura, providing vital medical infrastructure and services to improve accessibility and care quality. Key interventions include the provision of over 60 medical equipment such as video bronchoscopes, dialysis units, ultrasounds, and endoscopes. Additionally, mobile medical units, ambulances, and blood collection vehicles have been deployed to enhance healthcare delivery in these underserved areas.

In Meghalaya, ICICI Foundation's support to Reid Provincial Chest Hospital in Shillong has revolutionized TB care. A video bronchoscope has been pivotal in diagnosing TB and lung cancer, significantly re-

ducing mortality rates, especially for those with drug-resistant TB. In Assam, 25 dialysis units were installed across several districts, providing timely kidney care closer to home for patients in need. Meanwhile, in Nagaland, a mobile blood collection unit facilitated blood drives that collected 180 units of blood, benefiting over 500 patients. The foundation's initiatives are pivotal in addressing healthcare challenges in remote regions, reaffirming ICICI Bank's commitment to sustainable community development and improving healthcare access. In Shillong, these healthcare improvements have had a profound impact. With better access to diagnostic tools and treatment, local markets have seen reduced patient travel outside the region, allowing families to focus on recovery. Enhanced healthcare infrastructure also boosts public trust, encouraging more people to seek timely medical care, thus supporting local businesses and healthcare providers.

## IndiGo expands Northeast connectivity with eight new flights for winter season

**Agartala:** IndiGo has announced the launch of eight new flights this winter, aiming to boost accessibility across Northeast India. The new schedule introduces exclusive tri-weekly flights between Agartala and Dibrugarh starting October 29, 2024, alongside direct flights connecting Guwahati to Dimapur and Ahmedabad from December 10. Additionally, Kolkata-Bangkok services will see increased frequency, with flights operating four times weekly

beginning November 24, 2024. These new routes are designed to strengthen domestic connectivity, providing business and leisure travelers with convenient options across East and Northeast India. IndiGo's Head of Global Sales, Vinay Malhotra, stated, "The demand surge has led us to expand these routes, enhancing regional connectivity and supporting economic growth, tourism, and cultural exchange."

The new flights also

hold potential for Siliguri, which serves as a trade hub for the Northeast region. Enhanced connectivity could facilitate smoother movement of goods and promote tourism, benefiting local businesses and creating new economic opportunities. The winter schedule will allow travelers to explore the cultural richness of destinations like Guwahati, Dimapur, and Agartala, with booking options available via IndiGo's website and mobile app.

## Toyota Kirloskar Motor champions skill development for India's youth on National Education Day

**Bangalore:** On National Education Day, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) showcased its unwavering commitment to skill development, empowering India's youth through a range of transformative educational initiatives. Focused on bridging the skills gap, TKM's programs offer practical solutions to equip economically underprivileged youth with the technical know-how to thrive in the modern industrial workforce. A standout initiative is the Toyota Technical Training Institute (TTTI), which has been offering world-class technical education since 2007. Recently expanding its capacity to 1,200 students, including 600 women, TTTI provides a comprehensive three-year residential training program, emphasizing hands-on learning and holistic development. In addition, the Toyota Kaushalya Program, a unique "Learn and Earn" model, allows rural youth to gain industry experience while continuing their



education. TKM's efforts align with the region's increasing need for skilled professionals in automotive and industrial sectors. As Dimapur's infrastructure and economy continue to grow, TKM's programs offer a valuable opportunity for local youth to gain specialized skills and secure employment in industries critical to the region's development. By fostering talent, TKM is helping Dimapur nurture a skilled workforce that can drive economic growth. "Through these initiatives, we are empowering youth and supporting India's journey toward becoming a developed nation," said G. Shankara, Executive VP of TKM.

## QNET India strengthens wellness with nutriplus for World Diabetes Day

**Guwahati :** As World Diabetes Day approaches on November 14, QNET India is stepping up its commitment to diabetes management by promoting holistic health solutions. With the theme "Diabetes and Well-being," this year's observance, endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO), highlights the importance of managing diabetes through immunity-boosting, balanced wellness strategies. QNET India's Nutriplus DiabaHealth and Nutriplus ImmunHealth offer an innovative approach to diabetes care, emphasizing immune health and overall wellness. DiabaHealth, a 100% natural supplement, incorporates Malabar kino, known for its insulin-like properties, alongside other herbal ingredients. This formulation helps manage healthy blood sugar levels, offering a side-effect-free solution for long-term diabetes management. ImmunHealth further complements diabetes care by fortifying the immune system with ingredients like Papaya Extract, Aloe Vera, and Guduchi Satwa, crucial for DNA synthesis and immune regulation. Together, these supplements provide a comprehensive health boost that goes beyond blood sugar control, aiming to build resilience and immunity for individuals managing diabetes. Demand for natural health supplements is growing as more consumers seek preventive health measures. With increasing awareness around diabetes and immunity, QNET's wellness products are gaining traction among health-conscious individuals in the city, particularly those looking for natural, side-effect-free alternatives to support their well-being.



## Thailand extends visa-free entry for Indians

Thailand has indefinitely extended its visa-free entry policy for Indian nationals. Indian visitors can now stay in Thailand for up to 60 days without a visa. And if you're dreaming of a quick escape without the hassle of visa applications, here are some Asian destinations open to Indian travellers. Visa-free travel simply means that you can visit a country without applying for a visa in advance and provide a passport to the authorities on arrival. It allows you to make instant travel plans without getting into the hassle of paperwork and lengthy visa procedures.

### Thailand

Loved for its party scenes, pristine beaches, ancient temples and fabulous food, Thailand is one of the top travel stops in Asia. Pattaya, Krabi, and Phuket offer a variety of activities and experiences. Plus, it's cost-effective, meaning that it's not only beautiful but also affordable. So, if you are seeking a blend of stunning landscapes and vibrant city life, add Thailand to your bucket list. Extra tip: Do not miss out on relishing some mango sticky rice, a classic Thai dessert.

### Sri Lanka

Indian tourists are allowed visa-free access to Sri Lanka until April 2025. Known as the "Pearl of the Indian Ocean," it offers world-class surf, stunning wildlife, and beachside cafés. Colombo, and Kandy are some of its. Try local Sri Lankan delicacies. Try local Sri Lankan delicacies.

### Malaysia

Indian tourists can visit without a visa for tourism until December 31, 2024. a mix of modern and rich experiences because it's into Peninsular Malaysia Malaysia, each with unique top places to travel in-Lumpur, Penang, Langkawi, Highlands.

### Kazakhstan

In 2022, Kazakhstan launched a 14-day visa-free policy for Indian citizens. You can catch a 3-hour flight to Almaty, the country's largest city, and explore the Complex, shop at vibrant malls, or hike the lush valleys of the Tian Shan mountains. May to September are the best months to visit.

### Bhutan

Indian passport holders can travel visa-free for up to 14 days to Bhutan. A 2-3 hour flight from India takes you to the Land of the Thunder Dragon, which also stands as the last Buddhist kingdom on Earth. Thimpu, Paro, and Punakha are some of the best destinations to visit for a unique, spiritual trip.



ing, Galle, its must-visit cities for a culinary



Malaysia purposes Malaysia is cultural divided and East characteristics include Kuala and Cameron

day visa-free policy 3-hour flight to Almaty, Alzhir Museum-Memorial leys of the Tian Shan mountains. May

## Tata Motors rolls out 'Customer Care Mahotsav' nationwide to boost commercial vehicle services

**Aizawl:** Tata Motors has launched its much-awaited "Customer Care Mahotsav 2024," a nationwide engagement program designed to enhance the after-sales experience for commercial vehicle customers. Running from 23rd October to 24th December 2024, the initiative will be hosted at over 2,500 authorized service outlets across India, offering a wide range of benefits to fleet owners and drivers. The Mahotsav features free vehicle check-ups conducted by trained technicians, along with exclusive value-added services. It also includes driver training on safe and fuel-efficient driving, aligned with Tata Motors' Sampoorana Seva 2.0 initiative. This comprehensive service portfolio ensures customers



benefit from an all-inclusive solution that covers everything from vehicle purchase to lifecycle management. Girish Wagh, Executive Director of Tata Motors, highlighted the significance of the event, which coincides with the anniversary of Tata Motors' first commercial vehicle sale in 1954. "The Mahotsav reflects our commitment to delivering

the best-in-class service to our customers," he said. Aizawl is witnessing a strong response, with fleet owners taking full advantage of the Mahotsav's offerings. Local customers appreciate the convenience and value provided by Tata Motors' service centers, which are helping improve vehicle efficiency and reducing operating costs in the region.

## Godrej Industries expands food & beverage reach with Savannah Surfactants acquisition

**Guwahati:** Godrej Industries' Chemicals Business has signed a strategic agreement to acquire the Food Ester and Emulsifier Business of Savannah Surfactants Limited. The acquisition, which includes a manufacturing facility located in Goa with a capacity of 5,200 MTPA of finished products, aligns with Godrej's vision to expand its product offerings in the food and beverages sector. Vishal Sharma, Executive Director and CEO of Godrej Industries (Chemicals), stated, "This acquisition supports our strategy of growing our specialty chemicals business and is in line with our commitment to sustainable growth and innovation." As one of India's leading players in oleochemicals, surfactants, and biotech, Godrej Industries is committed to sustainable development through renewable resources-focused chemistries. With operations in over 80 countries and man-



ufacturing units in Maharashtra and Gujarat, Godrej continues to deliver tailored solutions for industries ranging from home and personal care to pharmaceuticals and agrochemicals. In Guwahati, where there is a growing demand for sustainable and innovative food ingredients, this acquisition strengthens Godrej's position in the region. It enhances their ability to cater to local businesses in the food & beverages industry, helping to meet evolving consumer demands for cleaner, greener, and more sustainable product offerings.

## Hebden Bridge: The surprising 'lesbian capital of the UK'

None of the bars here are gay bars," said Liz Paton. "But at the same time, they all are." Paton is the charismatic owner of Drink, an independent taproom in the Yorkshire market town of Hebden Bridge, where my boyfriend and I were visiting for a long weekend. Nestled between Manchester and Leeds in the scenic Upper Calder Valley, for years this rural town – which calls itself a "bohemian paradise", thanks to its many eco-friendly shops, artisan markets, galleries and indie bookstores – had been on my wish list. And so on my recent birthday, we finally booked a trip to stroll its cobbled streets, explore its rivers and canals, climb the surrounding wooded hillsides and – of course – gaze down from its eponymous 16th-Century packhorse bridge. Though only boasting a population of roughly 4,500 people, this small, peaceful community has long been known as "the lesbian capital of the UK" – 8.95% identified as LGBTQ+ in the last Census. I was curious to trace the queer history of "Trouser Town" (a nickname referencing Hebden Bridge's manufacturing heritage). But as I soon discovered, its evolution from a rural mill town to a tolerant bastion was a bit blurry. Back in the 1970s, artists and activists were drawn here by cheap housing after the cotton mills shut down. "One historical and cultural factor [that helped establish a burgeoning lesbian community] may have been the separatist wing of 1960s and 1970s feminism," said Dr Andrew Moor, who teaches film studies at Manchester Metropolitan University. "There was an element which allied itself with alternative hippy culture's experiments in alternative living, communes and a



resistance to full-throttle capitalism. Hebden was the right size and in the right place." Former resident Bev Manders moved here in the 1980s. "Certainly up to 1986, lesbians weren't particularly visible as far as I can ascertain," she said. But so steady was the growth of the community that, in neighbouring Todmorden, a monthly Women's Disco was launched. "The first took place on New Year's Eve 1986 at Cornholme Church Hall," said Manders. "With a fair amount of women there, it's my belief that this is the point we became more visible, and it also gave others the impetus to be visible – and some to come out." The disco was held in various venues before relocating to Todmorden Cricket Club, where it still takes place on the second Saturday of the month. "Within a short time, word got out and there'd be women coming from Bradford, Leeds, Burnley and even Cumbria, Blackpool and Nottingham." From 1986 to the early 1990s, Manders recalls that "an influx of lesbians" descended on the small town. "A number moved to the valley as they knew someone who lived there or had previously visited. Others had heard through the grapevine about this 'new' place with lesbians. In addition to the disco, there were writers' groups, book clubs, a choir and walking groups. Some were exclusively lesbian, some women-only." By the late 1990s a monthly pamphlet, Lesbian Zone, was available to buy via subscription or at specific bars – and by 2004 Hebden had the highest number of lesbians per capita in the UK. Bar owner Paton was born and raised in Calderdale but drawn to Hebden from a young age. "I was aware of the 'lesbian hippy' moniker," she said.



# Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine provides strong protection against MIS-C in children aged 5–17

A recent study in Vaccine analyzed public health data to assess the impact of COVID-19 vaccination on childhood multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) in California. Examining two age groups—12-17 and 5-11 years—researchers found that vaccination significantly reduced MIS-C risk in both groups. This study provides the first evidence of vaccine protection in younger children (5-11) and underscores the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination for children. While focusing specifically on the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the findings support public health vaccination efforts. Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) is a rare medical condition that may develop one to two months following severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection. It afflicts about one in every 3,000 children. Still, it presents severe symptoms, including high fever, inflammation, and adverse outcomes across multiple systems, with all cases requiring hospitalization and between 1-2% of patients dying despite intensive care unit (ICU) support. Unfortunately, little is known about MIS-C pathophysiology and the effects of vaccination on disease risk and outcomes. Vaccination against SARS-CoV-2 is hypothesized to attenuate MIS-C risk and improve outcomes, but supporting data is derived exclusively from teenagers and older children and remains limited to small cohorts. Younger children (age group = 5-11 years) are an especially understudied population, with almost no scientific literature available on this vulnerable group. Leveraging population-wide public health datasets would allow researchers to determine optimal public health responses to increasing MIS-C prevalence and inform policymakers, parents, and public debate in today's



increasingly anti-vaccination society. The present study aims to address current knowledge gaps by evaluating the prevalence of MIS-C in vaccinated and unvaccinated Californian children between the ages of 5 and 17. Population data was acquired from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and included clinical records archived by the California Reportable Disease Information Exchange (CalREDIE) disease surveillance system. Additionally, vaccination surveillance systems such as the California Immunization Registry, the San Diego Immunization Registry, and the Regional Immunization Data Exchange were queried for vaccination status data (date, manufacturer, batch). Since the Pfizer-BioNTech (BNT162b2) vaccine was the first vaccine to receive necessary regulatory permissions and

achieve widespread adoption across the state of California, the present study restricted its analysis only to children who received one ('partial' vaccination) or both ('complete' vaccination) dosages of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Other vaccines (such as Moderna) were excluded from analyses. The final older (12-17 years) study cohort comprised 872,936 unvaccinated and 2,117,575 vaccinated children ( $n = 2,990,511$ ), of which 66 (0.0076%) and 51 (0.0024%) developed MIS-C. Similar yet attenuated trends were observed in younger (5-11 years) children, with 51 cases in 2,113,725 unvaccinated children (0.0024%) and 9 cases in 1,221,293 vaccinated children (0.0007%). Children with MIS-C in California were more likely to be male than female, particularly in the younger age group. When restricting the

analyses to only participants with MIS-C and excluding children who only received partial vaccination, study findings revealed that 85% of younger MIS-C patients were unvaccinated. This corresponds with a 3.3-fold higher incidence rate-ratio (IRR) for unvaccinated children compared to their vaccinated counterparts. Observed contrasts were even more stark in the older age group, with 90% of MIS-C patients reporting no vaccination, corresponding with a 22.9-fold higher IRR than vaccinated children. Mortality results were similarly skewed in favor of vaccination – all 4 MIS-C-associated deaths that were obtained from public health records occurred in unvaccinated participants. Even in participants who survived, unvaccinated children frequently experienced MIS-C presentation in 6 or more organs, substantially higher than vaccinated children. Together, these results highlight that vaccination protects both against MIS-C development and severe MIS-C outcomes. The present study elucidates the protective effects of anti-SARS-CoV-2 vaccination against MIS-C risk and severity in Californian children. It supports previous data from older children (12-17 years) and presents the first evaluation of younger children (5-11 years) in vaccination-MIS-C analyses. Study findings revealed that vaccination substantially reduced MIS-C risk across both age groups. Additionally, none of the vaccinated children succumbed to MIS-C, compared to four unvaccinated children. Finally, disease severity was observed to be significantly attenuated in the vaccinated cohort. Together, these findings highlight vaccination's protective benefits against MIS-C disease risk and severity and support the ongoing government- or public health agency-promoted child vaccination campaigns.

## An ideal diet look like according to new ICMR nutrition guidelines

**New Delhi:** In an Indian household, meal times are almost sacred, and calorie counting often takes a backseat. A typical desi household enjoys anywhere between two to three meals a day—and that's not even counting the essential chai sessions that keep us going! While our love for food is undeniable, and the sheer variety makes restraint tricky, there is also this question: Is indulging in elaborate four-course meals okay, or are we just overeating? While three meals a day today are almost indispensable (unless you're on some kind of diet), did you know breakfast wasn't always part of a typical Indian diet? Until the 14th century, it wasn't usual to consume an early morning meal in India. Meals began only around midday and the only other big meal was supper, which used to be lighter than the midday meal. "Since the population consisted primarily of land-owning farmers and gatherers, this way worked the best for them," Amarnath Halembur, executive director and CEO, NextG Apex India Pvt Ltd,

told The New Indian Express. As more Indians started finding jobs in fields, homes, and factories, eating habits shifted. What was once reserved for children, the elderly, or the unwell became a routine for many workers, as they began their days with an early snack. In the 19th century, the East India Company's arrival also introduced tea, coffee, and the idea of breakfast as a formal meal, especially amongst the elite. But is that the right way forward? Dubai-based culinary



nutritionist and holistic wellness coach Eshanka Wahi says, "There's an old Indian saying, 'do waqt ki roti, do waqt khana hota hai'. So, ideally, for a relatively low-activity lifestyle, two to two-and-a-half meals

a day should be enough. That could mean two main meals with a small snack, like nuts, rather than three big meals." Bharathi Kumar, a dietitian at Fortis Hospital in Bangalore, agrees that while two meals can work for many, factors like age, activity level, and health goals also play a

role in deciding what's ideal for each individual. Recent studies indicate that eating too frequently could actually confuse hunger cues and lead to overeating, especially with carb-heavy snacks. Do Indians tend to overeat? India's typical diet is rich in carbohydrates and fats, which, as research suggests, can increase appetite and lead to overeating. With calorie-dense foods in every meal, it's worth asking: where does this leave us? Dr Madhusudan Singh Solanki, senior psychiatrist and head of psychiatry at Max Smart Superspeciality Hospital in New Delhi, explains, "The rich variety of Indian cuisines, with their vibrant and spicy dishes, along with the cultural emphasis on shared meals and food-centric rituals, can distract the brain and encourage overeating." Food as a love language In India, food isn't just sustenance; it's a love language. We celebrate, comfort, and express affection through food. "Our undefined meal patterns lead us to overeat," notes Eshanka Wahi.



## Emotional Cavendish wins final race of career



**Agency:** The 39-year-old from the Isle of Man, who said on Saturday that this would be his final race before retirement, triumphed in a sprint finish to end a 19-year career. Cavendish, riding for Astana-Qazaqstan, wore race number 35 to mark his record for stage wins in the Tour de France. He signed autographs and took selfies with fans before the race and received a 'wheel of honour' - other riders held their bikes up on one wheel and spun the other - on the start line of the race, made up of 25 laps of a 2.3km course. "I'm quite emotional," said Cavendish, who was close to tears after the race. "I realised in the last five laps it was the last 15km of my career. I was nervous about crashing or something if I fight [for the lead]. I really wanted that so bad. I've always loved this sport." Cavendish won 165 races in his career, including the road world title in 2011, 17 stages in the Giro d'Italia and three in the Vuelta a Espana. He received a knighthood in October. On the track, he won omnium silver at the 2016 Olympics and was a three-time madison world champion. Having delayed his retirement by a year, "Cycling is such a form of freedom," he said. "It's a way to meet people; it's a way to be alone with your thoughts. It has so much potential as a sport, a mode of transport, a pastime. I've always tried to do anything I can to help this move forward and that won't stop even if I'm not riding a bike any more. In fact, I might be able to put more into that. I'm looking forward to what the rest of my career holds. I couldn't have wished for a better send-off. I'm so grateful. I hope everyone enjoyed that." Alpecin-Deceuninck's Jasper Philipsen finished second and Arnaud de Lie third for Lotto-Dstny.

## ICC awaits PCB's decision on Hybrid Model for Champions Trophy

**New Delhi:** The International Cricket Council has sought a response from the Pakistan Cricket Board on hosting the Champions Trophy in a hybrid model following India's refusal to travel to the country for the tournament. The PCB on Sunday had confirmed that it received an email from the ICC that India declined to travel to the neighbouring country. "Unless

the PCB decides to pull out of hosting the Champions Trophy the current plan is to hold India's matches in UAE and the final in Dubai," a source told PTI on Monday. "The Indian Cricket Board has told the ICC that a Hybrid Model is acceptable to them only if the final is held in Dubai and not in Pakistan," the source added. The PCB on Monday remained silent without giving any reaction to the BCCI informing the ICC it will not send its team to play in Pakistan in the Champions Trophy. But according to sources, the ICC has asked the PCB to confirm if a Hybrid Model -- where India's matches and the final would be held in Dubai -- is acceptable to them. The ICC has assured the PCB that, under this arrangement, they would receive full hosting fees and a majority of the matches. "The ICC has told the PCB that if it decides to go ahead with the hosting of the mega event on a Hybrid Model it would get its

full hosting fees and majority of the matches," the source said. However, if the PCB decides to pull out of hosting the tournament due to India's refusal, the ICC could consider moving the entire event to South Africa, the source added. Earlier, a PCB source had said there was "no talk" of a Hybrid Model as of now and they would seek further clarity from the

ICC. "There is no talk about having the Champions Trophy on a Hybrid Model system as of now," a reliable PCB source told PTI. "An email is to be sent to the ICC with the advice of its legal department in which the Board wanted clarifications from the ICC on the Indian decision," the source said. "As of now



the entire situation is being gauged by the PCB. No decision has been taken on the next step. Yes the PCB is in touch with the government for consultation and directives if required," the source added. Meanwhile, Pakistani media speculated on potential responses, including the Pakistani government advising the PCB to avoid playing India altogether or the PCB pursuing legal action against the ICC and BCCI at the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Geneva. India has not travelled to Pakistan since the 2008 Mumbai terror strikes. The two teams compete against each other only in ICC tournaments.

## No marathons as Swiatek and Gauff sprint into French Open

**Staff Reporter:** After the French Open marathon came the sprints. Defending champion Iga Swiatek swept into the quarterfinals at Roland Garros in just 40 minutes after a crushing 6-0, 6-0 win against Anastasia Potapova. U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff took only 60 minutes to rout unseeded Italian Elisabetta Cocciaretto 6-1, 6-2. The 20-year-old American looked set for an even quicker victory when she led 5-0, but Cocciaretto fought back, getting a hearty cheer from the crowd after winning the next game. Swiatek wound up with 48 points to just 10 for Potapova. The match ended when Potapova hit a forehand into the net on the first match point. "I was just really focused and in the zone," Swiatek said. "It went pretty quickly, pretty weird." Their match started at around 11 a.m. on Court Philippe Chatrier. That's just eight hours after men's defend-



ing champion Novak Djokovic finished his five-set, 4 1/2-hour marathon against Lorenzo Musetti just after 3 a.m. in the latest finish in tournament history. Swiatek said late finishes don't just end with the match and are not healthy. "Usually it takes us, like, four hours to even chill, and you need to do recovery, media. It's not like the work ends with the match point," she said. "I was

always one of the players that said that we should start a little bit earlier." Gauff thinks the issue needs to be addressed. "It's a complicated thing," she said. "But I definitely think for the health and safety of the players it would be in the sport's best interest to try to avoid those matches finishing, or starting, after a certain time." Gauff says there's also a fine balance to be struck. "Ob-

viously I don't want to complain too much about it because we are very blessed and privileged to be playing for a lot of money. There's people working real jobs under worse conditions for less money and just trying to get by," she said. "It's just tough for me knowing where some of my family come from and where things are, and I think about the people hearing this. Yes, if I was a person working, I would be upset to hear, you know, players complain." In the men's draw, two-time Grand Slam title winner Carlos Alcaraz and 2021 French Open runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas set up a quarterfinal showdown, while No. 10 Grigor Dimitrov got to the final eighth in Paris for the first time in 14 appearances and will meet No. 2 Jannik Sinner next. Dimitrov eliminated No. 8 Hubert Hurkacz 7-6 (5), 6-4, 7-6 (3), and Australian Open champion Sinner recovered from a terrible start to beat unseeded Corentin

## Japan Masters 2024 Treasa-Gayatri pair exits in opening

**New Delhi:** In a disappointing start to their Kumamoto Masters campaign, India's Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand bowed out in the first round with a straight-games defeat against the Chinese Taipei duo Hsu Yin-Hui and Lin Yin-Hui on Tuesday. The world-ranked No. 20 Indian pair fell 16-21, 16-21 to the Taiwanese team, currently ranked 24th, concluding their match in just 36 minutes.

This loss marks the first victory for Hsu Yin-Hui and Lin Yin-Hui against the Indian pair, who still lead the head-to-head record 2-1. Treasa and Gayatri struggled to find their rhythm in a match that saw the Taiwanese pair control the tempo, capitalizing on well-placed smashes and tighter net play.

Meanwhile, Indian badminton stars PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen will kickstart their Kumamoto Masters campaigns on Wednesday. Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, is set to face eighth-seeded Thai player Busanan Ongbamrunphan in the women's singles opening round. Lakshya Sen, a World Championship medallist, will take on Malaysia's Leong Jun Hao in his opening men's singles encounter. India's Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand lost to the Chinese Taipei pair of Hsu Yin-Hu.



## CT 25 snowballing into a crisis as PCB confirm BCCI refusal to play in Pak

**Staff Reporter:** The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has confirmed receiving a letter from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) about India's decision to not travel to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy 2025. And the tournament could now be snowballing into a major crisis. The BCCI mail was sent last week to the International Cricket Council (ICC) which formally forwarded it to the PCB. A spokesman for the PCB confirmed receiving it, stating.

"The PCB has received an email from the ICC, stating that the BCCI has informed them that their team will not travel to Pakistan for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025. The PCB has forwarded that email to the Government of Pakistan for their advice and guidance." Although it has only recently been officially confirmed, the



BCCI's stance vis-a-vis playing in Pakistan has long been known to both the ICC and the global cricket community at large - its letter is on the expected lines. The big question now is: what next? Will the ICC and PCB revert to the hybrid model, holding India's matches in the UAE? That seems an overly simplistic solution to a complex issue involving deep-rooted acrimony, tension and perennial diplomatic stand-off between two countries who

have fought wars. Given the history of India-Pakistan relations, whether this issue has been handled properly by the ICC is open to debate. The ICC could have been more proactive, felt a key official involved in the conduct of the Champions Trophy. While approving the CT budget, provisions were made for partial relocation of matches but that looks unacceptable to the PCB. Its chief Mohsin Naqvi has said in as many words. "No discussions

have been held regarding a hybrid model as of today, and we are not ready to discuss such a model," Naqvi told reporters recently in Lahore last week. Those comments may be indicative of a serious situation unfolding. For now, the PCB intends to engage with the ICC, seeking clarity on the matter. Simultaneously, it will also seek advice from the authorities within the country. A lot will understandably depend on the response of the Pakistan government. For the record, Naqvi himself is a minister in the Pakistan government. The ICC called off an event, scheduled for Monday (November 11), when it would have announced the schedule. It would have also marked the 100-day countdown to the February 19-March 19 championship. What lies ahead is not explicitly clear, but a crisis may be looming.

## Spanish football manager stirs huge controversy in Italy

**Staff Reporter:** Fresh controversy has struck Italian football, but this time it doesn't involve the Serie A or any of its players, teams. An incident happened in Serie C where Triestina's Spanish football manager Pep Clotet had a moment of madness on Friday, grabbing and pushing his own player Raimonds Krollis, from Latvia, after he received a straight red card for a challenge. The altercation took place in the 33rd-minute when Triestina took on Giana Ermino. After the red card when Krollis was walking off the pitch, and went to his manager. But Clotet lost his cool and held the attacker by his collar and began to shake him furiously. Surprisingly, Krollis didn't defend himself, and had a dejected expression. Triestina eventually crashed to a 0-1 defeat as Gabriel Avinci scored a late winner in the 87th-minute. Speaking to reporters, he said, "I think, regarding the incident with the red card, the reaction was justified - that sending off should never happen in football." "Krollis is here on loan, representing another club that sent him here, and he does this to Triestina, to the club that entrusted him to us, and to the game itself." If a player does something like this on the street, there would be legal consequences. It's not normal, and we must not accept it in any way," he added. Meanwhile, Clotet also sacked Krollis, stating, "I told him exactly this face to face: with me as coach, he's done with Triestina from today." In the past, Clotet has managed teams like Cornella, Espanyol B, Halmstad, Oxford United, Birmingham City, SPAL and Brescia. He has also worked as an assistant head coach at Leeds United, as part of Garry Monk's staff.

## FIFA urged to avoid awarding 2034 World Cup hosting rights to Saudi

**Agency:** Saudi Arabia is slowly becoming a powerful force in the football world. From Newcastle United to Cristiano Ronaldo joining the Saudi Pro League, Saudi Arabia has been flourishing in the sport. They are also the lone bidder for the 2034 FIFA World Cup, but that plan has received a huge setback. According to the Amnesty International and the Sport and Rights Alliance (SRA), the World Cup should not be awarded to Saudi Arabia as it could lead to major human rights issues. In a new report, Amnesty and SRA evaluated Morocco, Spain and Portugal, who received the 2030 World Cup hosting rights, and Saudi Arabia. The report concluded that "neither bid adequately outlines how the would-be host nation would meet the human rights standards required by FIFA in its bidding regulations, nor did these bids show evidence of having meaningfully consulted with human rights organisations." Both Amnesty and SRA have stated there are high risks in awarding hosting rights to Saudi Arabia. Steve Cockburn, Amnesty International's Head of Labour Rights and Sport, said, "There will be a real and predictable human cost to awarding the 2034 World Cup to Saudi Arabia without obtaining credible guarantees of reform.



Fans will face discrimination, residents will be forcibly evicted, migrant workers will face exploitation, and many will die." "Saudi Arabia will require a vast number of migrant workers to deliver its World Cup ambitions, yet there are no commitments to reform the country's exploitative 'kafala' sponsorship system, establish a minimum wage for non-citizens, permit them to join trade unions or introduce new measures to prevent worker deaths," he added. Cockburn also urged FIFA to not award the hosting rights to Saudi Arabia if 'proper human rights protection' weren't put in place. Saudi Arabia's Bid Book for the 2034 World Cup includes plans to build or renovate 11 stadiums, provide more than 185,000 additional hotel rooms, as well as big infrastructure projects from transport connections to new cities.

## India tastes defeat against South Africa

**Agency:** The Indian cricket team faced an embarrassing defeat against South Africa in the second T20I of the four-match series held in Gqeberha, on November 10, leveling the series 1-1. Indian batters showcased a poor skillset, posting a total of 124 runs, while South Africa won by 3 wickets. Batting first, India faltered early, slipping to 15/3 within the first four overs as the top-order crumbled. Axar Patel (27) stabilised the innings with key partnerships, adding 30 runs with Tilak Varma (20) and 25 runs with Hardik Pandya. However, South Africa maintained control, picking up wickets at regular intervals. Top-scorer Pandya (39) provided a late surge with a few big hits, helping India to a more respectable total. Marco Jansen (1/25), Gerald Coetzee (1/25), Andile Simelane (1/20), Aiden Markram (1/4), and Ngqabayomzi Peter (1/20) all contributed with wickets. Brief Score: India: 124 for six in 20 overs (Hardik Pandya 39 not out, Axar Patel 27; Andile Simelane 1/20, Aiden Markram 1/4, Ngqabayomzi Peter 1/20).



## Bumrah to captain India in Sharma's absence: Gautam



**New Delhi:** The head coach of the Indian cricket team, Gautam Gambhir has announced that pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah will lead the national men's cricket team if Rohit Sharma is unavailable for the first Test of the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy series against Australia. The opening Test is scheduled to begin on November 22, in Perth. During a pre-departure press conference in Mumbai, Sharma said, "Bumrah is vice-captain; if Rohit is not available, he is going to lead in Perth." Rohit Sharma, while not currently with the squad, has not been officially ruled out of the series opener, according to Gambhir. "At the moment, there is no confirmation but we will let you know exactly what the situation will be. Hopefully he's going to be available, but everything we're going to get to know at the start of the series," Gambhir said at a press-conference before the team's departure to Australia. India's squad is departing for

Australia in two separate batches, with the first group having left on November 10 and the second set to depart today. Gambhir has acknowledged the importance of contingency planning in case Rohit is unavailable, mentioning that both Abhimanyu Easwaran and KL Rahul are in the squad and ready to step up as opening options. "Obviously there is [Abhimanyu] Easwaran and there is [KL [Rahul] there. So we will take a call closer to the first Test match if Rohit is not available," Gambhir said. "There are options there, it's not that there are no options there. There are quite a few options in the squad. To optimise their preparations, the Indian team has organized an extended camp in Perth, which will include players from the India A squad. Instead of a practice match, the management has opted for centre-wicket practice and match simulations, ensuring focused preparation ahead of the intense four-Test series.