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PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya, Haflong celebrated the 63rd Foundation Day of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) with enthusiasm, attended by Chief Guest Raghuraj Baidya and Guest of Honour Colonel Rakesh R. Krishnan.

90-Day Child Protection Campaign 'Suroxito Xaishob, Sonali Axom' Launched in Dima Hasao

Haflong, Dec 17: In a significant initiative aimed at strengthening child safety and welfare, the Office of the District Child Protection Officer (DCPO), Dima Hasao, in collaboration with the District Administration and various line departments, launched a 90-day district-wide child protection campaign titled "Suroxito Xaishob, Sonali Axom". The campaign was formally inaugurated at the Conference Hall of the District Commissioner's establishment in Haflong on December 16, 2025. The campaign will run for a period of 90 days and will include a series of intensive awareness drives, community outreach programmes, and stakeholder engagements across urban and rural areas of the district. The initiative aims to sensitise the public on issues related to child rights, child safety, and the importance of timely reporting and intervention in cases of abuse and exploitation. A key focus of the campaign is to promote awareness about Child Helpline 1098, a 24x7 toll-free emergency outreach service under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. The helpline provides immediate assistance and support to children in need of care and protection, including victims of child la-



bour, child marriage, trafficking, abuse, neglect, substance abuse, and abandonment. Officials emphasised that calls made to 1098 are directly linked to the District Child Protection Unit and the Child Welfare Committee, ensuring swift response and appropriate action. Members of the public were strongly urged to remain vigilant and to promptly report any instances of child rights violations by dialling the helpline. The launch programme was chaired by District Commissioner, Dima Hasao, Munindra Nath Ngatey, ACS, who high-

lighted the collective responsibility of society in safeguarding children and ensuring a secure and nurturing environment for their growth. The event was attended by the Additional Superintendent of Police, officials from various government departments, and representatives of the State Child Protection Society. The campaign marks a concerted effort by the district administration to reinforce child protection mechanisms and to work towards building a safer and more inclusive future for children in Dima Hasao.

Enhanced connectivity with the launch of the ROB project

Bajali, Dec 19: Assam Minister Ranjeet Kumar Dass lay the foundation stone for a Railway Overbridge (ROB) at Bamunkuchi on the Sarthebari-Path-sala road, significantly advancing the district's infrastructure development. The construction of the ambitious structure is expected to cost Rs 65 crore.

The minister expressed his happiness at the event and stated that the ROB would greatly reduce traffic, enhance road safety, and guarantee better connectivity for commuters in the area.

Departmental Executive Engineer

Biju Das, Assistant Executive Engineer Ritul Nath, BJP Bajali district President Mukut Kalita, Patacharkuchi Mandal President Rajiv Sharma, Bajali Mandal President Parag Talukdar, and Bamunkuchi Panchayat President Anjana Kalita were among those present at the foundation-laying ceremony.

Former MLA Samarjeet Haflongbar and Ex-CEM Suraj Naiding Lodge FIR Alleging Forged Land Records in Dima Hasao



Haflong, Dec 17: Former MLA and former Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC) Samarjeet Haflongbar, along with former CEM Suraj Naiding, have lodged a First Information Report (FIR) at Haflong Police Station, seeking investigation into alleged large-scale forgery and fabrication of land records involving over 1,000 bighas of land. The FIR names Uttam Daolagupu, Secretary (Revenue-in-Charge), NCHAC, accusing him of forgery, fabrication of false evidence, and use of forged documents in judicial proceedings, allegedly with the intent to mislead the Hon'ble Gauhati High Court. According to the complaint, the accused is alleged to have

known used a forged government letter dated 10 December 1998 (Memo No. Rev/S/4/1998-99), which falsely claimed that 6,000 bighas of land were allotted to the Industries Department at Umrangso. The document was allegedly produced before the court in connection with W.P.(C) No. 467/2025. The FIR further states that the accused authenticated the disputed document under oath in an Additional Affidavit-in-Opposition, annexing it as official evidence, thereby attracting offences under Sections 340, 471, and 420 of the Indian Penal Code. To support their claims, the complainants have submitted a sworn affidavit dated 1 November 2025 by former CEM Prakanta Warisa and

former Executive Member (Revenue-In-Charge) Mahendra Chandra Nunisa, who have categorically stated that the document in question is fabricated, the signatures are false, and no such land allotment ever took place. The FIR also alleges that the accused, being the custodian of official land records, either conspired to fabricate the document or knowingly used forged records to deceive the judiciary and the public. Citing the Supreme Court judgment in Iqbal Singh Marwah vs. Meenakshi Marwah (2005) 4 SCC 370, the complainants stated that police have the jurisdiction to investigate the case since the alleged forgery occurred prior to submission in court, making the FIR legally maintainable. Along with the FIR, the complainants have attached copies of disputed documents, RTI applications and replies from the Industries Department, and supporting affidavits. They have urged the police to register the case, conduct a thorough investigation, and initiate appropriate legal action against the accused and any other persons found involved.

PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya Haflong Celebrates 63rd Foundation Day of KVS with Grandeur

Haflong, Dec 15: PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya, Haflong celebrated the 63rd Foundation Day of the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) with great enthusiasm and festive spirit on Monday. The occasion was marked by the presence of Raghuraj Baidya, Assistant Commissioner and Executive Magistrate, as the Chief Guest, and Colonel Rakesh R. Krishnan of the 26 Assam Rifles as the Guest of Honour. The programme commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, followed by a welcome address. The Principal and teachers of the school felicitated the guests with floral bouquets. Addressing the gathering, Chief Guest Raghuraj Baidya lauded the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan for its significant contributions to the field of education, stating that Kendriya Vidyalayas play a pivotal role in providing quality, disciplined, and inclusive education across the country. Guest of Honour Colonel Rakesh R. Krishnan highlighted the importance of discipline, patriotism, and dedication to duty, urging students to work hard consistently to achieve success in life and contribute meaningfully to the nation. Coinciding with the Foundation Day celebrations, 182 Vocational Laboratories established under the PM SHRI Scheme were inaugurated across the country. The formal inauguration was conducted offline by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan from the Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Auditorium, PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya No. 2, Delhi Cantt, while all Kendriya Vidyalayas nationwide joined the event through an online platform. At PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya, Haflong, the Vocational Laboratory was inaugurated by Chief Guest Raghuraj Baidya. Speaking on the occasion, he said that vocational education would enhance students' skill development and help them move towards self-reliance, adding that the laboratory would provide practical knowledge and employment-oriented training. The programme also featured a series of vibrant cultural performances by students, including patriotic songs, dances, and group singing, which captivated the audience comprising guests, parents, and teachers, and added to the celebratory atmosphere. Recalling the glorious 62-year journey of the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, the school fraternity reaffirmed its commitment to advancing quality education, innovation, and skill development in the years ahead. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Principal Dr. Lokesh Kumar Gupta.



Thuruk Transforms into a Winter Wonderland Amid Sub-Zero Temperatures

Dima Hasao, Dec 19: Thuruk, nestled in the Borail mountain range of Dima Hasao district, has emerged as a prominent offbeat winter tourism destination, captivating visitors with sub-zero temperatures and frost-covered landscapes. As the peak winter tourism season sets in, the village is witnessing a steady influx of travelers eager to experience its chilling climate, pristine natural beauty, and serene surroundings, positioning Thuruk as a new winter paradise in Assam.



23 Fatalities Reported Across UP Due to Dense Fog Chaos on Highways

Lucknow, Dec 16: Twenty people were killed and dozens others injured in multiple road mishaps reportedly caused by dense fog across Uttar Pradesh. At least 13 people were killed on the Delhi-Agra Expressway after multiple vehicles collided in the wee hours on Tuesday amid a thick fog near Baldev area in Mathura district, according to the police sources here.

Police said that seven buses and two cars were involved in the mishap which happened around 3.30 in the morning. The vehicles caught fire after collision trapping the people inside them. Some passengers in the buses were charred to death. It took several hours for



the fire tenders to extinguish the leaping flames, sources said. Mathura divisional commissioner Shailendra Kumar Singh said that four bodies have so far been identified. Eye witnesses said that visibility was almost zero at the time of the mishap.

Sources said that 13 people died in the mishap while more than 100 others were injured. The injured were admitted to hospitals in Mathura and CHC, Baldev. Critically injured passengers were rushed to Agra Medical College Hospital. The number of dead could increase

as many of the injured were stated to be critical. The district administration has released helpline numbers to provide information about the incident.

In another accident, four people were killed after their vehicle hit a boulder in Bangarmau area on the Lucknow-Agra Expressway in Unnao district on Tuesday morning amid dense fog. Four passengers were killed and 20 others injured when the bus in which they were travelling collided with a truck in Sant Kabirnagar district at midnight on Monday. Two police constables were killed when their vehicle fell off the bridge on Hindon river in Meerut district late on Monday night amid thick fog

Bihar BJP appoints veteran Saraogi president, retains caste focus

Patna, Dec 16: A day after Bihar minister and five-time MLA Nitin Nabin was appointed BJP's national working president, the party on Monday named six-time MLA from Darbhanga, Sanjay Saraogi, as new Bihar state president.

A former cabinet minister, Saraogi replaces Dilip Jaiswal, who took oath as the state's industries minister in the Nitish Kumar government last month. Jaiswal had served as the Bihar BJP president for around two years. Like Jaiswal, Saraogi also belongs to the Vaishya community. Party sources believe the change follows the BJP's stated principle of "one person one post".

BJP national general secretary Arun Singh said in a letter, "BJP national president Jagat

Prakash Nadda has appointed Saraogi as the state president with immediate effect." Saraogi said, "The party has placed its trust in me, and I will try my best to live up to expectations. We will work to take the party forward." He also highlighted the party's internal assessment system, adding, "The party keeps a close watch on each and every one of its workers. It observes what everyone is doing."

Born on August 28, 1969, the 56-year-old Saraogi has a strong connection with the business community. He has an MBA degree and has been associated with the BJP and its affiliated organisations since his student days. He began his political journey with the ABVP and formally joined the BJP in 1995.

SC Issues Notice to Parliament on Varma Impeachment Plea



New Delhi, Dec 16: The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued notice to the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Secretariats and sought detailed replies after hearing a plea filed by Allahabad High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma challenging the impeachment proceedings initiated against him.

A two-judge Bench headed by Justice Dipankar Datta issued the notices while taking up Justice Varma's petition, in which he has questioned the procedure adopted for initiating his removal. "We issue notice and seek reply," the apex court said. In his plea, Justice

Varma contended that the impeachment process violated the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, arguing that the motion for his removal was not passed by both Houses of Parliament on the same day. He also challenged the constitution of the three-member inquiry committee, asserting that once motions are introduced in both Houses, the committee must be formed jointly by the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, and not unilaterally by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.

Justice Varma is facing a probe under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, following allegations of corruption. A parliamentary inquiry committee has already submitted a report indicting him and recommending his removal. Earlier, the three-member panel, after examining more than 55 witnesses, reported the recovery of large amounts of burnt and unburnt cash from Justice Varma's official residence. In its 64-page report, the committee held, "This committee holds the money/cash that was found in the storeroom located within the premises of 30 Tughlaq Crescent... officially occupied by Justice Varma."

MGNREGA Replacement Bill Tabled; Gandhi Name Removal Angers Oppn

New Delhi, Dec 16: The Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Bill, 2025, that seeks to replace the existing rural employment law Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday amid strong objections from the opposition over the "removal" of Gandhi's name from it.

Introducing the bill, Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the Centre not only believes in Gandhi but also follows his principles. "The (Narendra) Modi government has done more for rural development than previous governments," he said. Opposition members opposed the proposed legislation at the in-



troduction stage and pressed for sending the bill to a parliamentary panel for greater scrutiny. The MPs, including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of the Congress, strongly objected to the "removal" of Gandhi's name. Speaking with the press, Priyanka also slammed the government for its "obsession" with changing the names of schemes. Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, while opposing the

VB-G RAM G Bill in the Lok Sabha, took a sharp dig at the BJP-led Centre, recalling the 1971 hit Bollywood number, Dekho o deewano ye kaam na karo, Ram ka naam badnaam na karo. Tharoor said the VB-G RAM G Bill represents a "deeply regrettable and retrograde step" for the country and for its commitment to the welfare of its most vulnerable citizens.

Messi Event 'Mess-up': Bengal Minister Aroop Biswas Offers Resignation

Ghosh shares Biswas's resignation letter seeking relief from post

Kolkata, Dec 16: West Bengal Sports Minister Aroop Biswas has expressed his desire to step down from his position in the wake of the recent controversy over the "mismanagement" of the Lionel Messi event at the Salt Lake Stadium, TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said on Tuesday.

In a Facebook post, Ghosh shared what he described as a copy of a resignation letter written by Biswas to Chief

Minister Mamata Banerjee, seeking to be relieved of his responsibilities as the state's Sports Minister. The development came amid mounting criticism and political backlash over the alleged mismanagement and security lapses during the high-profile football event at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan, also known as Salt Lake Stadium, on December 13, in which angry spectators resorted to indiscriminate rampage and



clashed with the police, causing an estimated damage of Rs 2 crore of stadium furni-

ture.

"Sports Minister Aroop Biswas has written to Chief

Minister Mamata Banerjee requesting to be relieved of the responsibility of the sports department," Ghosh said in his post, attributing the move to the controversy triggered by the Messi event fiasco. However, the letter shared by the TMC leader was not on Biswas's official letterhead, raising questions in political circles over its formal status. Repeated calls and messages to Biswas went unanswered. There was also no immediate

confirmation from the Chief Minister's Office on whether the resignation request had been accepted. Biswas, a senior TMC leader and close associate of the chief minister, has not made any public statement on the matter so far. The state government had previously constituted a high-level enquiry committee to probe the alleged lapses during the event, which drew massive crowds but ended amid chaos and protests by spectators.

119 acres of illegal poppy fields in Ukhrul are destroyed by Manipur security forces

Imphal, Dec 19: During a significant anti-drug operation on December 18, Manipur security personnel destroyed 119 acres of illicit poppy production in Ukhrul district, according to officials. The activity is a component of the state government's stepped-up efforts to stop drug manufacture and dismantle networks that operate in the hill regions. The operation was carried out in the Ukhrul district's LM Block, Yaolen Chepu, and Lam-lai Chingphei districts, where vast tracts of land were planted with poppies. Once the unlawful crops were properly identified, security forces removed the fields and destroyed the standing crop. Twenty-four houses at the plantation sites were destroyed by fire during the operation. According to officials, cultivators and laborers involved in the illicit poppy crop were probably using these makeshift buildings. During the trip, no casualties were reported. A similar coordinated operation had taken place the day before the December 18 action. About 140 acres of poppy fields in the same regions were found and burned on December 17 by Manipur security personnel and the Ukhrul district Forest Department. As part of the clearance procedure, sixteen temporary huts were set on fire during that operation. The state's persistent attempts to combat illegal poppy production, which has been an increasing concern in Manipur's hill regions, are highlighted by the back-to-back raids, according to officials. Poppy cultivation is regarded as a serious threat to public health, law and order, and regional security because it is intimately associated with the production of narcotic compounds. According to an officer involved in the operation, "the goal of these drives is not only to destroy illegal crops but also to break the supply chain and discourage people from engaging in such activities." Based on intelligence inputs and assessments on the ground, authorities have reaffirmed that such operations will continue in other susceptible areas. Additionally, the state government has urged local communities to assist law enforcement and refrain from engaging in illicit drug cultivation. Security personnel in the area are constantly on guard to stop new efforts at poppy farming, particularly in isolated and forested areas that are frequently utilized to avoid detection.



Over 527 Grams of Brown Sugar Seized in Late-Night Operation at Harangajao, Dima Hsaso

Haflong, Dec 18: In a significant crackdown on drug trafficking, Dima Hasao Police arrested two individuals and seized more than 527 grams of brown sugar during a late-night operation at Harangajao on Thursday. The contraband, estimated to be worth several lakhs of rupees in the illegal market, was recovered following a targeted operation based on specific intelligence inputs. Police officials stated that the arrested persons were taken into custody for further interrogation, and a case has been registered under relevant sections of the law. Investigations are underway to as-



certain the source of the narcotics and to identify possible links to a wider drug network operating in the region. The successful operation un-

Section 163 BNSS Imposed Along NH-27 Jatinga–Harangajao Stretch to Ensure Uninterrupted Construction



Haflong, Dec 15: In a bid to ensure the timely completion of the Jatinga–Harangajao stretch of National Highway-27, the District Administration of Dima Hasao has imposed prohibitory or-

ders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023. According to official sources, the construction work on the Jatinga–Harangajao stretch of NH-27 is scheduled to be

completed by January 31, 2025. However, it has been observed that ongoing construction activities carried out by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and its contracting agencies have been frequently disrupted by local agitations, often without valid justification. Taking serious note of these repeated interruptions, the district administration has expressed its resolve to ensure smooth and uninterrupted execution of the project, which is considered vital for regional connectivity and development. In this regard, District Commissioner and District Magistrate of Dima Hasao, Munindra Nath Ngatey, ACS, has exercised the powers vested in him under Section 163 of BNSS, 2023 (corresponding to Section 144 of the erstwhile CrPC). The order prohibits the

assembly of more than five persons in the vicinity of construction sites along the Jatinga to Harangajao stretch of NH-27. The order has been issued ex-parte, as the prevailing circumstances do not permit prior notice to individuals or organisations, as provided under Section 153 of BNSS. The prohibitory order has come into force with immediate effect and will remain operative until further notice. The Senior Superintendent of Police, Dima Hasao, has been directed to ensure strict implementation of the order in both letter and spirit. The order was issued under the hand and seal of the District Magistrate on December 15, 2025, reaffirming the administration's commitment to completing the crucial highway project within the stipulated timeframe.

Chowna Mein, the chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh, reiterates her desire to restart stalled hydro projects

Itanagar, Dec 19: Chowna Mein, the deputy chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh, stated on Thursday that the state administration is working hard to resuscitate hydropower capacity that has stopped and to guarantee the sector's timely, responsible, and sustainable development. At a meeting conducted here during the day, Mein examined the state's significant, mega, and large hydropower projects, according to officials. Mein highlighted the government's targeted approach to accelerating hydropower development in a post on X following the meeting, saying, "Reviewed the status of major hydropower projects including Tawang I and II, Etalin, Demwe Lower, Naying, Kalai I and II, Hutong, Subansiri Upper, Kamala and the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project." Other mega

and large hydropower projects, such as the 3,097 MW Etalin Hydroelectric Project, the 1,750 MW Demwe Lower project, and the 1,605 MW Subansiri Upper project, are crucial to Arunachal Pradesh's long-term energy roadmap, according to the deputy chief minister, who also oversees the power and hydropower portfolios.

Mein highlighted institutional changes meant to increase productivity and project execution, saying, "also undertook a detailed review of other mega and large HEPs in the state, along with the operationalization of the restructured hydropower development department." He underlined that the activity is a component of a larger, organized endeavor to realize the enormous hydropower potential of Arunachal Pradesh. "The review is part of a com-

prehensive effort to ensure timely, responsible, and sustainable development across the sector and to revive stalled hydropower capacity," he stated.

Mein reiterated the state government's policy commitment, saying that these actions highlight the government's emphasis on long-term energy security for Arunachal Pradesh, responsible hydropower development, and policy stability. He pointed out that the state's development strategy continues to rely heavily on hydropower. The deputy chief minister added that he received a photo album of the hydropower department's annual review meeting, which he claimed shows the sector's strong institutional efforts and progress made, indicating a steady shift towards improving hydropower development's governance and delivery.

3,000 People Vaccinated in Assam Through NGO's Largest HPV Immunisation Campaign

Dibrugarh, Dec 19: The Indian Medical Association Dibrugarh, the Federation of Obstetrics and Gynecological Society of India, Assam, and Pratishruti Cancer and Palliative Trust launched an HPV vaccination campaign to prevent cancer in Dibrugarh on March 6 at the Dibrugarh IMA house. As a result of several immunization campaigns in Guwahati, Dhemaji, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Diphu, Nalbari, Tezpur, Nagaon, Morigaon, and Tinsukia, around 3000 vaccines have been administered thus far. According to a news release, this is the most HPV vaccination coverage by a non-profit organization in India



in such a short amount of time. Pratishruti has been providing free vaccinations to girls whose moms have cervical cancer, as well as to other impoverished families with cancer who are chosen based on their financial situation. In the 2024 Union Budget, India declared HPV

vaccination for girls a national priority, with a phased, school-based implementation aimed at children aged 9 to 14. This is crucial since India is responsible for around 20% of all occurrences of cervical cancer worldwide and would first need to vaccinate over 68 million girls.

Editorial

Drugs and the Future at Risk: A Societal Challenge That Demands Urgent Action

Drug abuse has emerged as one of the gravest threats to the youth of our time, silently corroding the foundations of society and endangering the future of generations to come. What often begins as experimentation or peer influence gradually turns into dependency, destroying health, derailing education, breaking families, and pushing young lives into cycles of crime and despair. The impact of drugs is not limited to individuals alone; it spreads across communities, weakening social harmony and burdening economic and healthcare systems. The causes of drug abuse among youths are complex and deeply rooted. Unemployment, academic pressure, lack of parental supervision, family breakdown, easy availability of narcotics, and the glamorisation of substance use through social media and popular culture all contribute to this growing menace. In many cases, curiosity and the desire to “fit in” become entry points, while stress, depression, and lack of emotional support push vulnerable youths deeper into addiction. Border areas, transit routes, and weak enforcement further aggravate the problem by ensuring a steady supply of drugs. The consequences are devastating. Drug addiction strips young people of their potential, turning energetic minds into victims of health disorders, mental illness, and criminal behaviour. It fuels violence, theft, and social instability, while families suffer emotional trauma and financial ruin. A society

that loses its youth to drugs risks losing its workforce, leadership, and moral compass. Curbing this menace requires a strong, multi-pronged, and sustained approach. Law enforcement agencies must intensify intelligence-driven operations, dismantle drug networks, and ensure swift and strict punishment for traffickers. At the same time, prevention must be given equal priority. Schools and colleges should introduce structured awareness programmes focusing on life skills, mental health, and the dangers of substance abuse. Parents must remain vigilant, communicate openly with their children, and create supportive home environments. Community participation is equally vital. Local organisations, religious institutions, and civil society groups can play a powerful role in counselling, early intervention, and rehabilitation. De-addiction centres must be strengthened and made accessible, treating addiction as a health issue rather than merely a crime. Employment opportunities, sports, arts, and skill development initiatives can provide positive alternatives and restore purpose to vulnerable youths. Protecting the future generation from the grip of drugs is not the responsibility of the government alone—it is a collective duty. A firm resolve, coordinated action, and compassionate intervention can save young lives and safeguard society. The choice before us is clear: act decisively today, or risk losing tomorrow to addiction.

Trump's Sharif-Munir photo-op may sway Pakistanis, but can't forge enduring ties

Against all norms, the Donald Trump-Shehbaz Sharif meeting conducted in the White House was closed to the press. Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, were present. From Pakistan's side, Sharif was accompanied by the army chief, ‘failed marshal’ Asim Munir. The meeting could well have been called the Trump-Munir meeting. It's well known that Pakistan is a state for a military and not the other way around. The defence minister, Khawaja Asif, was made to wait outside. Simply put, political authority in Pakistan is subservient to the military, despite Asif mentioning in an interview with Mehdi Hasan that Pakistan follows a ‘hybrid model’ and he is not under Munir. Closing the meeting to reporters implies that it was more of a personal interaction for Trump rather than discussions of global and regional subjects. Adding credence was the fact that no readout was issued by the White House, nor any briefing conducted to the media, which has been an norm for Trump. There was also no social me-

dia tweet by Trump on the meeting. Whatever was mentioned was only conveyed by Pakistan media, which itself was vague. Trump's interest is that World Liberty Financial, a decentralised finance platform with 60 per cent Trump family ownership, inked a crypto deal with Pakistan, and he would want it to succeed. There are no inputs on who received Sharif when he reached the White House, though reports mention administrative officials. There are also no photographs of the same. It was definitely not Trump, as he was involved in signing presidential orders and not even aware of their arrival, nor his wife, who officiates on his behalf on occasions. On the contrary, Trump received Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the White House the same day. Does it mean that a meeting with two so-called ‘heads of state’ of Pakistan was lesser interaction. Both had to wait for 30 mins, an act never heard of before about any other head of state in the White House. It is possible that this was not a planned meeting but one requested by Sharif when he met

Trump briefly on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, for which Trump was unwilling to amend his schedule. Even if we assume that Trump wanted to improve ties with Pakistan, seek its assistance in regaining the Bagram air base in Afghanistan, monitor Iran or even invest in minerals and oil in Pakistan, the media would have been briefed. US intelligence agencies are aware that Islamabad has zero influence over Afghanistan, is losing control over Baluchistan, and that even the Chinese have failed to effectively exploit Pakistan's mineral resources due to the ongoing freedom struggle. The US will never get involved militarily but expects the Pakistan army to do the needful. As far as oil is concerned, there are no known inputs of any major deposits. If the above subjects or even Pakistan offering military equipment were discussed, Trump would have gleefully sounded the media on the same, sending the message that the US is earning from Pakistan. With no mention of it, it implies that the meeting was more for providing an impetus.

Cleaning Delhi's air requires a Delhi specific plan

The government's replies to questions in the Lok Sabha on November 29, 2021, and July 18, 2022, show that even the Covid lockdown could not completely clean Delhi's air. The fix lies in prediction, participation, intensity of airshed-wide action, and the will to act before the air turns toxic. In 2020, when roads were deserted, factories were silent, and the skies were unusually clear, the city recorded 49 “very poor” and 15 “severe” air-quality days. In 2021, 56 and 24 such days. The data demolish an illusion: If vehicles slowed and factories paused, Delhi would breathe easy. Something deeper traps the capital in a haze that neither lockdowns nor routine regulations can dispel. The current plans are inadequate to overcome the challenge. There are three lessons for Delhi.

Understanding Childhood Leukemia with Higher Cure Rates and the Role of Early Detection: Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia and More

Dr. Satya Prakash Yadav, Senior Director, Medical Oncology, Medanta – The Medicity, Gurgaon

Childhood leukemia is the most common cancer in children and adolescents, accounting for approximately one-third of all pediatric cancer cases globally. The emotional, financial, and physical toll on families and healthcare systems is significant. An estimated 58,785 new cases of childhood leukemia were diagnosed worldwide in 2021. In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), including India, delayed diagnosis and limited access to specialized care significantly worsen outcomes, with survival rates often falling below 30%, compared to 80% in high-income countries.

Overview of Types of Childhood Leukemia

Childhood leukemia is broadly classified into several types based on the type of blood cell affected.

- Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia (ALL) is the most common form, accounting for nearly 75-80% of cases. It is characterized by the rapid proliferation of immature lymphoid cells.
- Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML) is less common, comprising most of the remaining cases. It is generally associated with a greater treatment challenge and a worse prognosis than ALL.
- Other rare forms, including chronic leukemias and genetic subtypes, contribute to the complexity of diagnosis and management.

Why Pediatric Cancers Require Special Attention
Children's bodies and immune systems are still

developing, making them uniquely vulnerable to the effects of cancer and its treatment. The psychosocial impact on families is profound, and the need for long-term follow-up care is critical and differs from adult cancers. Early intervention and specialized pediatric protocols have been instrumental in improving survival rates and quality of life for young patients.

Trends in Survival Rates Over the Past Decades

The story of childhood leukemia treatment is one of remarkable progress. With advancements in chemotherapy, supportive care, bone marrow transplants, and newer targeted therapies, the survival rates have dramatically improved.

- For ALL, 5-year survival rates in high-income countries have soared from less than 10% in the 1960s to over 90% today.
- AML outcomes have also seen improvements, with 5-year survival rates for pediatric cases now ranging from 65% to 70%, though survival rates remain lower than for ALL.

These advancements highlight the importance of timely and appropriate treatment pathways.

The Critical Role of Early Detection

Despite the progress in treatment, a timely diagnosis remains a crucial factor. The symptoms of leukemia often mimic common childhood illnesses such as the flu, leading to dangerous delays. Recognizing



key warning signs is essential for parents, schools, and primary care providers. A routine complete blood count (CBC) test can often detect abnormalities that lead to a confirmed diagnosis through a bone marrow biopsy. Early diagnosis not only improves the chances of survival but also reduces the need for more aggressive treatments and their associated long-term side effects.

By understanding the nature of childhood leukemia, recognizing its different types, and acknowledging both its global burden and the remarkable improvements in outcomes, one can fully appreciate the indispensable role that early detection plays. Continued awareness and access to specialized care are essential for enhancing survival rates and ensuring better long-term health and quality of life for affected children worldwide.

For ease of access Medanta has launched a dedicated Northeast Helpline Number: 0124-6930090.

~ Dr. Satya Prakash Yadav, Senior Director, Medical Oncology, Medanta – The Medicity, Gurgaon.

Year-end celebrations turn crispy as KFC brings epic feast to Shillong

Shillong: Year-end celebrations in Shillong have received a crispy boost as KFC rolled out its special Epic Feast offer across outlets in the city. Designed for group dining, the festive meal brings together popular KFC favourites at value pricing, making it a convenient option for families and friends celebrating the season.

The Epic Feast includes signature Hot & Crispy Chicken, Boneless Chicken Strips, Fries, Pepsi and a variety of dips. Priced starting at ₹1299, the offer is available for dine-in and takeaway and will run till January 4, 2026.

Local customers in Shillong said the timing of the offer fits well with holiday gatherings and end-of-year get-togethers. College students and working professionals are also opting for shared meals as a cost-effective way to celebrate with friends.

KFC has also encouraged customers to pre-order through its mobile app, allowing diners to skip queues



and reduce waiting time during the busy festive period.

With Shillong seeing increased footfall in food outlets during the holiday season, the Epic Feast is expected to attract strong response from chicken lovers looking for convenient and budget-friendly celebration meals.

Vi launches recharge-linked handset theft and loss insurance for prepaid users

Shillong: Telecom operator Vi has rolled out India's first recharge-linked handset theft and loss insurance plan for prepaid customers, offering much-needed protection for smartphones lost or stolen. The move is expected to benefit a large number of mobile users in Meghalaya, where prepaid connections dominate the telecom market.

The new insurance facility is available for both Android and iOS devices and comes bundled with select prepaid recharge packs. Under the plan, customers can claim insurance coverage of up to ₹25,000 in case of handset loss or theft. This is significant, as traditional handset insurance policies usually cover only accidental damage and often exclude theft

or loss.

In the Shillong market, smartphones are widely used for education, digital payments, office work and daily communication. Students, shop owners and working professionals depend heavily on their phones, and replacing a lost handset can be financially difficult. With mid-range smartphones costing between ₹20,000 and ₹25,000, the new plan offers timely relief.

Vi has introduced three recharge options priced at ₹61 for 30 days, ₹201 for 180 days, and ₹251 for 365 days. Along with insurance, these packs also include data benefits. The company said the digital-first claim process will simplify paperwork and help customers receive quicker settlements.

Airbnb brings exclusive Lollapalooza India 2026 experiences for music fans

Shillong: Airbnb has announced exclusive behind-the-scenes Experiences for Lollapalooza India 2026, giving music lovers across the country, including fans from Shillong, a rare opportunity to engage closely with one of India's most anticipated live music festivals.

The Experiences are part of Airbnb's first-ever global live music partnership and will take place during Lollapalooza India 2026, scheduled for January 24 and 25 at Mumbai's Mahalaxmi Racecourse. These curated sessions go beyond regular festival attendance and include backstage access, artist-led creative interactions and insider-guided tours of the festival.

Artists associated with the Experiences include singer-songwriter Ankur Tewari, composer-producer duo OAFF and Savera, and Lollapalooza India Insider RaashiSanghavi. Each Experience offers participants a closer

look at the creative preparation, collaboration and production efforts that bring a large-scale music festival to life.

Shillong, known for its strong live music culture and vibrant youth scene, has a growing number of festival travellers who regularly attend major music events across the country. The announcement is expected to attract interest from young musicians, creators and fans eager to explore the music industry beyond performances.

Each Experience is priced at ₹5,850, with bookings opening on December 15 at 10 am IST on a first-come, first-served basis. Airbnb clarified that guests will need to arrange their own travel to and from Mumbai. The initiative reflects Airbnb's effort to connect travel, culture and music through meaningful and immersive experiences.

Oriflame marks three decades in India with emphasis on innovation and local manufacturing

Guwahati: Oriflame's completion of 30 years in India highlights the brand's steady evolution in a competitive beauty and wellness landscape. Since entering the country in the early 1990s, the Swedish company has focused on combining scientific research, product safety and a community-driven business model to build long-term growth.

The brand currently offers over 500 products spanning skincare, wellness, haircare, personal care, colour cosmetics and fragrances. Its emphasis on responsible ingredient choices and performance-based formulations has remained central to its operations. One of its most recognisable products, Tender Care balm, is now manufactured in India, reflecting Oriflame's growing reliance on local production to support scale and efficiency.

Beyond products, Oriflame's business in India is powered by a wide network of independent Brand Partners. With women accounting for nearly 80 percent of this network, the company has positioned itself as a platform for flexible income generation and entrepreneurship. This approach has remained a defining element of Oriflame's strategy over the years.



Scientific research continues to play a critical role in the brand's expansion. Oriflame's long-term study of skin ageing led to the development of Oripeptide 3, a patented bioactivating technology designed to work with the skin's natural biology. This innovation strengthens the NovAge+ range, one of the company's most advanced skincare lines.

As Oriflame moves into its next phase in India, it aims to broaden its wellness and skincare offerings, engage with younger consumer groups, and expand opportunities beyond major urban centres. India remains a key market in the company's global growth strategy, supported by local manufacturing and sustained investment in innovation.

IndusInd Bank honours Indian Women's Blind Cricket Team after historic World Cup win

Guwahati: IndusInd Bank on Tuesday felicitated the Indian Women's Blind Cricket Team for their historic victory at the inaugural Women's T20 World Cup for the Blind, marking a major milestone for inclusive sports in the country.

The felicitation ceremony was held in Mumbai in collaboration with the Cricket Association for the Blind in India (CABI), an initiative of the Samarathanam Trust for the Disabled. The event was attended by IndusInd Bank Managing Director and CEO Rajiv Anand, CABI Chairman Dr. Mah-

antesh Kivadasannavar, and senior officials of the bank. The team was presented with a cash reward in recognition of their achievement.

Speaking on the occasion, Anand said the team's victory was a defining moment for women's sports and inclusion in India. He reaffirmed the bank's commitment to empowering persons with disabilities through long-term support.

In Guwahati, the achievement has drawn attention from sports bodies and disability rights groups, who see the win as an inspiration for visually impaired ath-



letes across Assam and the Northeast. Local coaches said such recognition encourages more young players to take up blind cricket seriously.

IndusInd Bank has been

Godrej initiative puts focus on contemporary Indian Christmas celebrations

Guwahati: Christmas celebrations in Guwahati are changing, and a new campaign by Godrej Vikhroli Cucina is reflecting that shift. Titled "Jingle Bells Unwrapped," the campaign captures how young Indians are creating their own festive moments, far from the picture-perfect scenes seen in films.

Instead of snow-filled streets and large family dinners, many Guwahati residents celebrate Christmas with flatmates, friends and colleagues. Shared snacks, video calls with family and small rituals now define the season. The new Christmas track, created with Voctronica and featuring Godrej Yummiez, mirrors this reality.

The campaign also includes well-known chefs Amrita Raichand and Ajay Chopra and focuses on how food plays a quiet but important role in celebrations. A warm snack or a familiar flavour often becomes the emotional centre of the festival.

Godrej says the idea behind the campaign is to show that festivals today are about personal choices and comfort. In a fast-growing city like Guwahati, where lifestyles are increasingly urban and busy, the message connects with young people balancing work, friendships and festive joy.

supporting blind cricket under its CSR programme, "IndusInd Bank Cricket for Blind," which provides training, equipment, nutrition, and financial assistance to players across India.

Japanese language centre aims to link Northeast youth with global careers

Guwahati: A new Japanese Language Training Center to be set up at Manipur University is expected to create fresh global career opportunities for youth from the Northeast, including Assam. The centre will be established through a partnership between NSDC International and Manipur University.

The programme focuses on equipping young people with internationally recognised Japanese language skills, making them employable in Japan's fast-growing sectors. NSDC International will oversee curriculum design, assessments, and training delivery, while the university will provide the necessary campus infrastructure.

Officials said the training will cover multiple job-linked sectors such as caregiving, hospitality, agriculture, and manufacturing. Courses will guide learners from foundational language skills to advanced proficiency levels.

Skill development experts in Guwahati said the centre could play a key role in linking regional talent with international labour demand while strengthening India's position as a global talent hub.

Guwahati investors track strong first-year performance of Groww Multicap Fund

Guwahati: The Groww Multicap Fund has emerged as a category leader in the multi-cap segment in its first year since launch in December 2024. The fund delivered 8.01% returns in one year, outperforming the Nifty 500 Multicap 50-25-25 benchmark index which gained only 0.29% over the same period.

Benchmark indicators reflected subdued equity performance. The Nifty 50 rose 4.83%, the Nifty 500 gained 0.93%, while the Nifty Midcap 100 saw a marginal 0.45% gain. Small-cap stocks remained under pressure, with the Nifty Small-cap 250 declining 10.99% over the year.

Financial advisors in Guwahati said the fund's performance may attract new investors, especially retail market participants seeking diversified equity exposure amid persistent volatility in mid- and small-cap

segments. The city's expanding salaried class and rising SIP adoption trends could support higher fund participation in the coming months.

The fund's outperformance came during a period marked by evolving global conditions, including tariff actions, RBI's rate adjustments, geopolitical tensions and fluctuations in export-linked business sectors. Analysts said the fund's portfolio strategy positioned it to benefit from key structural themes, including infrastructure spending, capital expenditure revival and deeper financialisation in the Indian economy.

Exposure to sectors such as capital goods, automobiles, banks, insurers and NBFCs contributed to performance. The scheme continues to follow a valuation-focused strategy and is jointly managed by Anupam Tiwari and Saptarshie Chatterjee.

Declining production and cheaper imports threaten India's tea sector

Guwahati: Member of Parliament Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla has drawn attention in the Rajya Sabha to what he described as a deepening economic and livelihood challenge in India's tea sector. Stressing that millions depend on tea cultivation and related activities, he said the downturn is caused by production decline, labour gaps and cheaper imports disturbing price stability.

He informed the House that imports of tea from African nations and Nepal rose by nearly 45 percent in the first six months of 2025, increasing competition against Indian tea in glob-

al markets. He added that mis-branding of imported teas as "Darjeeling" further weakens domestic integrity and international recognition.

Shringla said that production in Darjeeling has fallen sharply over decades and called for urgent policy measures to protect GI-tagged varieties. He recommended stricter controls on imports and more support for sustainable plantation management.

He also recalled Prime Minister Narendra Modi showcasing Darjeeling tea at the G20 Summit in 2023, calling it a reminder of the heritage value attached to Indian tea.

HDFC Life study flags wide gap in financial readiness among urban Indians

Guwahati: HDFC Life has released its latest research-based study, the 'Ready for Life' Index 2025, highlighting a significant gap between how financially prepared urban Indians believe they are and their actual level of readiness.

According to the report, India's actual Ready for Life Index stands at 59, while perceived readiness is much higher at 85, showing a 26-point gap. The study examines financial preparedness across four areas — financial planning, emergency preparedness, health and well-being, and retirement strategy.

The findings are relevant for cities like Shillong and the wider eastern region,

where financial discipline is visible but long-term protection planning remains limited. The report notes that retirement planning is the weakest area, with nearly two out of three individuals expecting family support after retirement, despite not saving adequately.

The study also found that only two out of five people have emergency funds sufficient to last more than four months. In health planning, a similar number of insured individuals hold coverage below ₹5 lakh.

Conducted by Ipsos India through face-to-face interviews across cities and towns, the index aims to encourage people to



move beyond confidence and take real action toward structured financial planning.

HDFC Life said the report underlines the need for stronger financial awareness and long-term security planning across urban India.

Kohima reacts to Nissan's upcoming GRAVITE MPV ahead of 2026 launch

Kohima: Nissan Motor India announced that its new seven-seater B-MPV will be launched as GRAVITE in early 2026. The vehicle will be locally manufactured at its Chennai facility and forms part of a revitalised multi-segment rollout for the Indian market.

The company said the MPV has been developed for modern family mobility needs, offering modular seating, expanded cabin space and flexible cargo handling. Nissan described the name GRAVITE as symbolising stability and attraction, reflecting the brand's plan to strengthen emotional connection among family travelers.

Dealers in Kohima observed growing interest in family-sized vehicles with increased cabin space and road stability for long-distance drives toward Dimapur, Pftusero and Wokha. Retailers said market reception will depend on competitive pricing, finance options and improved servicing networks in hill districts.

Nissan said the GRAVITE builds on momen-



tum gained through the export-driven success of the Magnite. The company plans to introduce Tektan SUV in mid-2026 followed by a seven-seater C-SUV in 2027, reinforcing India as a core development and production hub.

In Kohima, the demand for MPVs is rising, particularly among joint families, institutional buyers and shared-ride operators. Consumers expressed interest in cabin comfort and durable suspension suited for hilly terrain and varying road surfaces.

NSDC International, Manipur University sign pact to set up Japanese language training centre in Imphal

Imphal: In a major boost to overseas employment opportunities for youth from Manipur and the Northeast, NSDC International (NSDCI) on Monday signed an agreement with Manipur University to establish a Japanese Language Training Centre on the university campus in Imphal. The initiative aims to equip local youth with Japanese language skills aligned with international standards, enabling access to jobs in Japan.

The agreement was signed in the presence of senior officials, marking a significant step towards skill-based global mobility. Under the partnership, NSDCI will design and implement the training framework, while Manipur University will provide the necessary on-campus infrastructure to ensure accessible and structured learning.



Speaking on the occasion, NSDC International CEO Alok Kumar said the collaboration would help youth from Manipur compete confidently in international job markets. The training programmes will cover multiple sectors, including caregiving, hospitality, agriculture and manufacturing, and will guide learners from basic to advanced proficiency

levels.

For Imphal and surrounding districts, the centre is expected to create a direct pathway to global employment, reducing dependence on local job markets. The initiative strengthens Manipur's role in India's growing skill export ecosystem and expands international career options for the region's youth.

STIHL India concludes nationwide 'Parivartan Yatra' with grand finale in Itanagar

Itanagar: STIHL India on Tuesday concluded its West-to-East "Parivartan Yatra" with a grand closing ceremony in Itanagar, marking the end of a nationwide outreach programme focused on promoting farm mechanisation and modern agricultural practices.

The journey, which began in Dwarka, Gujarat, covered over 15,000 kilometres across nine states and connected with more than 10,000 farmers. Through direct interaction, live product demonstrations and on-ground discussions, the initiative aimed to raise awareness about modern farming tools that reduce manual labour and improve productivity.

Senior officials of STIHL India, including Marketing Director Shobhit Bahel, Trade Marketing Manager Pradumn Chaturvedi, Regional Manager (East) Debasis Sanyal and State Head Pragyans Sinha, attended the closing event in Itanagar. They highlighted the importance of expanding mechanisation in eastern and northeastern states.

For the Itanagar, the programme holds special significance as farming in hilly terrain often involves high manual effort. Company officials said such initiatives help farmers understand how mechanised solutions can suit local conditions.

STIHL India stated that the yatra was not just a road-show but a long-term effort to support farmers with reliable equipment and practical knowledge. The successful conclusion in Itanagar reflects the growing focus on agricultural development in the Northeast.

Britannia NutriChoice taps Aamir Khan, expands millet portfolio with new Apple Cinnamon cookies

Kohima: The simple dilemma of whether to add sugar to tea is now at the heart of a new campaign by Britannia NutriChoice, urging consumers to recognise how one small good choice can make the next one easier. Joining this relatable journey is Aamir Khan, whose presence adds warmth and humour to everyday decisions in the campaign conceptualised by Lowe Lintas. The brand hopes to spark conversations around mindful snacking and the ripple effect of positive choices. Britannia NutriChoice has also expanded its portfolio with the launch of 100% Millets Apple Cinnamon flavoured cookies*, crafted with millet flour led by jowar, and supported by foxtail and ragi millets. With no added sugar, no palm oil



and no maida, the ₹55 per 100g pack aims to provide a convenient, guilt-free option through modern trade stores and q-commerce platforms in

key metros. Speaking about the association, Aamir Khan said the thought resonated because small choices can gently change the flow of

the day. Senior executives at Britannia echoed that the proposition reflects a real consumer need for accessible, better-ingredient snacks.

ABSLI announces the launch of ABSLI Vision Retirement Solution

Guwahati: Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance Company Limited (“ABSLI”), the life insurance subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital, India’s leading diversified financial services company, has announced the launch of ABSLI Vision Retirement Solution—an innovative and flexible retirement solution offering a regular stream of income for your retirement. ABSLI Vision Retirement Solution is thoughtfully designed to meet the needs of today’s smart retirees. The solution combines the ABSLI’s Guaranteed Annuity Plus, which ensures guaranteed annuity payouts for life, with ABSLI’s Wealth Infinia Plan, which provides equity-linked growth potential to stay ahead of inflation. The solution offers guaranteed payouts till the age of 100, ensuring lifelong financial security, while the equity-linked portion enables better payout prospects with market exposure, unlocking potential of inflation beating income. Customers can choose between two premium allocation options, 60:40 or 50:50 between the guaranteed annuity and market-linked components, and select their preferred income pay-out frequency, such as annual, semi-annual, quarterly, or monthly, to suit their lifestyle and cash flow requirements. The solution also offers death benefit for legacy creation to the next generation. Mr. Kamlesh Rao, MD & CEO, Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance Company Limited, said, “We believe retirement should be a time to live life free from all financial worries. With Aditya Birla Sun Life’s Vision Retirement Solution, individuals can enjoy lifelong income potential that is designed to beat inflation, along with flexible premium options for lasting financial security.” This unique solution is available for people between age 40 to 65 years planning for their retirement income with flexible premium payment term of 7/8/10 years and annual premium starting from Rs.1 Lakh.

Ai+ Smartphone announces NovaFlip, at a price point of under 40,000

Guwahati: Ai+ Smartphone has announced NovaFlip, an innovative addition to the premium flip smartphone market, at a price point of under 40,000. This is in line with the company’s mission to make high-quality technology accessible for everyone. Scheduled for release in Q1 2026, this device marks the beginning of Ai+ Smartphone flagship Nova Series, a collection that merges cutting-edge innovation with affordability. Building on the success of the Nova 5G launch in July 2025, Ai+ Smartphone is expanding its flagship offerings with the Nova Series, featuring models like the Nova Pro, Nova Ultra, Nova Flip, and even a future Fold variant. Each device is intentionally crafted to provide outstanding performance, unique features, and a user experience that sets a new benchmark in the smartphone industry. Unlike conventional smartphones that treat the flip form factor as a hardware novelty, NovaFlip runs on NxtQuantum OS, designed to adapt intelligently across folded and open states. The privacy-first architecture of NxtQuantum OS ensures zero pre-loaded bloatware, no invasive trackers, and complete user control over personal data, prioritising long-term trust over short-term engagement tactics. “Flip smartphones bring back things people genuinely miss: compact-



ness, physical interaction, and a sense of control,” said Madhav Sheth, CEO, Ai+ Smartphone and Founder, NxtQuantum Shift Technologies. “There’s nostalgia in that experience, but there’s also a very modern need behind it.” The NovaFlip launch represents a significant milestone in Ai+ Smartphone’s 5G roadmap, reinforcing the brand’s commitment to diversifying its smartphone portfolio to meet the needs of the premium market while ensuring budget-friendliness. The Q1 launch will unveil NovaFlip with full product details and availability, marking the beginning of Ai+ Smartphone’s flagship Nova series.

Eris Lifesciences organises the IOACON Walkathon 2025 at the Sarusajai Sports Complex, Guwahati

Guwahati: Eris Lifesciences has organised the IOACON Walkathon 2025 on Thursday morning at the Sarusajai Sports Complex, Guwahati. The walkathon was held from 6 am to 8 am and saw participation from orthopaedic doctors attending IOACON 2025. The initiative aimed to draw attention to the importance of bone, joint, and musculoskeletal health. The walkathon was led by fitness enthusiast Milind Soman. Orthopaedic specialists walked together to highlight the role of regular movement, early diagnosis, and timely treatment in managing orthopaedic conditions. The event formed part of Eris Lifesciences’ ongoing efforts to engage with the medical community on awareness-led health initiatives. Orthopaedic health concerns are rising steadily in India. Recent studies suggest that near-

ly 47% of individuals aged 45 years and above reported joint pain, 31% reported back pain and 20% suffered from ankle or foot pain. The prevalence of pain at all the anatomical sites increased with age and was reported higher among females, while poor posture, lack of physical activity, obesity, and increasing screen time are contributing to bone and joint issues even among younger age groups. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Amit Bakshi, Managing Director, Eris Lifesciences, said, “At Eris Lifesciences, we focus strongly on prevention and timely care. The IOACON Walkathon 2025 was planned to keep the conversation around bone and joint health simple and relevant.” Leading the walkathon, Milind Soman said, “Walking is something most people can include in their daily rou-



time, and it plays an important role in maintaining joint health.” Dr. Diganta Phukan, Organising Chairperson, IOACON, said, “Recognising early warning signs and seeking timely advice can prevent long-term disability.” Dr. Chinmoy Das, Organising Secretary, IOACON, added, “Early intervention and a disciplined lifestyle are key to maintaining mobility and quality of life.” The IOACON Walkathon 2025 concluded with participants reiterating the need to encourage active lifestyle, recognize early symptoms and timely orthopaedic care as part of everyday health management.

Truecaller launches a free and powerful AI-powered voicemail experience for Android users in India

Guwahati: Truecaller has launched a free and powerful AI-powered voicemail experience for Android users in India with instant transcription and automatic spam protection. Unlike traditional voicemail, messages are stored directly on the device, offering full control and privacy over recordings. It also offers smart call categorisation, spam filtering, adjustable playback speed, and AI-powered voicemail transcription in 12 Indian languages. Truecaller users can simply set up unlimited voicemail in their Truecaller app for free in a few seconds. By

placing voicemail at the centre of the calling experience, Truecaller is strengthening its position as a daily-use communication platform and its fight against spam and fraud. With Truecaller Voicemail, users can record, store, and play messages directly on their device, without dialing voicemail numbers or remembering PINs. The feature supports a wide range of Indian languages, ensuring deeper personalisation and local relevance. The feature supports transcription in 12 Indian languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada,



Malayalam, Gujarati, Nepali, Punjabi, Sanskrit, and Urdu. Voicemails are transcribed in a few seconds, enabling anyone to read their messages

discreetly or during moments when listening is not convenient. “Traditional voicemail was built for a very different era of communication,” said Rishit Jhunjunwala, CEO, Truecaller. “With Truecaller Voicemail, we are fundamentally rethinking how voice messages fit into everyday life—making them free, device-native, and seamlessly integrated into the calling experience. By enabling on-device storage, instant transcription, spam protection, and support for a wide range of Indian languages, we’re removing the friction and limitations of legacy systems.”

Turmeric or ginger: best for immunity!



Turmeric and ginger are popular herbs with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that may help with pain and digestion. While similar, turmeric and ginger work differently to offer distinct benefits and risks that may affect your health.

For immediate digestive relief, ginger is the better option. Ginger contains compounds called shogaol and gingerols that can relax the digestive tract and help the stomach empty faster, helping relieve digestive discomfort. They can

also help reduce nausea. However, turmeric has been shown to help relieve chronic inflammation. Over time, this may help ease symptoms of digestive conditions like inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

Both turmeric and ginger have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that can help support immunity. They have also both been shown to have an antimicrobial effect that can help prevent illness-causing bacteria and viruses. Some research shows the compound curcumin in turmeric can have a direct effect on the immune response, helping it fight off active infections. Ginger may be helpful with cold and flu symptoms, as it has been shown to ease nausea and sore throat.

Tiny Toxins: The Hidden Damage to Your Skin

The annual pollution problem in North India is no longer just an environmental inconvenience; but a full-scale biological stressor. And the data continues to be sobering. The Air Quality Life Index (AQLI) projected an 8.2-year reduction in life expectancy for Delhi by 2025. It is not merely a statistic, but a reflection of chronic systemic inflammation, particulate-induced oxidative stress, and long-term cardiovascular burden. But beyond this, the pollution also impacts your skin.

Such severe levels of pollution calls for a specific skin care routine or Enhanced Pollution-Protocol Cleanse. Conventional double cleansing is beneficial, but during severe AQI spikes, a modified three-step method can be more effective at removing PM2.5 and PM10 particles. Begin

with micellar water, a gentle, no-rinse skincare product that acts as an all-in-one cleanser. It helps lift surface pollutants without friction. Follow up with an oil or balm cleanser to dissolve lipid-soluble particulates, and finally a gentle, low-pH water-based cleanser to ensure complete removal. The evidence is clear: thorough but non-stripping cleansing reduces the inflammatory effects triggered by pollutant residue. Air pollution increases Transepidermal water loss (TEWL), the natural evaporation of water from the skin's surface. This compromises the stratum corneum or the skin's outermost layer, and



heightens inflammatory cytokines in the skin. This eventually makes barrier repair an absolute non-negotiable during this time of year. Using a formulation containing ceramides, cholesterol, and fatty acids—in the ideal physiological ratio—helps restore structural lipids. Niacinamide (5–10%) is particularly valuable for its anti-inflammatory, barrier-strengthening, and pigment-regulating properties. At night, an occlusive such as petroleum jelly can significantly reduce TEWL and supports overnight recovery.

Given the high oxidative load caused by PM2.5, nitrogen dioxide, and ozone, ad-

vanced antioxidant layering is increasingly relevant. A combination of vitamin C, vitamin E, and ferulic acid in the morning provides protection against free radicals and UV-induced damage. Evening antioxidants such as resveratrol (a powerful antioxidant from grapes, berries, and peanuts,) or pycnogenol further support repair pathways. The use of green tea polyphenols throughout the day offers additional ROS (reactive oxygen species) scavenging benefits. As masks return during high-pollution days, we are observing a rise in occlusive acne or “maskne.” Applying a thin layer of non-nano zinc oxide or using a breathable silicone barrier in high-friction areas can reduce mechanical irritation and moisture-trapping—two primary contributors to these flare-ups.

Nutrition Programs Are Dramatically Transforming Children's Lives

Here's the thing about nutrition: it quietly shapes everything a child can grow into. For many children from underserved backgrounds, a school meal isn't just food, it determines whether they can sit through a lesson with focus, finish their homework with energy, or even make it to school at all.

“When a meal is dependent, attendance rises, concentration improves, and learning finally feels within reach,” says Bipasa Giri, Health Educator and Nutritionist, Lotus Petal Foundation.

Nutrition also helps bridge the health gap created by poverty.

Children who grow up without steady access to healthy food often struggle with weak immunity, chronic fatigue, and delayed growth. “A consistent meal program brings balance back into their lives,” Giri explains. “You begin to see fewer sick days, stronger bodies, and a sense of physical stability that

chronic hunger never allows.” But the impact of good nutrition goes far beyond physical strength. It plays a critical role in cognitive and emotional development. “Adequate nutrition sharpens memory, stabilises emotions, and helps children engage with the world in healthier ways,” says Giri.

A child who isn't fighting hunger is more likely to participate in class, collaborate with peers, and express curiosity. Confidence returns in subtle but powerful ways, clearer answers, thoughtful questions, and the courage to raise a hand.

What this ultimately creates is dignity and opportunity. “A reliable meal gives a child the freedom to focus on learning instead of survival,” notes Giri. “It allows them to walk into school with their head held high and their hopes intact.” Regular health education classes are integrated into the curriculum so children learn not only what to eat, but why nutrition matters. “Education ensures these benefits last beyond the classroom,” adds Giri. A meal doesn't just fill a plate. “It opens a future,” says Giri and that changes everything.



Poor diet fuels major lifestyle diseases

This year has served as a wake-up call for many Indians. Health conditions that once felt distant, something to worry about “later in life” are now appearing among young professionals, new parents, and even people who consider themselves reasonably active. Diabetes, high blood pressure, fatty liver disease, and stubborn weight gain are no longer exceptions; they are becoming part of everyday conversation. What's alarming is not just how common these conditions are tied to daily habits that once seemed harmless, or were even marketed as healthy.

According to Siddhi Kripal, these conditions didn't suddenly appear overnight. They are the result of small, repeated lifestyle choices. “They have slowly grown out of habits that seemed easy, harmless, and sometimes even labelled ‘healthy,’” she explains. Long working hours, dependence on packaged foods, irregular meals, sugary drinks, and low fibre intake quietly add up over the years, eventually showing up as lifestyle diseases. Kripal emphasizes that prevention doesn't require extreme diets or complicated rules. Simple, consistent choices can make a powerful difference.



Control hypertension during winter blood pressure spikes

Winter is often associated with cosy routines, and slower mornings – but for people living with hypertension, the colder months quietly raise cardiovascular risks. Blood pressure readings tend to climb as temperatures drop, making winter a particularly vulnerable period for heart health. This seasonal shift is driven by a combination of physiological responses to cold and lifestyle changes that affect activity, diet, stress, and medication consistency. Understanding how

overall cardiac health. When temperatures fall, our blood vessels constrict in an effort to preserve core body heat.” This increases systemic vascular resistance and forces blood pressure upward. Dr Nirajan Singh, Senior Consultant in Internal Medicine at CK Birla Hospitals, Jaipur, echoes this concern. He notes, “Even a drop of just a few degrees in temperature can impact cardiovascular function.” This constriction means the heart has to work harder, placing extra strain on individuals with existing hypertension, heart disease,



winter impacts blood pressure is the first step toward preventing serious complications.

Explaining the science behind the winter spike, Dr Joy Shome, Senior Consultant in Cardiology and Head of TAVR/TAVI at BM Birla Heart Hospital, Kolkata, says, “Cold weather has a direct and measurable impact on blood pressure and

or advanced age. Beyond the body's response to cold, winter habits often worsen blood pressure control. Dr Shome points out that colder months tend to reduce physical activity, alter medication routines, increase stress levels, and promote festive indulgences in rich, salty foods. Each of these factors independently raises blood pressure, and together, they amplify risk.

Dermatologist explains 'doing less' skincare works



Skin fasting refers to temporarily stopping most skincare products for a short period and allowing the skin to regulate and repair itself naturally. The idea is simple: stop overloading the skin, let it breathe, and allow its own repair mechanisms to take charge. But as the concept gains traction online, one question remains is skin fasting just another viral trend promising quick, flawless skin, or does it hold real dermatological value?

“Skin fasting is more relevant today than it has ever been,” says Dr Ridhima Arora, MBBS, MD (Dermatology & VD), Malik Radix Healthcare Pvt. Ltd. “The current beauty landscape is like a jungle of products, and consumers are often lost in it.” She explains that people are routinely layering retinol, vitamin C, exfoliating acids, niacinamide, peptides, and other ‘actives’ often without understanding compatibility or long-term consequences. According to Dr Arora, this ‘more is better’ approach has led to a silent but widespread issue: skin barrier damage.

Three factories are shut down by the Nagaon District Administration, which also reveals regulatory gaps

Guwahati, Dec 15: In a decisive action, the Nagaon district administration has shut down three illegal tar and bitumen mixing plants in the Puranigudam area, revealing significant failures by the Pollution Control Board. This operation, led by Additional Deputy Commissioner Tejesh Agnihotri, targeted facilities owned by two individuals in response to disturbing complaints from locals concerning severe air and water pollution. Alarming reports indicate that around 40% of the local population faces increased risks of respiratory illnesses



due to prolonged exposure to toxic emissions, while waste from these factories has reportedly polluted the Kolong River, transforming it into a hazardous body of water. During inspections, officials found that none of the three factories possessed valid

pollution control certificates, highlighting the Nagaon Pollution Control Board's neglect in monitoring these operations, which has now attracted public criticism. The immediate sealing of all three facilities underscores the administration's strong

message against environmental negligence and regulatory evasion.

This incident has led to heightened concerns about the long-term health and ecological effects of unchecked industrial activities in the area. The proactive measures taken by the district administration not only ceased illegal operations but also reignited the demand for transparent, responsible, and sustainable industrial practices, emphasizing the necessity for effective environmental regulations and community health protection.

Two of the seven militants detained in Manipur were women



Imphal, Dec 15: Security forces in Manipur have made significant strides in combating militancy and drug trafficking over the past 24 hours, culminating in the arrest of seven militants, including two women. The arrests were executed across various districts, with five members of the proscribed groups United National Liberation Front (UNLF) and People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) taken into custody from locations in Imphal West, Imphal East, and Bishnupur districts. Among those arrested were two active female cadres from the UNLF's Koireng faction, specifically Takhellambam Sanathoi Chanu and Kongbrailakpam Rameshori Devi, both 19 years old, who were apprehended in the Moirangkampu Sajeb Makha Leikai area of Imphal East. Seized alongside them were two mobile phones. In a separate operation, Manipur Police arrested a drug dealer named Baseimayum Yaibi, 47, in the Porompat Pangal Leirak area of Imphal East. From Yaibi, authorities confiscated heroin hidden in seven soap cases, with the drugs valued at approximately Rs 16 lakh. Intelligence-driven operations are underway, involving extensive combing, cordon, and search activities throughout various districts in the Imphal valley and hill regions.

Unauthorized coke factories in the East Jaintia Hills area were dismantled

Unauthorized Coca-Cola plants were destroyed

Shillong, Dec 15: Acting under the directive of the High Court of Meghalaya, the East Jaintia Hills district administration has successfully demolished all 11 remaining unauthorized coke plants in the district, reflecting a significant enforcement action against environmental violations. This initiative was spearheaded by Deputy Commissioner Shivansh Awasthi, who coordinated a joint team led by Sub-Divisional Officer Manish Kumar. The team also included officials from the Meghalaya State Pollution

Control Board and the Police Department, tasked with the demolition operations of illegal coke plants. Initially, 16 coke plants were identified as unlicensed in the district, with five demolished prior to this recent operation. Notices were issued in October 2025 to the owners of the remaining 11 plants, requiring them to submit compliance documentation regarding necessary permissions for legal operation; however, no responses were received. Following the High Court's orders, the demolition commenced on December 13,



2025. As of the latest report, seven of the unauthorized plants have been demolished by the joint teams, and the remaining four were found to have been dismantled by their owners. Consequently, all 11 unauthorized coke plants are now confirmed non-operational, as reported by the Deputy Commissioner.

The first shipment of automobiles to arrive in Mizoram by train

Aizawl, Dec 15: Mizoram's Sairang Railway Station recently marked a historic milestone by handling its first direct inward automobile rake, delivering 119 Maruti cars from Changsari, Assam. This event is set to significantly enhance vehicle availability in Aizawl, reduce reliance on lengthy road transportation, and provide numerous benefits to Mizoram's automobile sector, including local dealers and service providers. The Indian Railways affirmed that this accomplishment aligns with its commitment to improving connectivity and supporting regional growth across India. The newly inaugurated Bairabi-Sairang railway line, extending 51.38 km through challenging terrain with 45 tunnels, represents a vital infrastructural development for Mizoram, facilitating its strategic integration into the



national transport network. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the line on September 13 and flagged off three important train services: the Rajdhani Express to Delhi, the Mizoram Express to Guwahati, and an Express service to Kolkata. The new services have been well-received, with occupancy rates indicating high passenger demand; for instance, the Rajdhani Express has operated at 147% capacity. Following the inauguration, freight operations commenced, with the first freight movement occurring on September 14, transporting 21 cement wagons from Assam to Aizawl.

President Droupadi Murmu presents TSECL with the "Energy Conservation Award"

Agartala, Dec 15: The Tripura State Electricity Corporation Limited (TSECL) was honored with the Energy Conservation Award by President Droupadi Murmu during the National Energy Conservation Day celebration in Delhi. This recognition highlights TSECL's commitment to energy conservation and sustainability efforts within the state, showcasing its role in promoting efficient energy use. After achieving first place in the Group 4 category at the National Energy Conservation Awards in 2024, Tripura garnered second place in the Group 5 category in 2025, marking significant success for the small northeastern state in energy efficiency. The awards were presented at a ceremony at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi, with President Droupadi Murmu emphasizing the ne-

Arunachal Pradesh: Panchayat & civic elections are scheduled

Itanagar, Dec 15: The upcoming elections for the panchayati raj institutions and civic bodies in Itanagar and Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh, are set to take place, with preparations in place for a secure voting process. Authorities have deployed more than 40,000 personnel to facilitate the smooth conduct of the elections. Polling is scheduled to commence at 7 am and will run until 4 pm, as confirmed by State Election Commissioner Rinchin Tashi. The ruling BJP has achieved a dominant position by winning 58 zilla parishad constituencies unopposed, while the National People's Party (NPP) secured one seat. Additionally, four BJP candidates were elected unopposed to the Itanagar Municipal Corporation (IMC). A significant number of 5,037 BJP candidates for gram panchayat seats have also been declared elected without contest. Overall, the elections for 186 zilla parishad seats have 440 candidates vying for positions, with 39 candidates contesting for 16 IMC wards and another 21 candidates for eight wards in the Pasighat Municipal Council (PMC).

However, the State Election Commission (SEC) noted that 13 gram panchayat constituencies received no nominations, and the scrutiny process led to the rejection of all nominations in an additional



14 gram panchayat constituencies. Furthermore, polling for the Dumba Singpho gram panchayat seat has been canceled due to the passing of a candidate, highlighting challenges faced during the electoral process. Altogether, 831,648 voters are eligible for the upcoming elections, with 759,210 for panchayat bodies and 72,438 for municipal elections. There will be 2,171 polling stations for panchayat elections, 67 for the IMC, and 12 for the PMC. Notably, female voters outnumber male voters in the panchayat polls. Upper Subansiri district has the most panchayat voters (58,764), while Dibang Valley has the least (3,854). In municipal polls, Itanagar's Ward 19 has the highest number of voters (5,106), and Pasighat's Ward 6 has the lowest (812). Over 40,000 personnel, including 15,000 polling staff, are deployed to ensure smooth conduct, with special security in sensitive districts. EVMs will be used for municipal polls, while ballot boxes will be employed for panchayat voting. Vote counting is scheduled for December 20.



cessity of energy conservation and India's progress in clean energy initiatives. She noted that energy savings reflect responsibility towards nature and future generations. Union Minister for Power, Manohar Lal, praised the awards as evidencing the synergy between development and environmental protection, highlighting the participation of students in the National Painting Competition on Energy Conservation,

which raised awareness on the topic. The State Performance Award for Energy Efficiency placed Tripura second in a group that included 11 states and union territories, evaluated based on the State Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI) 2025 across various sectors including buildings, industry, and transport, with a total of 36 states and union territories assessed for the financial year 2024-25.

The third protech Guwahati Football Premier League is marked with goal fest

Football Premier League

Guwahati, Dec 15: The 3rd Protech Guwahati Football Premier League showcased two exciting matches on Sunday, highlighted by high scoring and competitive play. In the first match, DBI triumphed over Pride East Mavericks with a score of 5-2. The game's opening saw DBI secure an early lead through Bishnu Rabha in the 11th minute. Pride East Mavericks equalized in the 19th minute thanks to Warjit Ali and then took the lead just before halftime when L. Prosonanda scored in the 41st minute. However, DBI responded vigorously in the second half, netting four goals from Fairming Suting, Bikash Deka, L. Syiemlieh, and Donald Diengdho, thereby clinching a definitive victory. The



second match was an exhilarating encounter where FC Green Valley overwhelmed NFRSA with a score of 6-2. Green Valley set the tone from the start, leading 2-0 at halftime. They further asserted their dominance in the second half, scoring another four goals. N. Pritam Singh

was instrumental, earning a hat-trick, while S. Haokip, K. Phalgun Singh, and N. Henery Singh each contributed a goal. NFRSA managed to score two consolation goals through Sibra Narzary and Sudir Laitonjam, but it was not enough to change the outcome of the match.

Odisha Masters 2025: Kiran George and Unnati Hooda win singles championships

New Delhi, Dec 15: On the final day of the Odisha Masters 2025, a BWF World Tour Super 100 tournament, held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, the top seeds excelled with Unnati Hooda and Kiran George winning the women's and men's singles titles. In the women's singles final, Hooda, demonstrating exceptional composure, defeated compatriot Isharani Baruah with a score of 21-17, 21-10 in just over half an hour. Hooda efficiently controlled the rallies, neutralizing Baruah's previous momentum that had propelled her through to the final. Despite her loss, Baruah concluded a remarkable week with a silver medal, showcasing her talent through several impressive performances.



The men's singles final featured a competitive match where second seed Kiran George faced Indonesia's Muhamad Yusuf. After winning the first game 21-14, George faced a resurgence from Yusuf, who leveled the match. Nevertheless, George displayed notable resilience and tactical savvy to clinch the deciding game 21-16, securing the championship after an hour on court. In the mixed doubles category, Indonesia's Marwan Faza and Aisyah Pranata triumphed over compa-

triotis Dejan Ferdinansyah and Bernadine Wardana with a decisive score of 21-15, 21-10. Meanwhile, in women's doubles, Bulgaria's top seeds, Gabriela and Stefani Stoeva, emerged victorious against Malaysia's Ong Xin Yee and Carmen Ting, winning 21-19, 21-14. The men's doubles title went to Indonesia's pair of Ali Faathir Rayhan and Devin Artha Wahyudi, who managed a comeback against Malaysia's Khang Khai Xing and Aaron Tai, finishing with a score of 15-21, 21-12, 21-16.

India defeats Pakistan by 90 runs thanks to George, Deepesh, & Chouhan



New Delhi, Dec 15: Aar-on George led India's victory over Pakistan in the U19 Men's Asia Cup with a top score of 85 runs, contributing significantly to a total of 240 in 46.1 overs. The match, held at the ICC Academy Ground, saw disciplined bowling performances, particularly from all-rounder Kanishk Chouhan and pacer Deepesh Devendran, both of whom took three wickets, culminating in India securing a 90-run win that propelled them into the semi-finals.

Captain Ayush Mhatre also made a noteworthy contribution with a brisk 38 runs, and Chouhan added a quick-

fire 46, with sixes and fours lifting India to a competitive score. In response, Pakistan's batting faltered early, losing four wickets for just 30 runs due to Devendran's impactful bowling. Despite Huzaifa Ahsan's commendable effort of 70 runs from 83 balls, he received minimal support from his teammates, and the team was ultimately bowled out for 150 in 41.2 overs. The match was marked by the continuation of a 'no-handshake' protocol, with both teams avoiding handshakes during the toss and post-match, following a trend observed in other recent international fixtures involving India.

India wins the Squash World Cup for the first time in front of an ecstatic home audience

Mumbai, Dec 15: On a victorious note, India's squash team has triumphed in the Squash World Cup, achieving a 3-0 victory over Hong Kong, China in the final held in Chennai at Express Avenue Mall. This marks India's first title win in three World Cup appearances at home, resolving past disappointments. Key player Joshna Chinappa expressed immense joy at winning her first world title, ranking it among her top career moments. Rath-



er than feeling nervous, she was energized by the home crowd's support. Abhay Singh, another team member, described the experience as "unbelievable," celebrating the collaboration with his "legendary

teammates." Teenage star Anahat Singh concluded the dominant match with a decisive victory over Tomato Ho, while Chinappa's match showcased strong crowd support, celebrated upon overcoming her opponent, Ki Ya Lee.

Abhay Singh demonstrated his prowess by defeating Alex Leung in a quick 19-minute match. Anahat's victory came after a challenging semifinal, successfully clinching the title for India.

Perhaps you can't claim that Gukesh is the world's absolute best: Caruana

Mumbai, Dec 15: Fabiano Caruana, a prominent chess player ranked No. 3 globally with a rating of 2795, is regarded as one of the top contenders in the chess world despite only having advanced to the title match once, in 2018 against Magnus Carlsen. He is set to compete in his sixth consecutive Candidates Tournament in 2026, where he is expected to face strong competition, including fellow competitor Hikaru Nakamura. Caruana acknowledges the toughness of the Candidates, emphasizing that every opponent is fiercely motivated and seasoned. He considers R Praggnanandhaa, the only Indian participant in the upcoming Candidates, as a potential contender due to his experience despite not wanting to label any player as a favorite. Discussion in the chess community has also centered around D Gukesh, the current world champion, whose reign has been under scrutiny compared to that of



Ding Liren. Caruana suggests that Gukesh, while having a challenging year, performs at a higher level than Ding did during his turbulent championship period. Furthermore, during a recent tournament, Caruana's team faced a loss against Triveni Continental Kings, with both he and Anish Giri losing their games, ultimately marking a disappointing start for the Alpine SG Pipers. Overall, Caruana reflects on the competitive environment and the evolving narratives surrounding the current champions in the chess landscape.

In Dharamsala, India defeated South Africa



New Delhi, Dec 15: In a T20I match at HPCA Stadium, Dharamsala, India defeated South Africa by seven wickets, taking a 2-1 lead in the series. South Africa struggled to score due to India's strong bowling attack, finishing at 117 runs with early collapses at 30/4. Key bowlers included Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana, Varun Chakravarthy, and Kuldeep Yadav, each taking two wickets, while Hardik Pandya and Shivam Dube contributed one wicket each. During the chase, Abhishek Sharma played a crucial role, scoring 35 off 18 balls, supported by Shubman Gill's 28 and Tilak Varma's unbeaten 25. Suryakumar Yadav added 12 runs, and Shivam Dube finished not out with 10 runs. Aiden Markram was South Africa's top scorer with 61 runs but received minimal support from his teammates. India's bowlers, especially Arshdeep Singh, made early breakthroughs, and despite a spirited effort from Markram, the South African innings ended short.