

- Meghalaya faces a severe drug abuse problem, affecting 10% of the population, particularly young people aged 15-29.
- Amritsar, Gurdaspur, and Tarn Taran districts experienced a total shutdown due to a Punjab bandh organized by Samyukta Kisan Morcha and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha.
- Nagaland's Minister of Tourism, Temjen Imna Along, received the Damchao Dimbeswar Gogoi Memorial Samannya Award at the 35th Central Martyrs' Day celebration.
- Manipur's New Year began with tense violence in Imphal West's Kadangband region, involving suspected militants.

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The 35th Central Martyrs' Day, the Nagaland Tourism Minister received a distinguished prize

Kohima: Temjen Imna Along, Nagaland's Minister of Tourism, received the prestigious Damchao Dimbeswar Gogoi Memorial Samannya Award at the 35th Central Martyrs' Day celebration. The event was organized by the ATASU Central Committee and was held in the Sivasagar Girls' College Auditorium in Assam. Minister Along expressed his profound thanks for the recognition and admiration of the kind hospitality extended by the Sivasagar people. He emphasized the significance of the occasion and remarked that wearing traditional Tai Ahom attire was a special



honor that added to its memorable appeal. The 27-year-old Naga political disagreement has to be resolved quickly, according to Temjen Imna Along, Nagaland's minister of tourism. Minister Along highlighted the government's accomplishments this year,

particularly its proactive approach to addressing significant challenges like the ENPO situation. He reiterated the government's focus on the empowerment of the people and the development of Nagaland. He underlined the vital role played by the

state government and civil society and commended the Political Affairs Committee for supporting the ongoing efforts toward the Naga political settlement. He expressed his hope that Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will work together to find a common solution. He also commended the state government's collaboration with its alliance partners, emphasizing how their endeavors are driving the state's overall development. The minister expressed hope that this concerted effort will lead to a brighter and more prosperous future for Nagaland.

Drug misuse is becoming serious issue in Meghalaya

Shillong: In Meghalaya, over 3 lakh persons, or 10% of the population, use drugs, drug abuse is a severe problem. According to Social Welfare Minister Paul Lyngdoh, the majority of those affected are young persons between the ages of 15 and 29, with a prevalence rate of 30% within this group. In response to the growing issue, the state government is advocating for the establishment of a special court to handle cases under the NDPS Act. The Meghalaya High Court is now discussing the creation of this specialist court. To combat the escalating drug issue, the government established a specialized police force called the ANTF. Under the leadership of Superintendent of Police Jagpal Singh Dhanoa, the ANTF, which has 30 police officers under its supervision, is dedicated to battling the state's drug abuse pandemic. In recent years, police enforcement has seized a significant amount of drugs, including cash, firearms, and 42.758 kg of heroin, 13,521 kg of ganja, and opium. 653 drug-related incidents have been recorded in the past five years, resulting in the arrest of 1,027 males and 134 women. To enhance prosecution efforts, the ANTF is offering its officers specialized training, including simulated trials with renowned lawyers. The police station also has the power to freeze the bank accounts and assets of suspected drug dealers. In addition to strengthening law enforcement, the government is prioritizing rehabilitation. Because incarceration alone may be lethal owing to withdrawal symptoms, detoxification and rehabilitation institutions are helping drug users.



Again violence breaks out in Manipur



Imphal: Manipur's New Year started off tense when new violence broke out in the Imphal West district's Kadangband region. Residents were terrified when suspected militants who were stationed in the nearby Kangpokpi district's hills started an attack. "No casualties or injuries were reported in the incident," police official stated. Security concerns of the area have been raised by the fact that locals have frequently been the targets of attacks.

Trekkers exploring a remote offbeat of Arunachal District's mountain

Itanagar: A 10-person trekking team led by Tagit Sorang Abraham, the state's youngest Everester, visited Mount Kro in the remote Pipsorang region of the Kra Daadi district. Mount Kro, which lies in the Kra Daadi area near to Mount Kechi, Mount Kongto, and Mount Raba, is one of the most beautiful and pure mountain ranges. The five-day journey began at Hai Machi, the final village in the area without a road. Overcoming the challenging weather, the group trekked 2,600 meters above sea level across pristine, untouched country. Along with discovering a number of stunning waterfalls, they also came across endangered wildlife such as the red goral, crested langur, serow, and musk deer, as well as uncommon bird species including



the monal, pheasant, tragopan, and great hornbill. The region is also home to rare plant species including hermit's spittoon and rafflesia. The excursion showed how much potential there is for wildlife tourism on Mount Kro, which is still mostly unexplored but offers a beautiful environment for adventurers and wildlife lovers. Because of its rich biodiversity and potential for sustainable tourism, Mount

Kro has the potential to become a premier ecotourism destination. It was jointly funded by the team members and the Arunbhoomi Multipurpose Cooperative Society. Other crew members were native guides Hai Halle and Hai Tapak, wildlife doctor and photographer Dr. Sorang Tadap, and mountaineer Taru Hai. Dr. Tadap was the first officer to walk to Mount Kro.

"Mobius Young Climate Leaders" project is launched by CM

Shillong: The "Mobius Young Climate Leaders" project, a sustainability-focused effort aimed at seven northeastern states, including Meghalaya, has been launched by Meghalaya CM Conrad K. Sangma. The initiative, led by North East Leaders Connect (NELC) is in line with the Tawang Declaration and seeks to advance environmental sustainability, economic growth, and education.

The University of Cambridge and the Möbius Foun-

dation are supporting the endeavor. "North East Leaders Connect is happy to launch the 'Mobius Young Climate Leaders' project in seven northeastern states of India for education, economic, and environmental sustainability in alignment with the Tawang Declaration," CM Sangma said in a statement posted on his official social media account.

The program's main goal is to enable young leaders to spearhead regional sustainable development.

BSF confiscates Rs 20 lakh worth of contraband from Tripura-Bangladesh border

Agartala: In two different incidences along the India-Bangladesh border, the Border Security Force (BSF) in Tripura stepped up its anti-smuggling efforts and seized contraband worth ₹20 lakh.

BSF officers stopped 4,115 firecracker packs worth ₹10.60 lakh from being trafficked into Bangladesh during the first operation at Anandpur. In the second seizure, which took place close to Border Outpost

Dipak, BSF soldiers found 239 bottles of cough syrups, including Phensedyl and Eskuf, and 80 brand-new cell phones, totaling ₹9.34 lakh. December 31, 2024, was the date of the procedure.

Because cough syrup is abused as an intoxicant in the area, smuggling it is still a major threat. To stop these unlawful operations, the BSF has increased its surveillance along Tripura's borders.

State suffers Rs 336.49 crore loss due to African Swine Fever

Aizawl: According to the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department, the state lost ₹336.49 crore in 2024. Since it first appeared in 2021, the illness has decimated the state's pig population, resulting in a total loss of ₹896.69 crore over the previous four

years. With 33,417 pigs dying and an additional 12,568 culled, that year had the greatest toll, leading to a financial. In 2022, 12,795 pigs died, and 11,686 were culled, with losses amounting to ₹210.32 crore. In 2023, the toll was significantly lower, with 1,139

deaths and 980 pigs culled, causing losses of ₹15.77 crore. Officials noted a slight respite in December 2024, with a decrease in pig deaths and culling operations. Historically, ASF outbreaks subside during winter but tend to resurge with warmer temperatures.

The SpaDeX mission of ISRO is ready for launching

New Delhi: On December 30, the Indian Space Research Organization will launch its Space Docking Experiment, or SpaDeX, aboard a PSLV rocket. The space agency's most recent data indicate that the SpaDeX launch has been postponed from 9:58 to 10 p.m., a two-minute delay. "Launch Day is here. Tonight at precisely 10 pm, PSLV-C60 with SpaDeX and innovative payloads are set for liftoff," ISRO said in an update. The agency more added that "Space Docking Experiment is a pioneering mission to establish India's capability in orbital docking, a key technology for future human spaceflight and satellite servicing missions." Originally, the launch was set for 9:58 p.m. Instead of lifting off at 9.58 p.m. ISRO announced that it will now do so at 10 p.m. However, the cause for the postponing was not immediately disclosed. For India to achieve its space goals, which include



sending people to the Moon, collecting samples there, and constructing and running its own space station, Bharatiya Antariksh Station, in-space docking technology will be crucial. If successful, ISRO's Space Docking experiment a low-cost technology demonstrator mission for in-space docking would add India to a select group that already includes the US, China, and Russia. When several rocket launches are scheduled to accomplish shared mission goals, the docking technology would also be used. Launched from the first launch pad, the mission will

carry 24 secondary payloads in addition to SpaDeX's core payloads of two spacecraft. According to ISRO, Spacecraft A and Spacecraft B, the two spacecraft in the PSLV rocket, will be positioned in an orbit that maintains a distance of 5 km between them. At a height of around 470 kilometers above Earth, scientists at ISRO headquarters would attempt to move them closer to within 3 meters, which would ultimately result in their merger. According to ISRO authorities, the procedure should happen around 10-14 days following Monday's planned lift-off.

Lathi charge against student protesters is similar to attack the democracy

Pune: Arvind Kejriwal, the former chief minister of Delhi, has denounced the latest lathi charge against nonviolent student demonstrators and charged that the BJP regimes are repressing dissent by employing force. Kejriwal criticized the government's handling of student voices and referred to the episode as an assault on democracy in a post on the social networking site X.

He stated, "BJP governments want to suppress every voice of protest with the help of sticks. Lathicharge on peacefully protesting students is a direct attack against democracy." "Students are the future of the country; listen to their voice instead of suppressing it. Lathi's charge on the protesters shows the weakness and insensitivity of those in power. The country will never forgive such injustice to the youth. We stand with all these students," the post added. Congresswoman Priyanka Gandhi Vadra voiced her disapproval earlier today of the "inhumane" treatment of student demonstrators in Bihar who have been calling for the Bihar Public Service Commission to abolish the Integrated Combined CCE 2024. She claimed that the BJP two-engine administration has come to represent two "atrocities" against young people. Gandhi took issue with the Bihar government's



deployment of water cannons against students during the cold weather and police lathi attacks against them. She claimed that rather than reducing corruption, the students' voices were being silenced. "Students were oppressed for the second time in three days in Bihar. It is the government's job to stop corruption, rigging and paper leaks in examinations. But instead of stopping corruption, students are being prevented from raising their voices," the post added. "Water cannons and lathi-charges on youth in this harsh cold are inhumane. BJP's double engine has become a symbol of double atrocities on the youth," Gandhi, who is Congress MP from Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency, posted on X.

Western disturbance aiming from Jan 4 to cause snowfall



Mumbai: According to the IMD's Sunday prediction, a new western disturbance is expected to hit north India starting on January 4 and bring rain and snow in the days before. "A western disturbance is likely to affect northwest India starting on the night of January 4 and cause scattered rainfall and snowfall in the western Himalayan region starting in January," the IMD said in a statement. On January 4 and 5, the meteorological service has also forecast further extensive snowfall and rains in the area. According to IMD scientist Soma Sen Roy, cold wave conditions only lasted in the western

Himalayan area after the present western disturbance left the north Indian region. She also added that the new western disturbance would likely cause a rise in the minimum temperature by 3-5 degrees.

The scientist said that during this period rain is expected over Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. In its statement, the IMD predicted that over the following two to three days, there will likely be chilly daytime temperatures and dense to extremely dense fog over northwest India. Additionally, isolated areas of Jammu and Kashmir are still experiencing cold wave conditions.

Make digital payments by using any UPI

Mumbai: As long as the wallet has already finished the whole KYC verification process, the Reserve Bank of India has now permitted customers to make payments from their digital wallets using any app that supports UPI. It implies that customers won't be limited to using just one app to complete transactions. "A PPI issuer shall enable holders of only its full-KYC PPIs to make UPI payments by linking its customer PPIs to its UPI handle. UPI transactions from PPI on the issuer's application shall be authenticated using the customer's existing PPI credentials. Before a transaction like this enters the UPI system, it will be pre-approved.

"A PPI issuer may also facilitate discovery of its full-KYC PPIs on third-party UPI mobile applications, in turn shall enable such PPIs to be linked to their PSP handle. Such UPI transactions, from PPIs using third party UPI applications, shall be authenticated using the UPI credentials," the notification read.

Bandh farmers called shutdown



Chandigarh: In reaction to the Punjab bandh that the Samyukta Kisan Morcha and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha called, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, and Tarn Taran districts saw a total shutdown. The bandh was calm and brought Tam Taran, Jandiála Guru, Ajnala, and Majitha to a halt, according to the police. The bandh was organized to pressure the Center to satisfy their demands, which included a legal guarantee for a MSP for crops. Shops and restaurants stayed closed for the day, while residents chose to stay at home. The business districts of IDH Market, Hall Bazaar, Katra Jaimal Singh Bazaar, Chitta

Katra Bazaar, and Ranjit Avenue District Shopping complex were desolate. To guarantee the closure, the farmers who were protesting marched through marketplaces in groups after congregating at Hall Gate. From 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., government and private offices, banks, and educational establishments especially schools were closed. All services were affected, with the exception of health. There were no autorickshaws or buses on the city streets. The main routes were rarely used by private automobiles. Farmers who were loyal to the KMSC staged dharnas at various Amritsar landmarks and chowks.

Sparks down on Gurgaon highway during construction work

New Delhi: An intense internet discussion has been sparked by a viral video that shows hazardous building methods on NH-8 in Gurgaon. Many users have called the video a "perfect recipe for disaster." The undated video shows startling disregard for safety procedures while work is being done. The 36-second video shows two guys working on a big billboard over the highway, doing something similar to welding.

Indian Post discontinues book post



New Delhi: India Post terminated the "Book Post" service without informing relevant parties. Under the RBP service, customers may mail five kilograms of books for Rs 80, is far less expensive than the pricey courier services used by book companies. Even India Post staff were not notified beforehand that this product had been discontinued from postal services. Many in the publishing sector are dismayed by the significant price gap between registered packages and RBP. For example, shipping a cargo weighing 1 kilogram by RBP costs Rs 32, whereas shipping the same weight via "registered parcel" costs Rs 78. Likewise, the prices are Rs 45 and Rs 116 for 2 kg and Rs 80 and Rs 229 for 5 kg. A 5% import tax on sample books, is unprecedented for this type of charge, has been imposed in conjunction with the change. According to the article, critics have said that India's dedication to literacy, education, and intellectual development would suffer as a result of these capricious actions.

Preity Zinta twit about rumours dating life with Salman Khan

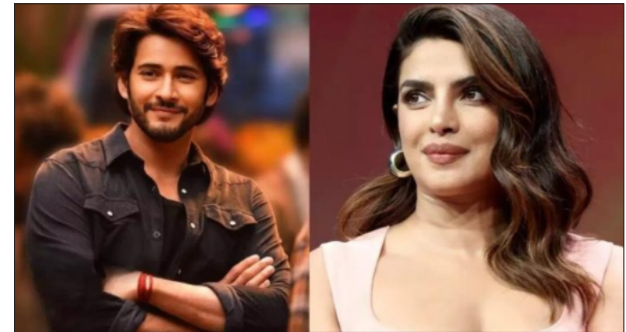
Mumbai: When a user on X questioned Preity Zinta if she had ever dated Salman Khan, she replied. Preity posted a number of pictures on social media to wish Salman Khan a happy birthday. The pair clutched each other and grinned in a few pictures. The pair was photographed in a still from a movie. In the final photo, Preity and Salman stood with their feet resting on a table. "Happy Burrday @BeingSalmanKhan. Just wanna say I love you the mostest. Rest will tell you when I speak to you and yes we need more photos otherwise I will keep posting the same old ones! Ting." An X user asked, "Did you two ever date?" Preity responded, "No not at



all! He is family & my closest friend and my husband's friend too .. just in case you were wondering . Sorry! Couldn't resist. Preity is prepared to return to the stage with Lahore 1947, directed by Rajkumar Santoshi. As Preity makes her long-awaited comeback to the big screen, this production represents a significant turning point in her career. Aamir Khan's production company, Aamir Khan Productions, is in charge of Lahore 1947. The film's star-studded ensemble attracted interest when it was first unveiled in October of last year. The movie will include Shabana Azmi, Sunny Deol, Ali Fazal, and his son Karan Deol.

Priyanka Chopra set for her south Indian movie

Chennai: In 2022, after the huge success of 'RRR' with Ram Charan and Jr. NTR, SS Rajamouli is ready to return with his next film, starring Mahesh Babu. Reports now indicate that Priyanka Chopra will play the female protagonist alongside Mahesh in this much-awaited film, which is tentatively named "SSMB29." Fans have been keen to discover more about the film's cast and concept. Mahesh will play a role reminiscent to Lord Hanuman in the African jungle adventure movie. Production is scheduled to start in April 2025, and Priyanka Chopra will play the lead role. According to the source, Priyanka would make her comeback to the Indian film business in SS Rajamouli's next pan-world jungle adventure. The script for the movie is almost fin-



ished, and production is scheduled to start in April 2025. Priyanka was the ideal choice for Rajamouli, who is renowned for his ability to communicate stories around the world, who was looking for a female protagonist who would be well-liked worldwide. The actress and director have had several conversations over the last six months, which has resulted in a cordial working relationship for this well-known film. The 'Krrish' actress'

last appearance was in 'The Sky Is Pink'. This project will see her collaborate with the acclaimed 'RRR' director and co-star Mahesh in an adventurous, action-packed role. The character offers Priyanka a new challenge, with significant action sequences alongside the 'Guntur Kaaram' actor. Sources reveal that she is excited about this uncharted territory and has already begun preparing for the role, marking a thrilling chapter in her career.

Roster ready for 2025, Pooja Hegde

Bengaluru: The only year Pooja Hegde has not released anything since becoming well-known with "DJ Duvvada Jagannadham" is 2024. Her career deteriorated after a string of failures in 2022, leading to only one release

she portrays a conventional Tamil woman. 'Thalpathy69' depicts her as Vijay's romantic interest. These two major films will release in the first half of 2025. Similarly, she will make a big comeback to Bollywood with Shahid Ka-



in 2023, and she struggled to get any film parts for about a year. However, luck had been on her side in recent months, resulting in an unanticipated spike of offers. She began to sign a lot of Tamil and Hindi film deals. In 2025, Pooja Hegde will have a strong roster. In "Retro," featuring Suriya,

poor's role in the Hindi movie "Deva." Alongside Varun Dhawan, Pooja Hegde has signed up for "Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai." These four movies are being made right now. Additionally, she is negotiating for another Bollywood film. It seems like Pooja Hegde is now engaged on five separate projects.

Masterchef India: Celebrity Masterchef going to have Farah Khan as host

Mumbai: Farah Khan, a filmmaker and foodie, has a YouTube channel where she posts recipes and works with well-known people. The filmmaker and choreographer has elevated her love of all things culinary by joining the judges of Masterchef India for the upcoming season, which includes chefs Vikas Khanna and Ranveer Brar. With a bit of eccen-



tricity, Farah, who will be hosting the season, made the

major revelation on social media, writing, "Kachra ho gaya! However, I am eager to embark on this adventure with my two most gifted and athletic pals. Celebrity Masterchef – Ab Unn Sabki Seeti Bajegi is the name of the star-studded season that Farah will be presenting. Celebrities like Gaurav Khanna and Tejaswi Prakash are among the competitors.

Samay Raina & Kusha Kapila separating friendship

New Delhi: The controversy over comedian Samay Raina's parody of influencer Kusha Kapila's separation from Zoravar Ahluwalia has rekindled the conversation about the thin line between insensitivity and comedy.

Relationships both personally and professionally suffered as a result of what started out as a humorous sketch turning into a contentious issue.

Kusha denounced the jokes earlier this year as "dehumanizing." Samay has now



discussed the event and disclosed how it has damaged his relationship with Kusha. "I don't have a favourite comedian, I have favourite jokes. I love and learn from

sooo many comics that the list won't stop if I start writing it down.

I don't chase controversies, I just be myself and something or the other happens. Learning to deal with it smoothly. Friendship with Kusha is not the same, we rarely talk but I spoke to her recently and it was great!

I am fond of her regardless. I hope someday she and I can laugh about everything openly but that day has time. Always rooting for her success."

Chennai book fair with 900 stalls

Chennai: At the YMCA Nandanam, Deputy CM Udhayanidhi Stalin & Minister for School Education Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi officially opened the 48th edition of the Chennai Book Fair. Deputy Mayor Magesh Kumar, Chennai Mayor R. Priya, Health Minister Ma. Subramanian, and Department of Rural Development Additional Chief Secretary Gagandeep Singh Bedi attended the ceremony. A visit to the TNCDW Saras exhibition kicked off the program.

Air India Express expands network; launches Phuket and Dibrugarh flights

Dibrugarh, Jan 02: Air India Express has announced the addition of Phuket, Thailand, and Dibrugarh, Assam, to its rapidly growing network, enhancing connectivity and convenience for travelers.

National, December 31, 2024: Continuing its expansion in Southeast Asia, Air India Express will commence direct flights between Hyderabad and Phuket starting January 31, 2025. Initially operating three times a week, the frequency will increase to six times weekly from February 15. Special inaugural fares start at



₹10,500, with loyalty discounts available on the airline's website and mobile app. In the domestic sector, Dibrugarh has been added as a new station, with direct flights to Guwahati and onward connections to Delhi. Known as the 'Tea City of India,' Dibrugarh serves as a vital hub for trade, tourism, and industry in Assam. With convenient one-stop connections to major cities like Bengaluru, Chennai, and

Kolkata, the new route is expected to boost Dibrugarh's prominence in the national travel map. Dibrugarh's thriving tea industry and vibrant markets are anticipated to benefit from the new flights. Traders and tourists alike can expect enhanced opportunities for business and leisure, aligning with Air India Express's mission to foster regional growth. Managing Director Alok Singh remarked, "With Phuket and Dibrugarh, we strengthen our presence in Southeast Asia and North-east India, connecting people and cultures seamlessly."

NSDC drives workforce transformation in 2024

Guwahati, Jan 02: The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) marked 2024 as a transformative year in India's skill development landscape. Anchored by the government's vision of a skilled India, NSDC's initiatives, such as the Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH), have been instrumental in equipping the workforce with industry-relevant skills. SIDH, offering over 500 courses in emerging fields like AI, drones, and cloud computing, has seen over 1 crore registrations and 50 lakh course completions.

NSDC's economic contributions include a 3.5% growth in IT and manufacturing sectors and the creation of over 2.3 lakh green jobs in renewable energy. Initiatives like the PradhanMantriKaushalVikasYojana (PMKVY) 4.0 and the Skill Impact Bond have enhanced job readi-



ness and inclusivity, particularly for women and disadvantaged communities.

In Guwahati, NSDC's programs align with the city's aspirations of becoming a hub for skilled talent in the Northeast. Courses tailored to AI, robotics, and renewable energy are empowering the region's youth to tap into emerging job markets, contributing to Guwahati's economic growth and reducing unemployment.

Looking ahead, NSDC's focus on international collaborations, entrepreneurship, and advanced technologies ensures India's workforce is future-ready, driving the nation closer to its \$1 trillion digital economy goal by 2030.

Hyundai Unveils Creta Electric



Mumbai, Jan 02: The Creta Electric SUV has been presented by Hyundai India in advance of its January 17 debut at the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025. The new EV will be the brand's most reasonably priced electric vehicle in the Indian market, carrying on the moniker of the well-liked ICE SUV. The Kona electric, which was comparatively less expensive than the flagship Ioniq 5, was once part of the brand's EV portfolio. The Hyundai Creta electric's design draws a lot of inspiration from its internal combustion engine. It will, however, include distinctive features like a front-end charging outlet and a closed-off grille. While keeping the same shape, it will also get new aerodynamic 17-inch alloy wheels as part of the package. In an effort to increase economy, the firm has also included dynamic air flaps to control air flow around the SUV. The brand offers eight monotone and two dual-tone alternatives, including three matte colors, to go with the design. The Ioniq 5 serves as the model for the electric SUV's cabin. It will include a touchscreen infotainment system with new features and software, as well as an entirely digital instrument cluster.

Multicap Momentum Quality Index Fund launches by Tata AIA

Mumbai, Jan 02: Tata AIA Life Insurance Co. Ltd. (Tata AIA), one of India's leading life insurers, has introduced Tata AIA Multicap Momentum Quality Index Fund. This new fund offer is designed to generate long-term capital appreciation by investing in a portfolio of stocks that replicate the Nifty 500 Multicap Momentum Quality 50 Index. The New Fund Offer (NFO) window will be open from 24th December 2024 and close on 31st December 2024. Commenting on the launch, Harshad Patil, Executive Vice President and Chief Investment Officer (CIO) of Tata AIA, said, "As India's economy continues on its growth trajectory, the equity markets present a compelling opportunity for wealth creation." Tata AIA policyholders

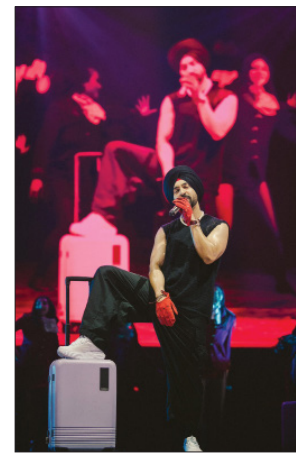


can invest in the Multicap Momentum Quality Index Fund through the company's Unit Linked Insurance Plans, including its popular TATA AIA Param Raksha solutions and Tata AIA Profit plan. These solutions offer long-term growth potential of equity investments while securing consumers and their families with much-needed life and health insurance coverage. Tata AIA has grown its assets under management significantly to INR 1,17,867.73 cr (November 24), translating to 35.91% YoY growth.

Diljit Dosanjh teams up with Mokobara to redefine global travel style

Guwahati, Jan 02: Diljit Dosanjh, the global music sensation known for his boundary-pushing style, has teamed up with Mokobara, a rising star in the travel accessories industry, to redefine the future of travel fashion. Known for blending tradition with modernity, Diljit's latest collaboration with Mokobara brings a unique edge to the world of travel. The partnership, which has already seen Mokobara luggage featured on his Dil-luminati world tour and on the sets of the Bollywood film Crew, is setting new standards for design-driven, functional travel gear.

Founded in 2020, Mokobara has quickly gained recognition for its sleek, bold, and highly functional travel accessories, making it a perfect match for Diljit's style. "No one is doing it like Diljit, on a global stage. His integration of our products into his music videos and world tour is fresh and exciting," says



Sangeet Agrawal, Founder of Mokobara.

The collaboration highlights Mokobara's commitment to elevating the travel experience. In Guwahati, this partnership offers a fresh perspective on premium travel gear. As consumers in the region become increasingly fashion-conscious and quality-driven, Mokobara's sleek, stylish designs are well-poised to resonate with local tastes, further boosting its appeal in Northeast India.

Wi-Fi service is introduced by Air India

Mumbai, Jan 02: Air India, is now the first in the nation to provide Wi-Fi in-flight on domestic flights. Connectivity in the skies will become a reality on January 1, 2025. Air India aircraft—the Airbus A350, Boeing 787-9, and some Airbus A321neo models—would be able to take advantage of free internet connection while in flight. By allowing people to browse, utilize social media, work, or remain in touch with friends and family, this innovative step improves the travel experience for both business and leisure travelers. Rajesh Dogra, Chief Customer Experience Officer at Air India, emphasised the importance of connectivity in modern travel, saying, "Connectivity is now an integral part of modern travel. For some, it is about the convenience and comfort of real-time sharing, while for others, it is about greater productivity and efficiency."

Suzuki share price jumps over 4%

Bengaluru, Jan 02: During Thursday's trading session, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd.'s shares increased by more than 4%, reaching an intraday high of Rs 11,675 on the BSE. The stock was up 4.01% at Rs 11,671.55 on the BSE at 12:04 pm, with a market value of Rs 3.67 lakh crore. The stock has increased by more than 6% over the last two days, driven by strong sales data and upbeat market sentiment, making this a noteworthy surge. In addition, domestic PV sales increased by 24% to 1,30,117 units from 1,04,778 units in the previous year.

Vodafone Idea's 5G will be gonna introduce to the mass on March

New Delhi, Jan 02: In order to draw clients away from competitors Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel, which now provide statewide 5G networks, Vi is preparing to launch its 5G mobile broadband services in March at competitive price.

The article, Vi plans to first provide 5G in 75 cities among its 17 priority circles, concentrating on industrial centers with significant data



usage. According to industry analysts, the company's entry-level 5G contracts may be up to 15% less expensive than Jio and Airtel's existing offerings, which may lead to a pricing war. According to an AVi representative, the business has enough 5G spectrum in its key areas to expand 4G

coverage and quickly roll out 5G. According to a top telecom expert, the business may also change its distribution strategy by raising dealer commissions and advertising expenditures in an effort to win back valuable prepaid customers from rivals. In FY24, Vi paid about Rs 3,583 crore on dealer commissions, which was more than Jio's Rs 3,000 crore but less than Airtel's Rs 6,000 crore.

From humble beginnings to global success: ShanyoHoram's inspiring journey

Shillong, Jan 02: ShanyoHoram, a woman who grew up in a small village in Manipur with only 33 houses, has become an embodiment of perseverance and success. The eldest of her siblings, Shanyo's childhood was marked by poverty and limited opportunities. She took on the responsibility of supporting her siblings' education and dreams, determined to change the trajectory of her family's future.

In 2003, Shanyo moved to Bangalore, where she balanced a job with her IATA course. Despite the challenges, her dedication led her to a job in the travel industry. However, she soon realized that the limitations of a salaried job hindered her aspirations for financial and personal freedom.

In 2011, a life-changing meeting with a Swedish holistic wellbeing brand shifted her perspective. Although skeptical at first, Shanyo embraced the entrepreneurial journey and, over time, overcame setbacks to become a Diamond Director with Oriflame. Today, she leads a successful network of entrepreneurs and has traveled to over 15 coun-



tries with her family, realizing dreams once deemed impossible.

Axis Max Life Insurance rebrands with 'Double Bharosa' campaign to drive growth

Guwahati, Jan 02: Axis Max Life Insurance Ltd., formerly known as Max Life Insurance, has officially unveiled its rebrand, marking a significant step forward in its growth strategy. With the inclusion of 'Axis' in its corporate name, the company aims to enhance its presence in the life insurance and financial services sectors. The rebranding introduces a fresh logo, combining Axis's iconic 'A' with a modern burgundy hue, symbolizing trust, responsibility, and forward-thinking. The new identity reflects the company's promise of "Double Bharosa" (Double Trust), emphasized through an integrated marketing campaign featuring cricket captain Rohit Sharma and his wife Ritika Sajdeh. Prashant Tripathy, MD & CEO of Axis Max



Life, noted that the rebrand aligns with the company's vision to expand beyond metros and tier-1 cities, including significant strides in Tier 2 cities. Guwahati is set to benefit from Axis Max Life's increased reach and enhanced customer engagement. The company's recent expansion, with over 90 new offices and 41 new

distribution partners, is expected to strengthen its foothold in the region, offering residents greater access to trusted financial solutions. Rajiv Anand, Deputy MD of Axis Bank, emphasized that this rebrand represents a deeper collaboration aimed at securing a brighter financial future for millions across India.

New pension rules of India from 2025

Pune, Jan 02: The CPPS has made it possible for retirees to pick up their benefits from any bank branch in India, regardless of where they relocate. The goal of this modification is to make the procedure considerably more comfortable for retirees by giving them more flexibility and convenience. The CPPS will be accessible through the Centralized IT Enabled Sys-

tem and is a component of the EPFO modernization initiative. It is a countrywide solution that uses cutting-edge financial and IT technologies to help retirees all throughout India receive their benefits more quickly and easily. When moving or switching banks, the method enables retirees to receive their benefits without having to transfer their PPO.

Auto stocks fuel the Dalal Street boom as the Sensex and Nifty rise by about 2%

New Delhi, Jan 02: Strong performance in the automotive, banking, and information technology sectors propelled the major stock market indexes, the Sensex and Nifty, to conclude Thursday's trading session with significant gains of around 2%. The Nifty gained 1.9% to settle at 24,188.65, while the Sensex increased 1.8% to close at 79,943.71. Major firms like

Nissan achieves best December sales, crosses 10,000 bookings for New Magnite SUV

Guwahati, Jan 02: Nissan Motor India has announced its best-ever sales performance for December 2024, registering a total of 11,676 wholesale dispatches. The company also crossed 10,000 bookings for the newly launched Nissan Magnite SUV, introduced in October 2024. For the calendar year, Nissan recorded a total of 91,184 units, showcasing its strong demand both domestically and internationally. The export figures were particularly impressive, with 9,558 units shipped



in December, reflecting a 72% year-on-year growth. Year-to-date exports for FY24 reached 51,764 units, marking a 63% increase over the previous year. Nissan's expansion strategy includes a target of 300 touchpoints across India by the end of FY24, reinforcing its commitment to customer reach.

In Guwahati, the Nissan Magnite has garnered significant attention due to its competitive pricing and feature-rich offering. The vehicle's stylish design, coupled with advanced safety and technology features, has made it a popular choice among customers in the region.

As the brand continues to expand its presence, the Magnite's success in Guwahati is expected to contribute significantly to Nissan's growth trajectory in Eastern India.

Post office interest rates unchanged for 2025

New Delhi, Jan 02: The government has declared that the interest rates for a number of small savings plans, commonly referred to as post office plans, such as the Public Provident Fund (PPF), Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS), Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY), and others, will not change from January to March 2025 as we approach the last quarter of FY 2024-2025. Because of this ruling, investors will be able to take advantage of the present rates until the end of March 2025. Investors may rest easy knowing that interest rates for the last quarter of FY 2024-25 have been confirmed to remain steady from the previous quarter. The following are the current rates for various well-known modest savings plans: 4.0% for savings deposits, 6.9% for one-year time deposits, 7.0% for two-year time deposits, 7.1% for three-year time deposits, and 7.5% for five-year time



deposits. 8.2% is the rate offered by the Senior Citizen Savings Scheme, 7.7% by the National Savings Certificate, 7.1% by the Public Provident Fund, and 8.2% by the Sukanya Samridhi Yojana. Kisan Vikas Patra, which matures in 115 months, also yields 7.5%. Investors may continue to have faith in their savings since the government's choice to retain these rates at their current level guarantees stability. The Shyamala Gopinath Committee's recommendations serve as the basis for setting the interest rates on post office savings plans. In order to maintain their competitiveness in relation to the returns on government bonds, rates are usually reviewed and modified on a quarterly basis.

Bajaj Finance share up by 4%

Mumbai, Jan 02: Early trading on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) saw a 4% increase in Bajaj Finance shares, which reached an intraday high of Rs 7,199. Bajaj Finance was the Sensex's biggest gainer at 11:05 a.m., rising 3.74% to Rs 7,195. After international stockbroker Citi maintained an optimistic perspective and apparently reiterated a "Buy" rating with a target price of Rs 8,150, Bajaj Finance shares saw a surge. Citi noted a little improvement in credit costs in its analysis, predicting a slight increase to 2.2-2.25% in Q3. Additionally, it projected a 7% year-over-year (YoY) and 6% quarter-over-quarter (QoQ) increase in assets under management (AUM), fueled by robust performance in securities lending, mortgages, sales finance, and new ventures. It is also anticipated that net interest margins (NIMs) will increase by three to five basis points.

The financial performance of Bajaj Finance has been strong lately. AUM increased by 28.8% YoY to Rs 3,73,924 crore in Q2, while net profit increased by 13% YoY and 2.8% QoQ to Rs 4,013 crore. At Rs 14,987 crore, its net interest income (NII) increased 28% year over year.

It should be mentioned that within the last month, Bajaj Finance's stock has increased by more than 8%. Over the previous year, it did, however, provide somewhat negative returns.



as Mahindra & Mahindra and Maruti Suzuki reported year-end discounts and high demand for SUVs. IT stocks also rose on upbeat brokerage sentiment.

Satish Chandra Aluri of Lemonn Markets said, "Markets extended gains on improving risk appetite fuelled by Auto, IT, and Financials. Auto shares rallied after sales data allayed concerns over weakening demand. Bargain hunting in quality stocks and anticipation of growth-oriented measures in the upcoming budget also boosted sentiment."

A downhill ski champion's guide to Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy

As the world turns its gaze to Italy's Cortina d'Ampezzo as one of the hosts of the 2026 Milano Cortina Winter Olympics, veteran Olympic skier Kristian Ghedina shares his hometown picks. Nestled between the jutting spires of Italy's Unesco-listed Dolomites mountain range, the small town and ski resort of Cortina d'Ampezzo (altitude 1,224m), is often called the "Queen of the Dolomites". Located in a valley near the rainbow-hued Cinque Torri mountain, Cortina's distinctive Tyrolean architecture has remained mostly untouched by modern developments. This jewel-like ski resort is also one of Italy's favourite wintertime destinations, luring local jet setters and professional skiers for



the settimana bianca, or "white week" – the Italian custom of taking a weeklong winter ski retreat. The resort has become so synonymous with style that designer and athletic labels like MC2 Saint Barth and Kappa have used its name to sell a myriad of clothing items. And yet, Cortina d'Ampezzo has been largely unknown overseas – until now. This sleepy ski town is about to attract a global audience as one of the hosts of the 2026 Milano Cortina Winter Olympics. But 2026 will hardly be its first Olympic foray; Cortina d'Ampezzo was also the host of the 1956 Winter Olympic Games. It's further known for being the birthplace and home of retired Olympic downhill skier Kristian Ghedina. "In Cortina, every youngster skis," says Ghedina. "I've travelled the world... but I'm attached to my land, my town. It's a very strong bond that [you have] with snow and skiing." Ghedina has spent his life on the slopes; his mother, Adriana Dipol, was the town's first female instructor. After qualifying for his first national competition at age 16, Ghedina won 13 World Cup gold medals and has become an ambassador for the sport and his hometown. We asked this veteran ski champ about the best things to do, eat and see during a settimana bianca in Cortina d'Ampezzo. "It's a fantastic place. It's in a beautiful, open valley," says Ghedina, noting Cortina's status as a luxury resort. "It's earned its image... It's a brand name by now, a bit like saying Venice or Monaco." But the town also has a demure charm, one that Ghedina particularly loves – especially in the quieter months. "I prefer Cortina in the off season, in the autumn," he says. "It has fantastic colours, there are fewer people". Formerly part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Cortina is multilingual – in addition to Italian and German, many locals speak Ladin, a local language similar to Romansch – and the region's culture in many ways more closely mirrors that of nearby Switzerland and Austria than what many consider

quintessentially "Italian". Here are Ghedina's favourite ways to enjoy Cortina d'Ampezzo. Skiing is impossible to escape in Cortina d'Ampezzo; a town whose fortunes were built upon the sport. Affluent tourists flooded into the town by the end of the 19th Century, leading to the development of some of Cortina's main landmarks – including its distinctive neo-Gothic belltower, known in Ladin as el Cianpanin. The town opened its Ski Club in 1903 and hosted the winter games 53 years later. Over the decades, it has developed the infrastructure for many winter sports – including bobsledding and figure skating – and pistes of different levels, which can be reached from the centre via cable car. "The slopes

are steep here," says Ghedina. "People from the neighbouring valleys [Val Gardena and Val Badia] come to ski in the winter. They enjoy our slopes more, they have remained the same. You can ski better here. You have smaller crowds, which is a plus." As for the best ski slope? "Olimpia delle Tofane," says Ghedina. One of Italy's most famous downhill descents, having gained renown after the 1956 games, Le Tofane stands at 1,778m high and allows skiers to schuss right to the centre of town amid stunning scenery of the surrounding Cinque Torri and rugged mountains. It will host the Olympic women's and Paralympic Alpine skiing competitions during the 2026 Milano Cortina Winter Olympics. Outside Italy, the catch-all term "Italian cuisine" is overwhelmingly associated with Bolognese, Roman and Southern Italian dishes like lasagna, pasta cacio e pepe and pizza. But up in snowy Cortina and the neighbouring regions, typical dishes are hearty, buttery and calorie-dense: the perfect fuel for any wintry excursion. While visitors will indeed find pizza and pasta at most of the area's restaurants, traditional local recipes have a decidedly more Austro-Hungarian flavour. "Here, you can eat casunziei, ravioli made with potato and red or white turnip, served with melted butter and poppy seeds," says Ghedina. "Game also makes for a popular secondo (meat dish)." Amongst Cortina d'Ampezzo's best-known local specialties is the aptly named bombardino: a brandy and eggnog mixture served with whipped cream. A true "hyper-caloric bomb", says Ghedina. All of these can be savoured at Ghedina's local culinary pick; the Rifugio Scoiattoli. Opened in 1969, the chalet is a local institution, and is reached by skiers and hikers venturing up to the Cinque Torri mountain range. Great food – from casunziei and polenta to deer fillet – aside, Ghedina points out the chalet's scenery.

Sara Tendulkar is busy catching waves

'Embracing every adventure before the year ends'

Sara Tendulkar's year-end plans are better than ours. Sara, a day back, shared a short video demonstrating her surfing lessons and we are already impressed. Sara shared a short video demonstrating her efforts in learning to surf the waves like a pro. "The ocean has a way of reminding you to be present, to let go, and just ride the waves—both in life and on the water," Sara captioned her post.

Sara wanted to learn surfing since she was a 10-year-old little girl. In the caption, Sara mentioned that her uncle sat her down on a surfboard when she was just 10 years old, and since then, she has been interested in learning more. "At 10 years old, my uncle sat me down on a surfboard, and I've been dying to learn surfing ever since. 17 years later, I finally got the chance to learn in Surfer's Paradise, Gold Coast. Catching my first wave was both exhilarating and humbling. There

were many wipeouts and a lot of laughing at myself, but that feeling of standing up and riding the wave was absolutely worth it," Sara reminisced and shared her experience of her first surfing lessons. Sara wanted to learn surfing since she was a 10-year-old little girl. This seems to be Sara's year-end plans of embarking on adventures and leaving 2024 behind on a happy note. "Here's to embracing every adventure before the year ends," Sara added. In no time, Sara's Instagram post was flooded with likes and comments from her Instagram family. Reacting to the video, one user commented, "Sea k mermaid bhi soch rhe honge, competition aa gayi (The mermaid in the sea must be thinking that she got a competition now)." Another netizen commented, "True example of pure beauty," while another person wrote, "That's exactly what you have been doing so far in your life too, my butter cup."



Deaths from alcohol at record high in England



There has been “a catastrophic rise” in deaths caused solely by alcohol in England over the past four years, government figures suggest. More than 8,200 people died because of alcohol in 2023 - a 42% rise on 2019 - with the North East having the highest rates. The Alcohol Health Alliance UK says alcohol consumption could be reduced if a minimum price for each unit was introduced, as in Scotland. The government says it’s unacceptable that alcohol deaths are at record high levels and it will prioritise public health in its 10-year plan for the NHS in England. During the pandemic, deaths caused by alcohol rose sharply across the UK. Heavier drinkers were drinking more while others, including more moderate drinkers, cut down or gave up entirely. And when pubs were shut, many people started buying alcohol in shops and drinking at home. Since then, deaths have continued to go up in England - although more slowly than in previous years. Most deaths are among men, who are dying early - before the age of 75 - from alcohol-related liver disease. Analysis by the Institute of Alcohol Studies suggests 55-74-year-olds “are now the heaviest-drinking age group”, which it says could be driving current trends. Another factor could be the cost-of-living crisis which may have triggered heavier drinking among people faced with higher bills. “Economic hardship can lead to people cutting down on their drinking, to save money, but it can also lead to an increase in drinking as a response to stress,” says Colin Angus, additions expert from the University of Sheffield. The Alcohol Health Alliance, which represents 60 organisations working to reduce the harm it causes, says deaths from alcohol sends ripples through society, “putting growing pressure on our economy and health services”. Heavy drinking cuts lives short, shatters families and leaves children to cope with grief and trauma, it says. The alliance predicts further rises in deaths from alcohol “and an ever greater burden on our healthcare system and society”. They say it’s unfair on those who drink responsibly, particularly those on low incomes. A spokesperson from the Department of Health and Social Care said there had been an unwillingness to lead on issues such as alcohol harm, smoking and obesity “for too long”. “It is unacceptable that alcohol deaths are now at record high levels. “Our 10-year health plan will shift the focus of the NHS from sickness to prevention.

Can a healthy diet help alleviate chronic pain?

A recent study published in Nutrition Research suggests that diet quality directly impacts pain levels and physical function, especially among women, regardless of body fat levels. Researchers examined data from the Whyalla Intergenerational Study of Health (WISH), which included information from 654 Australian adults ages 18 to 89. The majority were women (57%). They aimed to explore whether body fat—measured by body mass index (BMI), waist circumference, or body fat percentage—acts as a link between diet quality and outcomes like pain or physical function. The WISH study collected diet data using a 12-month food frequency questionnaire and assessed diet quality with the Australian Dietary Guideline Index, which measures how closely a person’s eating habits align with dietary recommendations. Pain levels were measured using a pain scale survey, while hand grip strength was used to evaluate physical function. After analyzing the data and accounting for factors such as age and energy intake, the study observed that body fat did not serve as a link between diet quality and pain. Although these effects initially seemed to influence the entire study population, differences became apparent when analyzing the data by gender. For women, better diet quality was significantly associated with lower levels of pain, with reductions ranging from 37.2% to 38.8%, and with body fat levels having no influence on this relationship. For women with higher “core food” consumption (whole food choices), the reductions in pain were even larger, ranging from 46.7% to 48.2%, depending on the measure of body fat used. Additionally, for women, better diet quality was linked to improved physical strength. However, in men, the researchers observed no significant direct or indirect effects of diet quality and bodily pain function.



effects about 30% of the global population Trusted Source. While the causes of chronic pain vary greatly, research indicates a strong link between body fat and chronic pain. Obesity increases the risk of both localized and widespread pain Trusted Source, creating a cycle where weight gain can worsen pain, and pain can contribute to weight gain. However, recent studies Trusted Source, including the current research, reveal that dietary patterns may influence pain independently of body weight. To help explain this connection, Thomas M. Holland, MD, MS, a physician-scientist and assistant professor at the RUSH Institute for Healthy Aging, RUSH University, College of Health Sciences, who was not involved in the study, spoke to Medical News Today about the potential mechanisms linking diet quality and chronic pain. “With this, we need to keep in mind that dietary quality is going to influence pain directly through its effects on inflammation and oxidative processes, regardless of someone’s body composition,” Holland said. The study observed that women who consumed more “core” foods—such as fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and grains—reported lower pain levels. According to Holland, this is likely due to the anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties of foods like fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats, which may help mitigate pain pathways and provide benefits independent of body weight. So, to support chronic pain management, Holland recommends adding foods with strong anti-inflammatory properties into your diet, including: “Incorporating these into the diet can help reduce pain severity and improve overall well-being,” he explained. Kiran Campbell, RDN, a registered dietitian and owner at Kiran Campbell Nutrition, not involved in the study, similarly suggests that “focusing on dietary patterns and constituents that modulate [inflammation and oxidative stress] may be crucial to alleviating chronic pain.” She highlighted several specific diets that align with these principles, including the Mediterranean, DASH, MIND, and other anti-inflammatory diet patterns. In addition to foods rich in antioxidants and omega-3 fatty acids, Campbell recommended incorporating foods rich in probiotics, fiber, vitamins, and minerals.



Further research is necessary as this observational study cannot establish causation, and its results may not apply to diverse populations. Still, the study’s findings offer encouraging evidence that a healthier diet may notably alleviate pain and support physical function, especially in women, irrespective of their body fat levels. Chronic pain, defined as pain lasting more than three months, af-

Welcome 2025 with New Year’s Eve celebrations

Join the ultimate dance party at largest dancefloor. Enjoy pre-dancefloor, giving all the best of paction. Groove to electrifying in a Arora and ‘Bolly Beats Crew’ that night. Beyond The Atrium, The One prefer an elegant celebration. Rel-cuts, live Indian street food stations, sand an assortment of international-traditional Indian flavours and inno-ingredients in a fine dining ambi-fers modern European-inspired cui-with fresh, seasonal ingredients and-31, 2024 v Time: 7 pm to midnight v Rs 15,000 per person Venue: The One v Ticket price: Rs 14,000 per person (All inclusive) v Venue: Eau de Monsoon v Ticket price: Rs 12,000 per person Venue: Nero v Ticket price: Rs 11,000 per person Escape the ordinary and welcome 2025 with a staycation crafted to reflect the festive spirit of #WinterofJoy. LeMeridien New Delhi’s exclusive New Year’s Eve stay packages for December 31 promise a delightful blend of comfort, indulgence and celebration. Relax in elegantly appointed rooms that exude warmth and style, offering the perfect retreat for all and their loved ones. They can begin their evening with access to the grand New Year’s Eve gala, featuring live entertainment, a sumptuous feast and a thrilling countdown to midnight. The joy doesn’t stop there - wake up to a lavish New Year’s Day breakfast that sets the tone for a bright and promising year ahead. v Executive room: Rs 14,000 v Superior room: Rs 15,500 v Club room: Rs 19,000 v Executive suite: Rs 28,000 Continue the #WinterofJoy celebrations with a festive New Year’s Brunch at The One. Indulge in a delicious brunch buffet, enjoy refreshing drinks and soak in the cheerful ambiance while toasting the New Year.



The Atrium, featuring the city’s um seating with direct access to the both worlds - comfort and nonsto-high-energy atmosphere by Alisha will keep everyone on their feet all offers a refined setting for those who ish a lavish buffet with various cold continental and Indian delicacies. Delight in a fusion of vative recipes crafted with premium ance at Eau de Monsoon. Nero of-sine featuring expertly crafted dishes bold flavours. v Date: December Venue: The Atrium v Ticket price: Rs 12,000 per person Venue: Nero v Ticket price: Rs 11,000 per person Escape the ordinary and welcome 2025 with a staycation crafted to reflect the festive spirit of #WinterofJoy. LeMeridien New Delhi’s exclusive New Year’s Eve stay packages for December 31 promise a delightful blend of comfort, indulgence and celebration. Relax in elegantly appointed rooms that exude warmth and style, offering the perfect retreat for all and their loved ones. They can begin their evening with access to the grand New Year’s Eve gala, featuring live entertainment, a sumptuous feast and a thrilling countdown to midnight. The joy doesn’t stop there - wake up to a lavish New Year’s Day breakfast that sets the tone for a bright and promising year ahead. v Executive room: Rs 14,000 v Superior room: Rs 15,500 v Club room: Rs 19,000 v Executive suite: Rs 28,000 Continue the #WinterofJoy celebrations with a festive New Year’s Brunch at The One. Indulge in a delicious brunch buffet, enjoy refreshing drinks and soak in the cheerful ambiance while toasting the New Year.

Haryana Steelers win first-ever PKL title after defeating Patna Pirates in final

Pune: The Haryana Steelers, who finished top of the table in the league stage during PKL Season 11, produced an outstanding display on the mat on Sunday after they defeated the Patna Pirates in Pune. With the Show Stopper Shadloui in full flow, the Haryana Steelers won the final with a scoreline of 32-23. For the Haryana Steelers, the champions, Shivam Patare scored 9 points, Mohammadreza Shadloui bagged 7 and Vinay added 6 more to the cause. The champions were awarded INR 3 crore whilst the runners-up Patna Pirates bagged Rs1.8 Crore, as per PKL press release. It was an electric start to the big evening, with the Haryana Steelers picking up the first few points, and the lead in the early exchanges. Devank and Ankit were fighting away for the Patna Pirates, but it was the Haryana Steelers, who were dictating terms and controlling the tempo, with Shivam Patare and Mohammadreza Shadloui doing

the heavy lifting. The Haryana Steelers' defence, led by Jaideep and Rahul Sethpal, was showing exactly why they are considered to be one of the best units in the competition, as they made scoring extremely tough for the Patna Pirates. However, as the half progressed, Gurdeep and Sudhakar brought the Patna Pirates back to within touching distance of their opponents. Devank and Ayan then levelled things up, before Shivam Patare.

Vinay, put the Haryana Steelers in the box seat, after which the Season 10 runners-up continued to build on further. At the half-time break, the Haryana Steelers led 15-12, the release added. The second half started off slower than the first, with the Patna Pirates picking up the first points through Sudhakar. The Haryana Steelers had done well to keep Devank and Ayan quiet so far, but the three-time champions were fighting back. However, the show-stopper Shadloui was scoring cru-



cial points, as was Jaideep, which kept the Haryana Steelers in the hunt for their first title in the history of the PKL. Close to the half-hour mark, the Haryana Steelers had a three-point lead, which had the game on a knife-edge. After that, the Haryana Steelers started to turn the screws on their opponents, landing the first ALL OUT of the game. The Show Stopper Shadloui was in his element, as the Haryana Steelers stormed into a 9-point lead. In the final minutes, the Haryana Steelers managed the game and the clock brilliantly and slammed the door shut on any hopes of a comeback. At the end of the forty minutes, the Haryana Steel-

ers walked off the mat with the win, which gave them their first-ever PKL title. HPCL Gen6 Raid of Season 11: Manjeet (Telugu Titans) Shriram Finance Tackle of Season 11: Ankit (Patna Pirates) Best Raider of Season 11: Devank Dalal (Patna Pirates) Best Defender of Season 11: Nitesh Kumar (Tamil Thalaivas) Mashal Sports New Young Player of Season 11: Ayan Lohchab (Patna Pirates) Most Valuable Player of Season 11: Mohammadreza Shadloui (Haryana Steelers) Mother Dairy Super Coach of Season 11: Manpreet Singh (Haryana Steelers). Haryana Steelers won the final with a scoreline of 32-23.

Swimming-China's Pan smashes own 100m freestyle for gold World Record of the Year

New Delhi: Upon touching the wall at the conclusion of the final of the 100-meter freestyle at last summer's Olympic Games in Paris, Pan Zhanle turned toward the scoreboard inside La Defense Arena. Once he saw the numbers next to his name, the Chinese star slapped the water and embarked on a deserved celebration that included some muscle flexing. Around the venue, fans and members of the media blinked a few times while digesting what Pan had just accomplished: A 46.40 world record that destroyed Pan's previous global standard and produced a victory of more than a second over a stacked field that included Olympic champions Kyle Chalmers and David Popovic. Now, as 2024 nears its conclusion, Pan's performance is being recognized as Swimming World's choice for Male World Record of the Year.

The Chinese athlete got the nod over American Bobby Finke, whose attacking approach landed him Paris gold and a world record in the



1500 freestyle. Finke broke the previous world record in the 1500 free with his effort of 14:30.67, an outing that shaved .35 off the 2012 mark of China's Sun Yang. In the final of the 100-meter freestyle at last summer's Olympic Games in Paris, Pan Zhanle turned toward the scoreboard inside La Defense Arena.

Once he saw the numbers next to his name, the Chinese star slapped the water and embarked on a deserved celebration that included some muscle flexing. Around the venue, fans and members of the media blinked a few times while digesting what Pan had just accomplished: A 46.40 world record that destroyed Pan's previous global standard and produced a victory of more than a second over a stacked field that included Olympic champions Kyle Chalmers and David Popovici.

Magnus Carlsen's big charge against Viswanathan Anand

New Delhi: World No.1 Magnus Carlsen took potshots at Viswanathan Anand, the deputy president of chess' global governing body, saying that the five-time champion is unfit for his job. The latest statement came hours after he confirmed that he would play in the World Blitz Championship. The Norwegian was involved in a huge row last week after he pulled out of the event. He was fined by FIDE for violating the dress code rules by wearing jeans on Day 2 of the event. "Well, first of all, let's go back to a couple of days ago. I did have some choice words for FIDE in my interview with you. And I would say that it was a bit imprecise. I definitely mean it when it comes to certain people in FIDE. No question about it," Carlsen told "Take, Take, Take." "I think the situation was badly mishandled on their side. And I was about to basically book my plane tickets and get out of here. My father said that we should maybe wait until the morning to make a decision to speak to the FIDE president, Arkady Dvorkovich, whom we have a good relationship with," he added. Speaking further, Carlsen said, "So I'm not even sure I broke any rules.

Time for Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli to retire Ravi Shastri reacts to MCG flop shows Australia vs India, 4th Test:

Melbourne: Former India head coach Ravi Shastri has backed Virat Kohli to continue playing Test cricket for "3 to 4 more years". However, he suggested that Rohit Sharma might need to take a call on his career at the conclusion of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Shastri was responding to discussions about the futures of the two veteran cricketers after they failed to deliver when the team needed them most in the final innings of the fourth Test in Melbourne on Monday, 30th December. Rohit Sharma has appeared out of sorts as a batter during the Test series. After scoring just three runs in the first innings upon returning to the top of the batting order, Rohit endeavoured to fight it out during India's chase of 340. He remained focused and disciplined until the 17th over when he attempted to flick a fuller delivery from Pat Cummins towards the leg side but ended up being caught in the gully by Mitchell Marsh. Rohit Sharma has appeared out of sorts as a batter during the Test series. After scoring just three runs in the first innings upon returning to the top of the batting order, Rohit endeavoured to fight it out during India's chase of 340. He remained focused and disciplined until the 17th over when he attempted to flick a fuller delivery from Pat Cummins towards the leg side but ended up be-

ing caught in the gully by Mitchell Marsh. India found themselves struggling at 33 for 3 by lunch. Familiar issues resurfaced for Virat Kohli as he chased a delivery slanted outside his off-stump by Mitchell Starc. "No, I think Virat Kohli will play. Virat will play for some time, forget the way he got out today. I think he will play for 3 or 4 more years," Ravi Shastri told the broadcaster, Star Sports. "As far as Rohit is concerned, it's a call. At the top of the order, his footwork isn't the same. He is probably, at times, a little late in meeting the ball. So it's his call at the end of the series." But, having said, this Australian team want it badly. The captain wants it badly. The determination in his eyes was evident even when he was batting yesterday. He was not going to give it away," he added. Virat Kohli scored a century in Perth during the first Test of the series but has struggled since, with Australia consistently troubling the star batter with their disciplined bowling outside the off-stump. Kohli's scores since the Perth hundred read 7, 11, 3, 36, and 5. On the other hand, Rohit Sharma has looked lost at the crease, managing scores of 3, 6, 10, 3, and 9 so far in the series, accumulating just 31 runs across three Test matches. Rohit's struggles were evident even at home during India's shocking 0-3 defeat to New Zealand in Oc-



tober-November, where he managed only 91 runs in three Tests, while Kohli scored 93 runs across six innings. Ravi Shastri empathised with Rohit Sharma, acknowledging that there was little the Indian captain could have done on the morning of Day 5 against a relentless Australian bowling attack. "This is the mode of dismissal. Rohit Sharma, at his best, that front foot would be closer to the pitch of the ball. There's a trigger movement and then the front foot stays planted. So the bat goes at the ball, so you are playing away from the body," Shastri explained. "They have bowled well at him. You can say 'try and attack the bowling'. But, they gave you nothing. This is the best I think Australia have bowled in one spell as a unit," he added.