

- Batiapara residents in Bongaigaon district are preparing for the Bihu festival, honoring rural traditions and uniting as a community.
- 100 BJP leaders and karyakartas in Haflong demanded ouster of North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council Chief Executive Member Debolal Gorlosa, citing "monotheism" & hooliganism.
- Sixth Schedule Protection Committee submitted memorandum to District Commissioner and Superintendent of Police, urging investigation into illegal coal mining and teer gambling.
- DDMA in Dima Hasao, in collaboration with ASDMA, has launched an awareness campaign on disaster preparedness through street plays.

# NEWS BEARER

NEWS FROM NEAR & FAR

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## Assam gears up for the much-awaited Bihu festival by building traditional bhelaghors

**Guwahati, Jan 09:** As Assam gets ready for the much anticipated Bihu festival, the people of Batiapara, in the Bongaigaon district, are making every effort to celebrate the event in the most traditional way possible. In preparation for Uruka night, when families gather for the sumptuous feast, the community's traditional "bhelaghor" (temporary tent) is nearly complete. The agricultural festival of Bihu, which has deep roots in the farming community, marks the start of the Assamese New Year. The celebration of this occasion is more than simply food and partying for the residents of Batiapara; it's about honoring rural traditions and



uniting as a community.

The folks have been working hard to build the bhelaghor. In the bhelaghor on Uruka, families would gather for a joyous meal that featured Assamese specialties like

pithas, which are traditional rice cakes.

The event aims to strengthen the bonds that unite family and community, with participation ranging from young children to the elderly. The

project, which has the support of every villager, is expected to promote harmony and unity among the residents over the holiday season and showcase the greatest features of Assamese rural life.

## 'Save BJP' & 'Remove CEM Gorlosa' are slogans echoing in Haflong's streets

**Haflong, Jan 07:** 100 BJP leaders and karyakartas rallied in Haflong town, demanding the ouster of North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council Chief Executive Member Debolal Gorlosa. Protestors voiced their opposition to what they described as "monotheism" under Gorlosa's leadership. Chanting slogans like "BJP Zindabad," "Narendra Modi Zindabad," and "Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma Zindabad," the demonstrators handed over a memorandum to administration and high command, urging his immediate removal to protect the party's image and integrity in the region. Protestor expressed strong discontent, alleging that Gorlosa's administration in Dima Hasao district has been characterized by hooliganism and autocratic tendencies. "He must be removed from his post for the good of the party," the protestor demanded. The rebellion within the BJP has reportedly been brewing for some time, with discontent escalating over Gorlosa's governance. Speaking to reporters, BJP dissident leader former EM for NCHAC from Langting constituency Golonjo Thaosen and BJP leader Jaydesh Phanglo claimed that around 15,000 party members and supporters participated in the protest. "If Debolal Gorlosa is not removed, we will intensify our agitation and hold demonstrations near the state BJP office," Phanglo warned. The protest escalates the internal BJP rebellion in Dima Hasao district, posing a significant challenge for the party's leadership.



## 6th Schedule Protection Committee Dima Hasao submits memorandum to authorities

**Haflong, Jan 08:** In an effort to combat the growing threats posed by illegal coal mining and the proliferation of teer gambling in Dima Hasao, the Sixth Schedule Protection Committee has submitted a memorandum to the District Commissioner, with a copy also sent to the Superintendent of Police. The memorandum calls for immediate intervention and investigation into these issues, citing a recent coal-mining disaster in Umrangso that claimed several lives as an example of the urgency. The committee expressed serious concerns regarding the illegal rat-hole coal mining activities in Umrangso. They pointed out that unsafe mining practices have not only endangered the lives of workers but also resulted in the recent tragic incident. Illegal mining operations



have caused significant revenue losses as they bypass legal taxation, depriving the autonomous council and the state of essential funds.

In addition to illegal coal mining, the memorandum highlighted the widespread issue of teer gambling in Dima Hasao. This illicit betting activity has become a pressing concern due to its harmful impact on

the community. The committee noted the proliferation of illegal gambling counters and bookies, which are causing financial distress to families due to gambling addiction.

The memorandum highlighted the urgency of addressing these issues, as the illegal activities are eroding the economic stability, social harmony, and moral values of Dima Hasao.

## Awareness campaign on disaster readiness launched via street plays

**Haflong, Jan 08:** Marking the "International Day of Disaster Reduction 2024," the DDMA, Dima Hasao, in collaboration with the ASDMA, has launched an awareness campaign on disaster preparedness through street plays under the theme Surokhit Axomor Babe Bator Nat. The ceremonial event took place at the District Commissioner's Office in Haflong, featuring a street play performance and the flagging off of a mobile street play van. The campaign was inaugurated by DHAC Joint Secretary Rebecca Changsan, ACS, in the presence of District Commissioner and DDMA Chairperson Simanta Kr Das, ACS; Additional District Commissioner of Dima Hasao; DPO DDMA Riki Phukan, and other dignitaries. In his address, District Commissioner Simanta Kr Das underscored the critical need



for public awareness regarding disaster preparedness, particularly for natural calamities such as landslides, lightning, floods, and storms. The campaign's mobile street play van will travel across various locations in Dima Hasao district, starting from the District Commissioner's Office in Haflong. Performances are scheduled for market days in Thajuwari, Kalachand, Langthing, Haflong, Diyungbra, Mahur, Dihangi, Maibang, and Hatikali. This initiative seeks to educate the public on disaster preparedness and safety measures through engaging street plays, ensuring the message reaches a wide audience.

## Assam Rifles recovered illegal areca nuts

**Aizawl, Jan 09:** Zote area of the Champhai district, 10,320 kg of illicit areca nuts valued at around Rs 72.24 lakh were seized by the Assam Rifles. A joint team of Assam Rifles and representatives from the Customs Preventive Force, Champhai, conducted the operation, which led to yet another victory in the fight against smuggling. The entire package has been turned over to the Champhai Customs Preventive Force for additional legal processes. The continuous unlawful smuggling of goods is a serious problem for both India and the state of Mizoram. A modified firearm and a CMG were discovered. A 303 rifle, two 9mm pistols, three single-barreled rifles, ammunition, warlike goods, and grenades. One M-16, three Lathods, seven IEDs ammunition, and warlike items were recovered during a combined operation by the Assam Rifles and Manipur Police on December 31, 2024, in the approximate region between Thingphai and TS Lajiang village in the Chandel district.

## The 73-foot national flag was raised in Tawang at Gorsam Chorten

**Itanagar, Jan 09:** Historic event held near the Indo-Tibet border in the Tawang area of Arunachal Pradesh, a 73-foot national flag representing pride and togetherness was raised. The ceremony, held in the tranquil Jemithang Valley near the borders with Tibet and Bhutan, was attended

by more than 200 locals and Indian Army personnel and was a significant turning point for the region.

The celebration, was organized by the Indian Army, civil government, and the Chorten monks, showed a common commitment to promoting patriotism in border regions. Indian

Army soldiers raised the National Flag with full military honors, accompanied by the National Anthem and thundering Jaikaraas that echoed across the valley.

The 73-foot-tall high mast flag is the second to be placed in the Tawang area in a year. The initia-

tive, carried out by the Ball of Fire Division and the Gajraj Corps, both located in Tezpur, was funded by the Flag Foundation of India. The broader national objective of Border Area Development seeks to boost tourism and foster a sense of unity among border communities.

## Umrangso Coal Block Disaster: Arrest Made, One Body Found, Numerous People Still Trapped

**Haflong, Jan 08:** Grave tragedy has struck the Umrangso coal block in Dima Hasao, Assam, where a coal mining disaster has left workers trapped and rescue teams battling against challenging conditions to save lives. 10 to 15 miners became stranded inside a flooded quarry, prompting an extensive rescue operation that continues to face significant hurdles. Despite efforts by NDRF & SDRF none of the trapped miners have been rescued so far. Three bodies have been sighted within the quarry but remain unretrieved due to

high water levels and logistical difficulties. To intensify the mission, navy divers from Visakhapatnam have been called in but are yet to arrive. Umrangso police arrested Punus Nunisa on charges of illegal coal mining, linking his activities to an incident. Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma confirmed the arrest and listed trapped miners, including Ganga Bahadur Shreth, Hussain Ali, Jakir Hussain, Sarpa Barman, Mustafa Sheikh, Khushi Mohan Rai, Sanjit Sarkar, Lijan Magar, and Sarat Goyary. Ten miners managed to flee, but



the exact number of those still trapped remains unconfirmed, with estimates ranging between 13 and 17. The workers are reportedly from Assam, West Bengal, and Nepal. Early Wednesday morning, the body of a 42-year-old miner, Rajen, from Nepal's Udaipur district, was recovered from

a flooded mine in the 3 Kilo area of Umrangso. The operation, led by the NDRF's 1st Battalion and supported by the Indian Army, Navy, Assam Rifles, and Fire & Emergency Services, has deployed advanced equipment, including specialized deep-diving gear from the Eastern Naval Command. CM Sarma thanks army and agencies for support, hoping for miners' rescue. ASSDMA reports a complex operation with no clear timeline, highlighting the need for stricter safety protocols in mining operations to prevent future tragedies.

## Prashant Kishor was imprisoned, refusing to sign bail bond

**New Delhi, Jan 09:** After being arrested during a fast-unto-death demonstration at Gandhi Maidan in Patna, Jan Suraj founder and political strategist-turned-activist Prashant Kishor was condemned to jail today. When Mr. Kishor refused to sign a bail bond after being arrested, he went on a hunger strike. In response to claims of a question paper leak, the poll strategist is calling for the cancellation of a BPSC test. The police claim that because the demonstration was held in a restricted location, it was illegal. According to the Patna District Magistrate, Mr. Kishor and his followers were

repeatedly reminded to move the rally to the approved protest location, Gardani Bagh. During the operation, cars, including tractors, were confiscated, and Mr. Kishor and forty-three followers were taken into custody. Police said that only Mr. Kishor's supporters were forcibly removed, refuting claims that he was manhandled. Proponents assert that Mr. Kishor was abused and slapped while being arrested. He was brought to Patna AIIMS for a medical checkup, but at first he refused to go through the process. The BPSC retested a few of the applicants who were impacted by the incident.

## The murder of a journalist from Chhattisgarh has been arrested in Hyderabad

**New Delhi, Jan 09:** The guy was detained in Hyderabad on suspicion of planning the murder of journalist Mukesh Chandrakar, whose body was discovered in a septic tank in Chhattisgarh last week. The assassination is said to have been planned by Suresh Chandrakar, a contractor and distant relative of the journalist. Ever since the murder was discovered, he has been absent. Suresh Chandrakar was hiding in his driver's house in Hyderabad, the police said. The cops looked through

200 CCTVs' worth of material and tracked down about 300 cellphone numbers in order to find him. According to authorities, he is now being questioned by the police. Suresh Chandrakar's illegally built yard was dismantled, and four bank accounts connected to him were blocked. According to police, Suresh Chandrakar's wife has also been arrested and is being questioned in the Kanker district of Chhattisgarh. Mukesh Chandrakar's body was discovered in a septic tank at a contractor's work-

shop in Bastar, Chhattisgarh. On New Year's Day, the independent journalist was last spotted leaving his Bijapur house. Yakesh, the journalist's brother, reported him missing the next day after he failed to return. Police discovered the 32-year-old's corpse close to his house after starting an inquiry. A post mortem report states that Mukesh Chandrakar was severely injured in the head, chest, back, and stomach after being struck by a large item. His hand had a tattoo that identified his body.

## PM formally launch the Jammu Railway Division

**Srinagar, Jan 09:** In a significant step to improve regional connectivity, PM Narendra Modi will use video conferencing to officially open the new Jammu Railway Division. Jitendra Singh, the Union Minister of State in the PMO, will be present for the inauguration at the Jammu Tawi Railway Station. The celebration in Jammu will also be attended by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, CM Omar Abdullah, other Northern Railway dignitaries, and top civil and police administration officials. Additional Divisional Railway



Manager, Jammu, Rajiv Kumar Singh, while speaking to media, said, "New Railway Division in Jammu was notified by the Railway Board earlier this week. Its inauguration is taking place tomorrow virtually by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the circulating area of Jammu Railway Station."

## Kashmir covered in fresh snow



**Jammu, Jan 09:** While the heavy fog earlier in the day affected air operations and forced the cancellation of all flights at Srinagar International Airport, Kashmir saw more snowfall on Sunday. Up until Monday afternoon, the Meteorological Department forecasted sporadic snowfall. Snowfall was recorded in Gulmarg, Kokernag, Pahalgam, Srinagar, Kupwara, Baramulla, Sonamarg, and a few more places in addition to the upper elevations of Kashmir. MeT authorities reported that while Srinagar also had rain and snow, Gulmarg ski resort received 21 cm of snow, Kokernag 0.3 cm, Pahalgam 1.4 cm, and Kupwara 9.1 mm. While roads leading to the upper levels of Machil, Tangdhar, Keran, and Gurez remained blocked owing to snow buildup, snow removal efforts are now continuing at all important routes. At the same time, a strong cold wave was still chilling Kashmir. Gulmarg saw temperatures drop to minus 4 degrees Celsius, while Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of minus 2.5 degrees Celsius.

## Namo Bharat trains take only 35 minutes from Delhi to Meerut



**New Delhi, Jan 09:** Imagine being able to ride 160 kmph between Delhi and Meerut in less than 40 minutes with Namo Bharat Delhi-Meerut! Namo Bharat train service was introduced by PM Modi on the 13-kilometer route that runs through Anand Vihar in Delhi, linking Sahibabad and New Ashok Nagar. As a result, it

now only takes 35 minutes to travel between Delhi and Meerut using the Regional Rapid Transit System! What is the rail service known as Namo Bharat? What are the main characteristics and tariffs of the Namo Bharat train? The top ten facts of the Namo Bharat RRTS train service between Delhi and Meerut are examined.

## Maoists in Chhattisgarh detonated a security vehicle, killing 9 people

**Chhattisgarh, Jan 09:** In the Bijapur area of Chhattisgarh, Maoists detonated their truck with an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), killing eight jawans and a driver. Around 2:15 p.m., the IED detonated the Scorpio SUV near Kutru in the Bastar area, when the nine were on their way back from an operation. Security troops killed five rebels, including two women, in a raid on Maoists in the Abujhmad area of Chhattisgarh earlier today. Self-loading rifles and automatic firearms like the AK-47 have been found. The rebels targeted the Jawans as they were returning from this mission. Eight members of the security force were members of the District Reserve Guard, a specialized police force established to combat



Maoism in the state. Images revealed a huge hole at the location, indicating the force of the IED explosion that killed the Jawans. The Maoist offensive occurs as security forces are encircling the insurgents and advancing far into Chhattisgarh's Maoist-dominated regions. Mahesh Kashyap, BJP MP from Bastar, described the

attack as "cowardly". "Our jawans are eliminating Maoists. So they have carried out this unfortunate attack out of desperation. I offer my condolences to the families of the jawans killed in this incident. Our government is committed to clearing Bastar of Maoists by 2026. We will avenge our jawans," he said.

# Priyanka Chopra enjoying her new year vacation with family

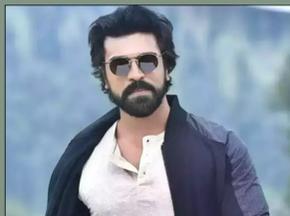
**Mumbai, Jan 09:** Priyanka Chopra is kicking in 2025 “in joy, happiness, and in peace” by fashionably maximizing her family time in Turks and Caicos. Priyanka’s 2025 is already looking remarkable, from spending a day at the beach to lounging in the sun with her significant other. Priyanka began the year in a most fashionable manner, as seen by her holiday photos. Definitely her figure-flattering red bikini. The actress chose to wear identical bottoms with a bralette-style strapless bikini top. Her stylish sunglasses and large matching hat were ideal for a sunny getaway. The actress, wearing a stylish pink bikini, made pool day appear quite stylish in another photo. In the most stylish trip fashion, Priyanka



brought back the Barbiecore trend. The actress was spotted showcasing her easygoing style ambitions in a striped cord ensemble from another page of her holiday style journals. The actress chose a stylish athleisure ensemble in a striped crop bralette and matching shorts to unwind and stretch in the fresh air. She summarized the highlights of her trip in a healthy piece. “Ample. My objective for 2025 is that. In peace, pleasure, and contentment. I hope this new year brings us everyone plenty. I am really thankful for my family. “Happy 2025,” the message said, accompanied by a collection of images. It seemed obvious that the year couldn’t start off more stylishly.

## Ram Charan and director Shankar coming together

**Chennai, Jan 09:** Ram Charan, a Mumbai, South actor, said that working with renowned director S Shankar on his next movie, “Game Changer,” was a “enriching” experience. After directing a number of financially successful Tamil films, including “Indian,” “Anniyan,” “Sivaji: The Boss,” “Enthiran,” and “2.0,” Shankar



makes his Telugu film debut with the political action movie. The actor claimed that he was unable to find

the confidence to approach the filmmaker about his desire to collaborate with him or his father, the famous Chiranjeevi, on a movie. As SS Rajamouli’s “RRR” was being made. Both Rajamouli and Shankar, according to Charan, are “task masters” encourage their actors to perform to the best of their abilities.

## Taimur carries Mom Kareena’s heels

**Mumbai, Jan 09:** Kareena Kapoor frequently posts updates from her everyday life. Actress shares photos of her family includes husband Saif, and children Taimur Ali Khan and Jeh Ali Khan, they are at festivals or lounging over the holidays. The actor shared a few photos on Saturday showing how Taimur made her feel proud by removing her heels so she could walk more freely after an event.

## Richa Chadha & Ali Fazal oppose of their daughter photographed



**New Delhi, Jan 09:** Richa Chadha and Ali Fazal, an actor couple, recently traveled to Delhi for the first time without their six-month-old daughter, Zuneyra Ida Ali, who was in Mumbai with her grandparents. The pair tells us in an exclusive interview that they originally intended to take Zuneyra to the capital but changed their minds “due to the weather and the pollution.” As new parents, Chadha and Fazal couldn’t stop gushing over their daughter. “It’s a whole new universe in our lives. Obviously, the way we see and perceive cinema and storytelling has shifted a little. I don’t know how much, but it definitely has,” Fazal says. Chadha responds, “It’s nice and peaceful,” when asked how things are doing for the new parents at home. “I think we were prepared

for the chaos,” she adds. We have an excellent support network and a fantastic babysitter. Both my mother and Ali’s father are present to help us. We are fortunate in this regard. The saying “it takes a village to raise a child” is not incorrect. It’s quite true.

Chadha and Fazal also talked about their choice to shield their daughter from the photographers throughout the talk. Chadha responds, “Soon to pata nahi but I would never want her to be clicked,” when asked why they are asking the paparazzi not to take pictures of their kid and if this would change anytime soon. “At least until she is able to make those decisions for herself,” Fazal continues. We have no idea how she will feel as an adult. Kya pata humein hi padegi gaaliyan.

## Chiranjeevi Gets Blasted for Ignoring Allu Arjun



**Hyderabad, Jan 09:** The gap between Allu Arjun and the Mega family Pawan Kalyan, Ram Charan, and Chiranjeevi—has been increasingly noticeable recently. Both groups exhibit distinct differences in their public personas and interactions. In addition to promoting the movie, Pawan Kalyan, who was at the Game Changer pre-release event the other day, quietly positioned Ram Charan as the next major talent that Mega fans might support. Chiranjeevi publicly declared at another function that his biggest accomplishments are Pawan Kalyan and Ram Charan. Nevertheless, in spite of Allu Arjun’s recent achievement, he conspicuously refrained from naming him.

## Hrithik Roshan with his six-pack abs absolutely handsome hulk, but his gonna turn 51

**Mumbai, Jan 09:** With an eye-catching photo of himself showing off his biceps, Hrithik Roshan pleased his admirers. His strong and toned body, which is a magnificent monument to his commitment to fitness, left fans in utter wonder. Hrithik’s incredible body, which includes sculpted strong biceps and noticeable six-pack abs, is motivating many followers and setting significant fitness goals as his 51st birthday approaches on January 10. The photo’s chiseled body serves as a potent motivational tool for New Year’s resolutions. For people who might already be neglecting their exercise responsibilities, it serves as a mild yet powerful reminder. Hrithik captioned the post, “Such a big difference between being strong and looking strong. This year I’m going for the real thing.” Fitness is more than just



appearing toned and muscular, as Hrithik reminds us. It’s not just for show. Being strong is another aspect of fitness. His piece, which reflects on the effort required to obtain his toned, sculpted appearance, reflects the discipline he exemplifies. The “Greek-godlike” figure of Hrithik Roshan left fans speechless. They praised his muscular appearance and referred to him as a Greek God in the comments area. One user commented, “Dream Physique of Everyone,” while another hailed him as an “Inspiration for a generation.” Another fan added, “Age kam hoti ja rahi hai” (he is ageing backwards), perfectly capturing the gravitas of his ageless appearance.

In War 2, Hrithik Roshan will reprise his role alongside Kiara Advani. The actor costarred with Deepika Padukone in Fighter earlier this year.

## Jindal (India) Limited unveils its premium range of colour-coated sheets, Jindal NEUCOLOR+

**Tinsukia, Jan 09:** Jindal (India) Limited, part of the esteemed B.C. Jindal Group and a leading manufacturer of downstream steel products in India, has unveiled its premium range of colour-coated sheets, Jindal NEUCOLOR+, at the 'Milaap' event held in industrial city of Tinsukia, Assam. Organized to engage and interact with leading retailers in the region, the event was attended by senior company officials, including Mr. Vinod Tiwari, Zonal Head—West & East, Jindal (India) Limited. The 'Milaap' meet was organised



in collaboration with company's authorized distributor, SR Industries, and witnessed participation of approximately 60 retailers from the region. The 'Milaap' event is in line with the company's endeavour to further

strengthen its foothold in the region and expand its geographical presence across India. "A leading national player, Jindal (India) Limited will continue to further strengthen its foothold in current markets while simultaneously expanding to newer regions," said a Jindal (India) Limited's spokesperson. As part of this initiative, representatives from Jindal (India) Limited also discussed the company's plans for the region, gather first-hand feedback from the retailers, and address any challenges that they may be facing.

## Vi strengthens its annual recharge portfolio with SuperHero

**Mumbai, Jan 09:** Leading Telecom operator Vi recently launched an industry-first proposition, "SuperHero," that has offered unlimited access to data between 12 AM to 12 PM, designed keeping in mind the ever-increasing need for more high-speed data. To further sweeten the deal for customers looking for yearly packs or value for money offers, Vi has three Best in Value Annual Recharge options which not only deliver upto 25% sav-



ings compared to monthly plans but also cater to the entertainment & uninterrupted mobile data requirements throughout the year. Vi's annual recharge plans offer half-day unlimited data from 12 AM to 12 PM in addition to a 2 GB daily data quota for the remaining 12 hours of the

day. Not just that, Vi SuperHero packs also offer Weekend Data Rollover, which allows users to carry forward unused weekday data and use it during the weekend. Add to it, these plans also offer emergency data top-up with the Data Delight feature, which provides an unconditional additional 1GB of data twice a month. In addition to these benefits, users can also enjoy OTT subscriptions like Disney+ Hotstar & Amazon Prime Lite for a full year.

## Mutual funds roses by small, mid-cap funds

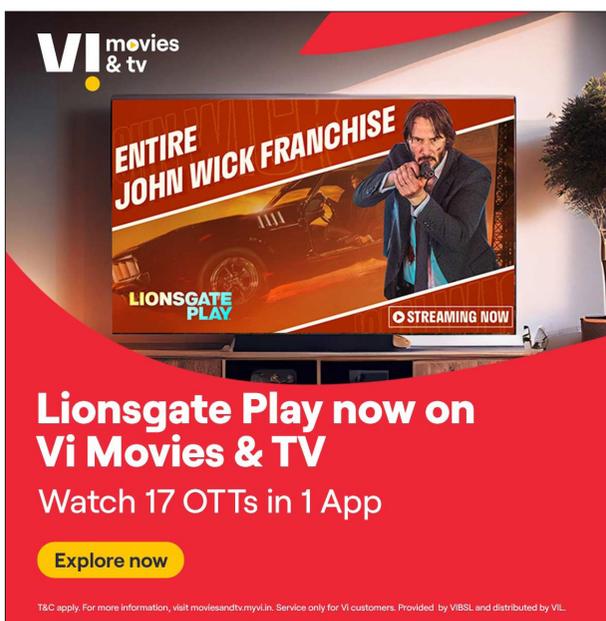
**New Delhi, Jan 09:** Inflows into Indian equities mutual funds increased by almost 15% month over month, with investors continuing their purchasing binge despite concerns about a projected deceleration in profits and the possibility of fewer rate cuts in the US in 2025. Equities mutual fund inflows were Rs 41,156 crore.

December had the second-highest monthly inflows ever, extending the inflow run to the 46th month, the longest on record.

## Vi announces a strategic partnership with premium streaming service Lionsgate Play

**Mumbai, Jan 09:** Vi, India's leading telecom operator, has announced a strategic partnership with premium streaming service Lionsgate Play, unlocking an exclusive library of top-tier content. Featuring action blockbusters, iconic franchises, acclaimed films and series, global awards, exclusive premieres, and a range of dubbed content, Lionsgate Play promises an unmatched entertainment experience. This collaboration further expands Vi's OTT portfolio, providing a premium, diverse library of Hollywood movies, original series, international titles and more at an affordable price.

Vi Movies & TV is de-



signed to cater to the diverse entertainment needs of consumers, via aggregation of the top OTTs through a sin-

gle app and single subscription offering consumers the convenience to enjoy content from a wide range of OTTs.

With Lionsgate Play, Vi Movies & TV users can now enjoy its extensive library of global hits, featuring blockbuster franchises like John Wick, The Hunger Games, and Saw, alongside standout titles such as Past Lives, Tokyo Vice, Paris Has Fallen, Normal People, Operation Fortune, Plane, Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard, The Iron Claw, The Beekeeper, Arcadian, and more. The partnership with Lionsgate Play is a testament to Vi's continuing pursuit of innovation and commitment to delivering best-in-class entertainment.

## CEAT inaugurates new CFA in Tripura



**Agartala, Jan 09:** CEAT, a leading Indian tyre manufacturer, has further cemented its commitment to the North Eastern region with the inauguration of a new premium retail facility in Agartala, Tripura. The expansion highlights CEAT's focus on customer-centric growth and its dedication to enhancing accessibility and service across the North East. With the steady growth of four-wheeler sales in the region, CEAT sees immense potential for expanding its premium retail presence to meet the evolving demands of customers. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Arnab Banerjee, MD & CEO, CEAT,

said, "At CEAT, we are driven by our "Customer First" philosophy, which prioritizes the needs and convenience of our customers." CEAT has established a strong retail footprint across the Northeast, with a total of 18 premium outlets and over 900 retail touchpoints spread across Assam, Nagaland, Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram, and upcoming expansions planned for Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya. The facility is designed to cater to the growing demands of customers in Tripura and neighbouring areas, offering a wide range of high-performance tyres for passenger cars, two-wheelers, and commercial vehicles.

## TCS's third-ever interim dividend announcement



**Mumbai, Jan 09:** The IT bellwether Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. will release its quarterly results beyond stock market hours, coupled with the announcement of its third interim dividend for FY25. At 5:30 p.m., TCS's leadership team will speak to the media, and at 7 p.m., a conference call is planned. The software exporter has already declared dividends of Rs 20 per share for FY25, Rs 10 per share in Q1 and Q2, and if a third interim dividend is announced, the eligible shareholders whose names are listed in the depositories' records as beneficial owners will receive the dividend. Along with the Q4 results from the previous fiscal year, TCS announced a final dividend of Rs 28 for FY24 in April 2024. Following its third-quarter performance, TCS announced a special dividend of Rs 18 per share in addition to an interim dividend of Rs 9 per share. It also declared interim dividends of Rs 9 apiece for the first and second quarters. In FY24, TCS also carried out a share purchase program for Rs 17,000 crore.

## NSDC partners with Axis My India to strategically map skill demand and supply across India

**Guwahati, Jan 09:** National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has partnered with Axis My India, a consumer intelligence company, to strategically map skill demand and supply across India. This partnership aims to identify data-driven gaps in key skilling initiatives, measure their outcomes, and enhance beneficiary participation rates, particularly in underserved regions. Through this collaboration, NSDC seeks to harness Axis My India's research expertise to support its mission of fostering industry-driven skill development initiatives that align training programs



with market needs. NSDC will also be able to assess the impact of existing skill development programmes on beneficiaries, including their

employability, income generation, and social-economic upliftment.

Ved Mani Tiwari, CEO of NSDC and MD of NSDC In-

ternational, emphasized the importance of this partnership: "Our collaboration with Axis My India represents a significant advancement in our efforts to identify and address skill gaps across various sectors." These efforts will target key stakeholders—including government bodies, educational institutions, industries, and the general public—to promote skill development programs effectively. Pradeep Gupta, CMD, Axis My India, stated, "We are excited to collaborate with NSDC to align grassroots insights with transformative skilling efforts."

### Center start MSME credit guarantee scheme

**Pune, Jan 09:** M Nagaraaju, the secretary of financial services, announced that the government will shortly introduce a new credit guarantee program for the MSME sector that would cover loans up to Rs 100 crore. The MSME sector in India has made a substantial contribution to the GDP of the country by continuously exhibiting exceptional resilience and flexibility. The government is eager to increase lending to rural regions through its different programs in order to encourage entrepreneurship in rural India.

## Emami Ltd announces a fresh new identity for its iconic men's brand Fair And Handsome

**Guwahati, Jan 09:** Emami Ltd has proudly announced a fresh new identity for its iconic men's brand, Fair And Handsome, now rebranded as Smart And Handsome with Bollywood's heartthrob Kartik Aaryan as its new brand ambassador. This significant transformation marks a bold step forward, reflecting the brand's leadership in the male grooming market for nearly two decades and embracing the cultural shift towards more holistic grooming practices. With changing consumer preferences, today's young men are prioritizing skin health and overall wellness, and Smart And Handsome is

ready to meet their evolving needs. The new positioning statement, "Har Roz Handsome Code," captures the brand's commitment to providing men with grooming solutions that enhance both their confidence and personality. For a seamless rebranding transition, the new packaging will prominently feature the message, "Fair And Handsome is now Smart And Handsome," reinforcing familiarity and trust with the consumers. "We see a tremendous opportunity to address a broader spectrum of grooming needs for today's dynamic young men," said, Mr. Mohan Goenka, Vice Chairman and



Wholtime Director, Emami Ltd. Kartik Aaryan expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership: "I'm truly excited to join the Emami family as the face of Smart And Handsome."

## India's borders must be established initially. AI research to promote creativity

**Mumbai, Jan 09:** According to Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella, India has to focus on cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) research and create fundamental paradigms to spur innovation. However, he pointed out that a single ground-breaking mathematical discovery has the potential to completely transform the AI landscape and that significant investment is needed to overcome the entrance hurdle. "There is no reason why India can't do frontier work, but you can even define frontier pretty unique.



For example, I don't think the last known big breakthrough in AI frontier has happened. I always say we are one mathematical breakthrough away from that entire edifice being thrown out and being going after something else," said Nadella. In order to promote cloud and AI transformation, Nadella announced strategic

alliances with the Indian government and business titans when he was in India. This follows its announcement that it will invest \$3 billion over the next two years on cloud and AI infrastructure in India, including the construction of new data centers. To promote digital, cloud, and AI transformation in the Indian Railways and public sector, Microsoft has teamed up with RailTel. Microsoft will help RailTel create an AI center of excellence as part of its five-year collaboration. Additionally, the business has partnered with

the Mahindra Group to use AI to revolutionize financial, agricultural, and automotive services. Furthermore, it has collaborated with Apollo Hospitals to advance digital transformation in the healthcare industry, co-innovate, and cooperatively produce products. Additionally, the collaboration would concentrate on research in fields including genetics and disease progression. Microsoft and Bajaj Finance have partnered strategically to improve digital transformation and provide seamless customer experiences.

## Anil Agarwal now lead the iconic Riverside Studios



**Guwahati, Jan 09:** In a significant move that connects art, culture, and innovation across continents, Anil Agarwal, Founder and Chairman of Vedanta Group, will now lead the iconic Riverside Studios. The 100-year-old studio, which is a renowned global centre for arts and located on the north bank of the River Thames in the centre of London, will now operate under the name 'Anil Agarwal Riverside Studios'. Over its illustrious history, Riverside Studio has hosted prestigious artists from across the world with song recordings by Beatles, performance by David Bowie, presented work by Dario Fo and exhibited works by David Hockney, to name a few.

"I have always believed that

art has the power to transcend boundaries, unite people, and elevate human experience. Riverside Studios will become a premier global destination for showcasing Indian and global arts and culture. I invite Indian artists and the film fraternity to showcase their artistic talent and cinematic depth at this world-renowned venue for a truly enriching experience. Global leaders from various spheres now have an opportunity to enthrall audience with their real-life experiences and journey, here." said Anil Agarwal, Founder and Chairman of Vedanta Group.

This strategic move reflects Mr. Agarwal's belief that art is a universal language, one that connects individuals across borders and cultures.

## Zomato & Swiggy introduce a 15-minute delivery service



**Bengaluru, Jan 09:** With the launch of new services by key companies like Zomato and Swiggy, the rapid food delivery market is further heating up. Zomato's 15-minute meal delivery service is now available. Similarly, meals will be delivered in 15 minutes using Swiggy's new app, Snacc. The new app and service are already accessible to users, even though neither player made an official announcement about them. The new service from Swiggy Bengaluru has seen the introduction of Snacc, which claims to bring breakfast, snacks, and dinners in 15 minutes. The Snacc app may be found on the App Store and Google Play. This app will deliver from a central location and concentrate on providing short meals, snacks, and beverages within 15 minutes, even though Swiggy has Bolt, which offers restaurant food delivery in 10 minutes. In just eight weeks, Swiggy reported that its Bolt service has expanded to 5% of its food delivery orders and is now accessible in over 400 cities. Zomato has launched a 15-minute meal delivery service that enables customers to order meals from local eateries.

# Gulmarg, Auli and Solang Valley

From pristine slopes of Gulmarg to rugged terrains of Auli, here are top three ski destination picks: As the fresh snowfall blankets the mountains in India, it's time to ski! The peak season, which typically runs from January to March, is considered perfect for this winter sport. From pristine slopes of Gulmarg to rugged terrains of Auli, here are top three ski destination picks: This frozen fairyland is often hailed as the Ski Capital of India. It boasts of an impressive Gulmarg Gondola, stretching nearly 2.7km and ascending 1,280m to an altitude of 3,980m near Mt Apharwat. The location also features five international ski lifts from Poma, a French company renowned for its high-quality, cable-driven systems, providing one of the safest skiing experiences available. The best way to reach Gulmarg is to take a flight to Srinagar and then travel 60km further by road. All eyes are on Auli as it is set to host the National Winter Games, starting January end. The ski slopes here begin at an altitude of 3,000m and extend for 3km, featuring a vertical drop of 500m. A Poma ski lift and one chairlift is also available here to take you up to the slopes. To reach Auli, the best option is to fly to Dehradun. From there, it is a long drive of approximately 295km to Auli. Since there are limited hotel options in Auli, staying in a nearby area like Joshimath, which is just 12km away, is the most convenient choice. For many tourists, no trip to



Manali (38 km away) is complete without visiting Solang Valley, offering stunning views of the Himalayas along the way. Additionally, the cable car in Solang covers a distance of 1.3km, with a vertical rise of 500m near the summit of Mt Phatru at 3,200m. However, since there is only one Poma ski lift available, tourists may experience long queues and wait times. It is recommended to book a ski resort for convenience. However, only a few of those truly stand out due to the lack of proper infrastructure. To be considered a proper ski resort, it must have cable cars or chairlifts to take skiers up the well-maintained slopes. At some of these locations, a ski patrol team, often supervised by an international expert or snow safety officer, is available to maintain safety standards. However, the rescue facilities are limited and not as extensive as one might expect, so one needs to be cautious. For those looking to elevate their skiing experience, consider trying heli-skiing. This adventure involves a helicopter taking you to remote, untouched snow in the mountains, away from the crowds, where you can ski or snowboard. A heli-skiing drop-off and pick-up, lasting approximately two hours, starts from ₹15,000 per person in Gulmarg. According to Mohd Aashu Khan, a seasoned tour guide and ski instructor from Tangmarg, J&K, a 15-minute to 1.5-hour introduc-

tory ski session with a trainer costs around ₹2,000. For those serious about learning, a 7-day beginner's course, including 3-star hotel accommodation, is available for ₹40,000.

Another ski guide, Kamlesh Bisht from Auli with an experience over 8 years, shares packing essentials for a ski trip, "Waterproof jacket, gloves and pants are always recommended. There are rental shops at locations for boots, poles, helmet and goggles. One needs to be wear warm thermals which is an absolute must in such extreme weather condition." A travel enthusiast, Vineet Garg, a college student from Gurugram shares his experience about travelling to Auli on December 31st. He says, "I went to Auli on New Years, and it was a one-of-its-kind experience.

It was my first time and we chose public transport to commute. We took a bus from Delhi to Rishikesh and another bus till Joshimath and further travelled through shared taxi. I did skiing under the experts' guidance. It was all snow and looked so serene that I still can't get over it. We also paid visit to Lord Badrinath, the idol of Lord Badrinath is moved to the Narsingh Temple in Joshimath for six months during the winter when the Badrinath Temple is closed due to heavy snowfall."



Manali (38 km away) is complete without visiting Solang Valley, famous for its winter sports. A scenic 70-kilometre drive from Bhuntar Airport leads will lead you to this val-

## How to manage your child's anger and stubbornness

When you have a child around, it's common to see them get upset or angry when they don't get what they want. A simple wish can quickly turn into a tantrum, with crying and howling when it's unmet. But when their desires are fulfilled, their faces light up with a big grin. Parenting isn't easy, and parents often find themselves criticised no matter what they do. If they give in to their child's demands, they're accused of spoiling them. If they refuse, they're labelled as heartless or uncaring. Dr Sarthak Dave, an Ahmedabad-based psychiatrist, tells India Today that kids become stubborn and express their anger loudly because they absorb behaviours from their surroundings and consider them normal. If they frequently observe their parents displaying anger or reacting loudly, they learn to replicate this behaviour, believing it to be acceptable. He explains, "At a young age, their id—the instinctual drive to fulfil their

desires—is very strong, while their ego (logical reasoning) and superego (moral understanding) are still underdeveloped and grow with age and experience. When children want something, they struggle to think logically or anticipate the consequences of their actions. If they don't get what they want, they feel distress and express it in ways they've learnt from their environment."

Additionally, if they've previously received what they wanted by acting out, this behaviour gets reinforced, encouraging them to repeat it. Further, Riddhi Doshi Patel, a Mumbai-based child psychologist and parenting counsellor, tells us that kids can be stubborn or loud because they don't yet have the words or skills to express their emotions or because they feel ignored or misunderstood by adults. She mentions that these outbursts are their way of coping with emotions they can't fully control or explain. According to Patel, while kids do



learn from their environment and often replicate their parents, stubbornness is also a natural part of development as children learn to assert themselves.

It doesn't always mean parents are at fault. A child's stubbornness, anger, and loud reactions are often ways of acting out due to their limited ability to handle emotions and dis-

stress. "These behaviours indicate that the child may not yet be developing the emotional tools needed to cope effectively. If such reactions are not addressed or discouraged, they can become ingrained as primitive defence mechanisms, suggesting that the child's emotional growth is not progressing as it should," says Dr Dave.

# Food trends 2025: Asian flavours, spicy chiles, functional foods and more on the menu

Get ready for 2025 food trends! From spicy chiles to Asian flavours and functional foods, it's all about bold, tasty, and health-boosting dishes. As we tip into the New Year, we food writers are often tasked with putting on paper our predictions for what will be trending. Truly, this used to be a simpler task! Now, with food becoming more and more global, culinary innovations developing at the speed of light, social media weighing in, chefs feeling more empowered to break traditional rules -- or to dig deep into their cultural roots -- it's kind of hard to know where to begin. But begin I will, with the caveat that this list is far from comprehensive, and I'm not allowed to hog the whole lifestyle section. Asian flavours and chains it seems a little silly to say Asian cuisine is on the rise, since the category is enormous and has been around for millennia. But the growing number of Asian (Southeast Asian in particular) markets, restaurants, ingredients and prepared foods is dramatic, and is influencing all kinds of cooking. H Mart, a South Korean chain of Asian markets, now has 96 stores worldwide, most in the U.S., while other chains like 99 Ranch (Chinese) and Patel Brothers (Indian) are expanding. Gochujang, sambal, yuzu, calamansi, matcha and kimchi (to name but a few) appear more and more on packaging and menus. There's sushi, barbecue, ramen, bulgogi. And Asian dumplings are proliferating in the frozen food aisles. The global palateDiners are looking for a blend of authenticity and convenience, says Leana Salama of the Specialty Foods Association, a not-for-profit trade association representing more than 3,600 businesses worldwide. After COVID, she says, when people began traveling again, they came home from trips wanting to recreate the traditional flavors they had tasted. That has led to a lot of unique spinoffs of more authentic snacks from all over. Besides Asia, other leading areas of culinary influence are South and Central America, says Whitney Herrera of Whole Foods' functional snacks division. Heat is hotOur love of chiles continues. In 2025, it will be "less about how much heat you can stand, and more about exploring the flavor nuances," Salamah says. She's seeing various chiles used in everything from chocolate to cheese. Herrera agrees: "Heat is bigger than ever, with more of an emphasis on complex notes of sweet and spicy." Chile flavors are permeating snack items such as nuts and trail mix. Chile crunches or crisps are still gaining fans. Chile oils are infused with crunchy bits, usually fried garlic or shallots, sometimes with added ingredients.

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chance is the Mexican version of chili crunch, with nuts, seeds and spices added to the hot chili oil. Functional FoodsThe "food is medicine" philosophy has evolved, Salamah says. People are thinking more about what foods will enhance their mood or their health, and less about what to avoid. Non-alcoholic beverages continue to emphasize different flavors, adaptogens and "functional" ingredients. Salamah calls functional-mushroom beverages a way to "elevate your drinking experience in a healthier way," appealing to folks avoiding alcohol. Functional mushroomsalso are showing up in snacks, in teas and in your coffee. Salty snacksSeaweed is "on fire," says Herrera, becoming more prevalent in snacks and other food categories. It's pitched as having health benefits and sustainability. With its strong umami flavor, it can be a stand-alone snack, or used as an ingredient, a flavoring for nuts, in stir-fry kits, rice dishes and more. Another aquatic plant that is moving from the supplement aisle to the food aisles, in beverages in particular, is sea moss, Herrera says. Crunchy is the texture of the momentSee chile crunches and

crisps above. And salty, crunchy snacks are a burgeoning category, says Herrera. Pistachio seems to be the nut of the moment. In the last month alone, I've seen pistachio panettones, pasta, lattes, spreads and croissants in New York City. The pistachio-filled Knafeh chocolate bar from Dubai has been a global sensation. Added protein"The 'proteinization' of foods is here to stay," says Salamah. "Makers are finding new and innovative ways to pack more protein into foods." She mentions a 2024 TikTok-spurred craze promoting cottage cheese as a protein source for flatbreads, dips, and cookie dough. Food waste and sustainabilityMore and more, consumers want to know how their groceries were grown, raised, harvested and produced, say retailers and restaurant owners. Attention to packaging and efforts to reduce food waste are growing. Companiesare becoming more transparent about sourcing and manufacturing in response to customer demand. Micro trendsSo, if this were the Oscars the music would be soaring, and I'd still have more people to thank. There are many more trends, and micro trends, to explore. Sandwiches getting bigger and more creative. Foods made in pearl form (algae caviar, balsamic vinegar). Lavender in food and drink. Freeze-dried foods. Mood foods. Dumplings in all guises. Unusual melons. AI entering your grocery shopping experience. Cookbook clubs. Sourdough (again!). High-low food pairings.



See chile crunches and

## HMPV cases in India rising, 3 infants identified so far

While the entire world is concerned about the HMPV outbreak in China, the first case of the virus has been detected in India's Bengaluru city. "A 3-month-old female infant, who was diagnosed with HMPV after being admitted to Baptist Hospital, Bengaluru with a history of bronchopneumonia. She has been since discharged. An 8-month-old male infant, who tested positive for HMPV on January 3, 2025, after being admitted to Baptist Hospital, Bengaluru, with a history of bronchopneumonia. The infant is now recovering," the government has confirmed. It is important to note that neither of the affected patients have any history of international travel, the official statement confirms. Reports further say citing the state health department that the sample of the baby was not tested in their lab instead the reports have come from a private hospital. "The reports have come from a private hospital and we have no reason to doubt the tests of the private hospital," a health department source had told the media. The state health department had released an advisory on Saturday saying there has been no case of HMPV detected in Karnataka, thus making this the first case. "I don't think we should be pressing the panic button, because HMPV is not a new virus, it's an existing virus. The reports come out as this is the first case in India, which is not true. It's an existing virus and certain percentage of people do get affected by this virus, and it is not something new. The child that got affected got no travel history, they are local people. China's outbreak they are saying it is a new variant of HMPV. We don't have the full details, and government of India is yet to provide full details to us, and maybe they are also trying to get more information," Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao told the media. "It is emphasized



that HMPV is already in circulation globally, including in India, and cases of respiratory illnesses associated with HMPV have been reported in various countries. Furthermore, based on current data from ICMR and the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) network, there has been no unusual surge in Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) or Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) cases in the country," the Centre has said. Amidst concerns around HMPV, Dr. Atul Goel, Director-General of Health Services has reassured the public that there is no cause for alarm.

He explained that HMPV is similar to other respiratory viruses, typically causing mild cold-like symptoms, with flu-like symptoms in very young or elderly individuals. Dr. Goel emphasized that hospitals in India are fully prepared to handle the seasonal rise in respiratory infections, with adequate supplies and beds available. He urged people to follow basic hygiene practices, and take general precautions to stay safe during the winter season. Union Health Ministry has posted on X. Dr. RR Dutta, HOD, Internal Medicine, Paras Health, Gurugram explains: There has been no significant increase in respiratory illness cases beyond the expected seasonal variations. Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) is a respiratory virus that usually causes mild symptoms like cough, fever, and nasal congestion, similar to the common cold. In certain vulnerable groups, such as young children, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems, it may lead to flu-like symptoms or complications like bronchitis or pneumonia. However, there is no cause for concern at this time as the situation remains under control.

## 2-tier Test cricket in the works, ICC chief Jay Shah leading the charge

**Mumbai, Jan 09:** Newly-elected International Cricket Council chairman Jay Shah is driving the idea of a 2-tier Test cricket, if reports are to be believed. Australian media outlet The Age reported on Monday, January 6 that Shah was leading the charge alongside cricket boards from India, Australia and England to host more marquee Test series in the cricketing calendar. The move, if it is to be believed, comes after the record attendance in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy where India and Australia played 5 Test matches. The BGT was the most attended non-Ashes series in the history of cricket in Australia, with 837,879 people attending the games in stadiums. This was the fourth most attended series in the history of Australian cricket behind the Ashes series of 1936-37, 2017-18 and 1946-47. In the 2-tier format - the top teams in the current cricketing environment like India, Australia, England, South Africa and New Zealand will play each other more often than they do. While the other teams like Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Ireland and

Zimbabwe - who are not known for their Test prowess would be demoted to the 2nd tier of the format. This might include teams like Bangladesh and West Indies, who have not found success in Test cricket in the recent past. This format will see the top-tier teams compete against each other, while the lower-tier teams only stick to their division. There is no confirmation if this system will also include a provision for promotion and relegation. The idea of a 2-tier Test format was floated back in 2016, but was shot down by the then-Indian cricket board president Anurag Thakur after opposition from the smaller teams. Thakur had said that the 2-tier structure would marginalise the small teams and would not be fair to the spirit of cricket. "The BCCI is against the two-tier Test system because the smaller countries will lose out and the BCCI wants to take care of them," then-BCCI president Anurag Thakur said in 2016. "It is necessary to protect their interests. In the two-tier system, they will lose out on a lot, including



revenue and the opportunity to play against top teams. Team plays against all the countries," Thakur added. However, there has been growing support from certain sections of broadcasters, who want to be even more profitable than they already are. Ravi Shastri, while commentating on the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy said that there was merit in the argument that big teams playing big teams would ensure the survival of Test cricket. "I've been a firm believer in that if you want Test cricket to survive and be alive and thriving, I think that's the way to go," Shastri said on SEN during the final Test match of the series. "The top teams play against each other more often, so there is a contest; you want contests," he added.

## PT Usha dissolved legally appointed Commission EC

**New Delhi, Jan 09:** Indian Olympic Association president PT Usha dissolved its "legally appointed" Ethics Commission and has started the process of setting up a new body in violation of IOA's constitution, vice-president Rajlaxmi Singh Deo complained to the Union Sports Ministry on Saturday. In response to the ministry's letter to IOA on the latter recognising one Indian Golf Union faction over the other, Deo in a letter to the ministry said the Executive Council (EC) is not to blame, neither was it responsible for the actions taken by IOA. She said the IOA EC has been "rendered ineffective" as Usha was taking "arbitrary" decisions without "any consultation or advice" from the executive body. In the letter, Deo also said India's bid for the 2036 Olympic Games "may be in jeopardy unless the house is put to order." The row between Usha and EC has escalated against the backdrop of the controversial IGU elections. The Sports Ministry has taken a stern view of IOA recognising the Harish Kumar Shetty-led IGU faction, asking the apex sports body to adhere to its constitution and National Sports Code. "It is indeed a matter of concern that the principles of good governance, transparency, account-



**PT Usha dissolved the IOA's Ethics Commission, prompting complaints of constitutional violations and concerns over India's 2036 Olympic bid, says Rajlaxmi Deo.**

ability, as embodied in the Olympic Charter and the Sports Code, have been violated repeatedly by the President IOA, flouting all norms of democratic behaviour," Deo wrote to the ministry. A copy of the letter is with HT. "The EC of IOA has been rendered ineffective by the dictatorial attitude of the President of IOA, who chooses to take arbitrary decisions without any consultation or advice from the EC, in total violation of the IOA constitution and norms."

## D Gukesh sets sights on new 2025 goals after World Championship, Khel Ratna wins

**New Delhi, Jan 09:** Chess prodigy Gukesh Dommaraju, fresh off his World Championship victory and the prestigious Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award, is now resetting his focus as he prepares for a "challenging" 2025. The 19-year-old is eager to dive into new tournaments and refine his skills, starting with the upcoming Tata Steel tournament in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands, set to begin on January 17. The event will feature top players, including Anish Giri, Arjun Erigaisi, Fabiano Caruana, and R Praggnanandhaa. Speaking during a felicitation ceremony organised by WestBridge Capital, Gukesh shared his excitement about the year ahead. "2025 will offer a very tough challenge. A lot of new and interesting tournaments are coming up. The World Championship was in the past. I'm very happy about it and all the awards and receptions," he said. "But now, I have started thinking about new goals, new tournaments, and new ways to prepare. The goal, and approach will be the same, to give my best, to keep improving myself, and win as many tournaments as possible. So, I am looking forward to a fun year with a lot of learning, a lot of improvements and hopefully a lot of good results." Despite the heightened expectations that come with his world champion title,

**● Youngest world champion in the history of chess D Gukesh has set his sights on new goals in 2025. Gukesh had a terrific 2024 after winning the world championships and then the Khel Ratna Award.**

Gukesh remains unfazed by the added scrutiny. He expressed confidence in handling the spotlight, stating, "Yeah, I have been used to being under the attention for a while. Obviously, after the World Championship, it will be more. But the basic things I remember are to keep improving myself and accepting failures when they come. I think, in general, I have high expectations of myself. So, I think my aim is to meet my own expectations rather than that of others." Reflecting on the overwhelming attention since his World Championship victory, Gukesh admitted it was more intense than he had anticipated. "I had thought that it (winning the World Championship) would be somewhat similar to the Candidates, but obviously it's much more. I'm grateful for all the attention and recognition," he said. "I guess one thing is to manage these things with the training. But after the (World Championship) match, I also



need some recovery period. I've started training a bit. But it will be more serious soon." Viswanathan Anand, Gukesh's mentor and a five-time world champion, praised his young ward's victory, noting that it has brought much-needed attention back to chess. "I think it brings back the spotlight to chess. If you project this forward, it's possible that in every single tournament there is some Indian playing that you can look forward to watching. So, I hope a lot of the dots are connected. The audience numbers in India are very good. Now,

we have regular broadcasts and everything. So, I think it will be a sport in the main line," Anand said. He further added that Gukesh's triumph would inspire younger generations to take up the game. "Of course, Gukesh will spearhead that, especially as being the world champion. But now people are interested to see if there will be Indians playing in a tournament. So there's a lot of excitement at all stages. And the second effect, which is maybe even more profound, is that young players will be inspired to take up the game."

## Gautam Gambhir needed to tell Virat Kohli 'don't play that shot'

**New Delhi, Jan 09:** Former cricketer Yograj Singh has commented on the Indian team management led by Gautam Gambhir after India's 1-3 loss against Australia in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Speaking on the day that India lost their final Test match in Sydney, Yograj pointed out that at the elite level, Gautam Gambhir needed to be less of a coach and more man-manager. Yograj pointed out the dismissals of Virat Kohli, who got out 8 times edging the ball. The former player hinted that it was Gautam Gambhir's responsibility to go and tell Kohli to not play the off-stump channel balls through covers. The father of Yuvraj Singh said that Gambhir should have told Virat to play those balls straight which could have helped him in the Australian pitches. When you're an exceptional player representing India, you might not necessarily need coaching in the traditional sense.