



THE MILEAGE

THURSDAY 12 DECEMBER 2024 | GUWAHATI | AIZAWL | IMPHAL | ITANAGAR | PAGES 06 | Rs 3.00



VOL 6, ISSUE 45

BRIEF NEWS

SC relaxes Sisodia's bail terms

New Delhi
The Supreme Court on Wednesday relaxed the bail conditions for former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in the liquor policy case, Eliminates weekly reporting.

Family of 3 dies

Jaipur
Three members of a family died from food poisoning after drinking tea containing pesticide in Rajasthan's Banswara district, police said on Monday.

Bomb Hoax At Delhi's 44 Schools

New Delhi
The email issuing bomb threat to 44 Delhi schools has been sent using a Virtual Private Network (VPN), similar to the earlier cases.



Cold Wave Warning for Delhi, Parts of North India from This Week; Shimla Receives Season's First Snowfall - (PTI)

AAP Releases Second List of 20 Candidates for Delhi Polls

Sisodia to contest from Jangpura

New Delhi
The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Monday (December 9) released the second list of 20 candidates for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections 2025.

The list includes former Dy CM Manish Sisodia to contest from Jangpura and Avadh Ojha from Patparganj.

The list also consists names of Jintender Singh Shunty (fielded from Shahdara) and Surinder Pal Singh Bittu (Timarpur), who

recently quit the BJP to join the Arvind Kejriwal -led party.

Furthermore, Shunty replaced sitting AAP MLA and Speaker in the outgoing Assembly Ram Niwas Goel, while Bittu has been fielded in place of Dilip Pandey, AAP's chief whip in the house. The AAP had announced 11 candidates in its first list for the polls. The list includes six leaders from the BJP and Congress, who had recently switched to the Arvind Kejriwal-led party, figured in the list.

AAP To Contest Delhi Election Alone, no alliance with Congress: Kejriwal

In the 2015 and 2020 Delhi Assembly polls, the AAP won 67 and 62 seats

New Delhi: Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will be contesting the Delhi election alone, said former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday adding that "there is no possibility of any alliance with the Congress."

"Aam Aadmi Party will be fighting this election on its own strength in Delhi. There is no possibility of any alliance with Congress," Kejriwal posted on X.

His reaction comes amid media reports that the two parties were likely to have a tie up for the 70-member Delhi Assembly polls due in February.

Earlier this month also, Kejriwal had ruled out the possibility of the alliance between the AAP and the Congress for the Delhi elections.

The recent buzz over alliance between the two Indian National Developmental



Arvind Kejriwal speaks inside the AAP headquarters

Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) partners was fuelled by cancellation of the Congress' 'Nyay Chaupal' event scheduled on Wednesday in which party leader Rahul Gandhi was to participate.

The event was to be held as culmination of the "Nyay Yatra" taken out by the Delhi Congress across Delhi ahead of the assembly polls.

These developments were seen as the Congress and AAP making their moves cautiously in view

of the upcoming Delhi polls so that the future options remain open, sources said.

The AAP and Congress fought the Lok Sabha elections in Delhi together earlier this year but lost on all the seven seats against the BJP. However, they failed to reach a seat-sharing agreement ahead of the Haryana Assembly polls in October despite several rounds of talks.

The AAP has so far released two lists of its total 31 candidates so far.

Various ISKCON properties attacked in Bangladesh in 4 months

ISKCON alleges its centre in Bangladesh capital Dhaka burnt down, 'idols set ablaze'

New Delhi

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) on Saturday alleged that its centre in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka was burnt down earlier in the day.

ISKCON's Kolkata vice president Radharamn Das said in an X post, "ISKCON Namhatta Centre burned down in Bangladesh. The deities of Sri Sri Laxmi Narayan and all items inside the temple were burned down completely. The centre is located in Dhaka."

"Early morning today, between 2-3 AM, miscreants set fire to the Shri Shri Radha Krishna Temple and the Shri Shri Mahabhagya Lakshmi Narayan Temple, which fall under the Hare Krishna Namhatta Sangha, located in Dhaur vil-

lage, under the jurisdiction of Turag Police Station, attention of the interim government in Bangla-



Dhaka district," Das added.

"The fire was initiated by lifting the tin roof at the back of the temple and using petrol or octane. Address: H-02, R-05, Ward-54, DNCC, Dhaka 1230," he said.

Later, Das told PTI that targeted attacks on members of the community go on "unabated, adding that despite ISKCON drawing

desh, "not much is being done by the police and administration to assuage their grievances and address their concern."

Bangladesh has witnessed an increase in attacks on minorities, particularly Hindus ever since the interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus took over after the collapse of Sheikh Hasina's regime in August.

Shimla sees first snowfall, cold wave grips North India

New Delhi: Delhi is gearing up for chilly days ahead, with the weather agency predicting a cold wave starting today. The national capital woke up to a foggy morning, with the minimum temperature expected to be 8 degrees Celsius and the maximum around 24 degrees Celsius.

According to reports, temperatures are likely to drop sharply to as low as 6 degrees Celsius by December 10, as forecasted by the India Meteorological Department (IMD). Neighboring northern states such as Punjab, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh will also feel the chill, with the cold wave expected to persist until December 14.

Kiren Rijiju Urges Congress and Others to Unite Against Sonia Gandhi-George Soros 'Links

New Delhi

A day after the BJP alleged that Congress leader Sonia Gandhi had links to the George Soros Foundation, which has allegedly supported anti-India stances, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, referring to the same on Monday, said that everyone should unite against forces working against India.

"The issue that has come to light in the country right now is George Soros. Whether it is the name of Sonia Gandhi or Rahul Gandhi," Rijiju said. His comments came at a time when Congress was protesting inside and outside Parliament, demanding discussion over businessman Gautam Adani's indictment in the US.

"I want to tell the leaders of the Congress party that everyone should unite



against the forces working against India. The issue of George Soros has already been raised in Parliament," the minister said at a press conference.

He added, "I want to appeal to the leaders of the Congress party and its workers that if even their leaders are found to have links with anti-India forces, they also should raise their voices".

The Parliamentary Affairs Minister claimed that the BJP "does not see this issue politically" and stressed that "we want to run the House".

"We do not see it as an issue relating to the Congress party, Rahul Gandhi.

Rising religious violence over minorities, this decision was made Hotels in Barak Valley refuse lodging to B'desh nationals amid attacks on Hindus

Guwahati

Hotels in Barak Valley of Assam have announced they would not host any Bangladesh national till attacks on Hindus and other minorities in the neighbouring country stop.

Barak Valley, which comprises three districts of Cachar, Sribhumi (formerly Karimganj) and Hailakandi, shares a 129-km-long border with Bangladesh's Sylhet region.

"The situation of Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh is concerning. We cannot accept this in



any way. We have, therefore, decided to stop hosting any national from that country in all three districts of Barak Valley until the situation improves and atrocities on the Hindus stop.

This is our form of protest," Barak Valley Hotel and Restaurant Association president Babul Rai told reporters on Friday.

"The people of Bangla-

desh must ensure that stability returns to the country. Only if the situation improves, we can reconsider our decision," he said.

A few days ago, Sribhumi District Hotel Association has banned Bangladeshi nationals from staying at their hotels, citing recent incidents of religious persecution and minority harassment in Bangladesh.

The association emphasised the temporary nature of the ban, which will remain in effect until the situation in Bangladesh normalises.

Kurung Kumey District starts 100- Day TB Elimination Drive



Arunachal Pradesh

Kurung Kumey district in Arunachal Pradesh has launched a 100-day campaign under India's National TB Elimination Program, aimed at eradicating tuberculosis (TB) by 2025.

The campaign commenced with mass awareness rallies and the Nikshay Shapath oath, calling for collective action to

combat the disease.

With the slogan "TB Harega, Desh Jeetega," the drive focuses on educating the public about TB prevention, early detection, and treatment.

This initiative aligns with the national vision of a #TBMuktBharat (TB-Free India) and #TBMuktArunachal, highlighting the district's commitment to eliminating TB and promoting public health.

The campaign represents a crucial step in India's efforts to eliminate tuberculosis, underscoring the importance of community involvement in achieving a TB-free nation.

Myanmar man arrested with unaccounted cash



Aizawl

A huge amount of unaccounted cash was recovered by police and security personnel in Champhai, Mizoram.

Sources said that acting on a specific input, personnel of Assam Rifles in collaboration with Mizoram Police seized unaccounted Indian currency notes worth Rs 1.24 crore at Ngur village in Champhai, Mizoram.

During the operation, the team also apprehended a Myanmar national.

The 26-year-old was identified as Lianbiaksang.

The seized unaccounted cash were in the denominations of 500, 200 and 100 notes, an Assam Rifles statement said.

The seized cash was handed over to the police for further investigation.

It has been suspected that the cash may be gained from illicit business activities.

The police are also trying to find a link between cross-border crime networks.

Asia's largest spoken festival debuts at Shillong's Wards Lake

Shillong

Asia's largest spoken festival was held for the first time at Wards Lake in Shillong, Meghalaya, offering an opportunity for poets, writers, and storytellers to elaborate on their work and exchange ideas with other artists. The event also provided a platform for Meghalaya's budding talent. The venue came alive with raw energy, unfiltered stories, and voices at the festival, supported by the Department of Tourism, Government of Meghalaya. Tourism Minister Paul Lyngdoh, along with Tourism Director Cyril VD Diengdoh attended the event.

Speaking at the event, Paul Lyngdoh expressed his gratitude to the local population for their support and the collaboration of groups and enthusiasts like Kommune and the artists, further stating, "It is indeed a moment of joy and ecstasy for us in the department to see that experiential tourism and the arts and culture are getting a fresh lease of life in Meghalaya". Lyngdoh stated that the indigenous tribes of Meghalaya have a long history of oral tradition; the stories, myths and legends are an old part of the history of the state even before introduction to the written word.

Tripura health team delivers baby girl after 2-km journey

Agartala

A remarkable rescue operation led by health workers in Tripura ensured the safe delivery of a pregnant woman from the remote village of Samaruchara, located in Unakoti district.

The woman, 22, had gone into labour on the morning of December 3 while in her village, which lacks accessible roads. Having attended regular prenatal check-ups at the Nishiranjan Nandita Memorial Primary Health Center, she quickly sought help

when labour began. Local health workers conducted a preliminary examination and advised immediate medical attention. However, due to the village's rugged terrain, transport was a major challenge.

Displaying extraordinary resourcefulness, the health workers, with help from the woman's family, created a makeshift swing using bamboo and cloth. They carried her for two kilometers through difficult paths until they reached a motorable area. From there, she was transported by vehicle.

Meghalaya BJP MLA Sanbor Shullai slams Assam government's beef ban

Shillong

Meghalaya BJP leader and MLA Sanbor Shullai has strongly criticized the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led Assam government's recent decision to ban the consumption of beef in hotels and public places, calling it a violation of personal choice and constitutional rights.

Shullai condemned the move, asserting that the Constitution of India does not impose any restrictions on the consumption of beef. "When you travel to



different countries, people eat snakes, rats, and even insects. It is their personal choice. Why should anyone restrict people from consuming beef?" he remarked.

Expressing his firm opposition, Shullai stated that he would soon bring the matter to the attention of the BJP central leadership. He emphasized that in Me-

ghalaya, people are free to eat what they like.

"I used to eat dog meat when I was young, and recently, one of my friends sent me some, which I enjoyed with my wife. I will never allow such a diktat to be enforced in Meghalaya as long as I am alive," he declared.

Shullai also highlighted that his approach as a BJP leader differs from that of his counterparts in Assam.

He plans to condemn Assam government's move in a letter to BJP leadership and CM Sarma.

Assam Rifles DG meets Meghalaya CM

Shillong

Lieutenant General Vikas Lakhera, AVSM, SM, Director General of Assam Rifles, met with Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma to discuss matters of development and civil-military coordination in the state.

The meeting focused on enhancing Assam Rifles' role in supporting developmental initiatives and maintaining regional stability. Chief Minister Sangma commended the Assam Rifles for their ongoing contributions to the state's progress and security.

■ This expansion increases the Council of Ministers to 20 members

Himanta Biswa Sarma expands cabinet, 4 new ministers take oath

Guwahati

CM Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday expanded his cabinet with four ministers taking oath.

Assam Governor Laxman Prasad Acharya administered the oath of office to the four new ministers - Prasanta Phookan, Kaushik Rai, Krishnendu Paul, and Rupesh Goala. All of them are BJP legislators.

The chief minister and members of his cabinet were present on the occasion. Phukan is a four-



time MLA from Dibrugarh, Paul a two-time MLA from Patharkandi while Rai and Goala are first-time MLAs from Lakhimpur and Doom Dooma respectively.

This cabinet expansion

reflects the Assam government's commitment to inclusive development and balanced regional representation, aiming to accelerate progress across the state.

Nissan boosts customer service with advanced training centre in Chennai

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. (NMIPL) has launched its first National Training Centre, the Nissan Academy, in Chennai. This 10,500-square-foot facility at the Alliance JV plant is set to upskill over 1,000 dealership and service technicians annually, enhancing after-sales service quality nationwide. The initiative underscores Nissan's commitment to customer experience and operational excellence.

The state-of-the-art Nissan Academy features a cutting-edge mechanical workshop for hands-on training in vehicle diagnostics, repairs,

and aggregate overhauling, alongside a modern body shop equipped with advanced tools for comprehensive repair techniques. Frank Torres, Divisional Vice President of the AMIEO Region and President of Nissan India Operations, inaugurated the academy, emphasizing its role in reinforcing Nissan's service network. "This facility reflects our dedication to delivering unmatched service quality and customer satisfaction across India," Torres stated. In Guwahati, the training centre's impact is anticipated to enhance cus-

tomers trust and loyalty. With skilled technicians addressing diverse service needs, Nissan aims to strengthen its presence in the competitive northeastern market, particularly in Guwahati's fast-evolving automotive sector. Nissan's \$1.8 billion investment in India, in partnership with Renault, has facilitated over 70,000 employment opportunities. Coupled with recent launches like the New Nissan Magnite, the Nissan Academy reinforces the company's 'One Car, One World' philosophy and long-term vision for the Indian market.

Nissan expands leadership team, appoints Abhishek Arora as Director of DND-CQT

Guwahati: Nissan Motor India (NMIPL) has strengthened its leadership structure with the appointment and role expansion of Abhishek Arora as Director – Dealer Network Development and Customer Quality Training (DND-CQT). Effective November 14, 2024, Arora will also continue as Director – Transformation and New Projects, a position he has held since September 2024.

In his expanded role, Arora will lead Nissan's channel development and management, focusing on strategic initiatives to en-



hance the brand's readiness for upcoming product launches. His extensive experience in managing premium automotive networks, including key roles at Audi India, General Motors, and Tata Motors, positions him as a pivotal leader in Nissan's India

strategy. Saurabh Vatsa, Managing Director of NMIPL said, "His leadership will ensure we are well-positioned for growth, enhancing customer experience and strengthening our network capabilities."

In Guwahati, Nissan's efforts to expand and refine its dealer network are poised to meet the region's growing appetite for premium vehicles. The city, with its vibrant automotive market, is expected to benefit from improved customer service and enhanced product accessibility under Arora's leadership.

Bajaj Finserv AMC launches 'Bajaj Finserv Healthcare Fund' to harness growth in India's healthcare sector

Guwahati: Bajaj Finserv Asset Management Company (AMC) has officially launched the Bajaj Finserv Healthcare Fund, a new open-ended equity scheme aimed at capitalizing on the robust growth within India's healthcare and wellness sectors. The fund will open for subscription on December 6th and close on December 20th, 2024.

The scheme primarily in-

vests in companies within the pharmaceuticals, hospitals, diagnostics, and wellness industries, with a focus on long-term wealth creation. The fund is benchmarked against the BSE Healthcare Total Return Index (TRI) and targets an investment horizon of five years or more. It aims to invest at least 80% in companies that belong to sectors forming part of the BSE Healthcare TRI,

aligning with India's evolving healthcare landscape.

Ganesh Mohan, CEO of Bajaj Finserv AMC, said, "The healthcare sector is poised for significant growth, and our fund aims to leverage this transformation to deliver long-term benefits to our investors." Nimesh Chandan, CIO at Bajaj Finserv AMC, highlighted the potential for sustained wealth creation, driven by healthcare meg-

trends.

In Guwahati, healthcare infrastructure is expanding rapidly, driven by rising demand for quality healthcare services.

The Bajaj Finserv Healthcare Fund is well-positioned to benefit from the city's growing healthcare investments, offering investors in Guwahati a promising opportunity to capitalize on the sector's long-term growth.

Honda's road safety drive engages Dimapur's youth



Dimapur: Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India (HMSI) reinforced its commitment to road safety with a campaign in Dimapur, Nagaland, educating over 1,900 students and staff from Livingstone Foundation International, Shalom Public School, and Sakus Mission College. The initiative aimed to foster a culture of responsible road use among young individuals.

The campaign featured interactive activities such as theoretical lessons on safe riding, danger prediction training, helmet awareness sessions, and practical exercises using Riding Trainers. HMSI's innovative approach combined education with engagement, making road safety lessons impactful and memorable. An HMSI spokesperson remarked, "Through these campaigns, we aim to create a generation of responsible road users and contribute to safer roads across the country."

Dimapur's bustling market, a commercial lifeline for Nagaland, highlights the importance of road safety

in ensuring uninterrupted trade and public safety. By targeting the younger demographic, HMSI aims to build a foundation for a safer community, directly benefiting the local economy and daily life in Dimapur.

Aligned with the Government of India's goal to reduce road fatalities by half by 2030, HMSI's efforts extend beyond campaigns. Its E-Gurukul platform and traffic training parks have already reached over 8.5 million people nationwide. With a vision for zero traffic fatalities involving its vehicles by 2050, HMSI continues to lead the way in road safety education.

HMSI's campaign in Dimapur is part of its broader mission to align with the Government of India's vision of halving road fatalities by 2030. Through ongoing efforts, including its digital E-Gurukul platform and traffic training parks, HMSI has reached over 8.5 million people across the country. The company's long-term vision aims to achieve zero traffic collision fatalities involving its vehicles by 2050.

Courtyard by Marriott Shillong ushers in festivities with grand celebration

Shillong: Courtyard by Marriott Shillong marked the beginning of the holiday season with its Second Edition of the Cake Mixing and Tree Lighting Ceremony on December 8, 2024. The event brought together dignitaries, loyal patrons, and community members, setting a festive tone with a blend of tradition and innovation.

The hotel transformed into a winter wonderland, with a magnificent Christmas tree and dazzling decorations creating an enchanting ambiance. Esteemed guests such as East Khasi Hills Deputy Commissioner Smt. Rosette Kurbah, Archbishop Victor Lyngdoh, and MDC BajopPyngrope graced the occasion, adding to its grandeur.

The Cake Mixing Ceremony symbolized unity, with participants enthusias-



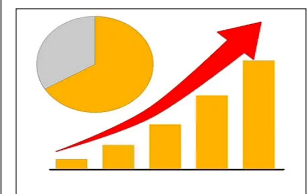
tically preparing the base for Christmas cakes. This was followed by the Poolside Tree Lighting Ceremony, where carol singing and a lively countdown illuminated the festive tree, spreading warmth and cheer.

The evening featured the launch of the Shillong Baking Company's new menu, offering innovative dishes like Avoc-Broc Vegan Salad and Pulled Barbeque

Chicken Calzone, complemented by handcrafted Christmas hampers. Live performances, including music by the Colours band, and Santa Claus's presence delighted attendees of all ages.

"Our aim is to create magical moments that celebrate community and the festive spirit," said Tushar Nagar, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Shillong.

Retail vehicle sales jump 11.2 percent in November



New Delhi: Retail vehicle sales in India rose 11.21 per cent year-on-year in November to 3.21 million units, buoyed by a strong demand for two-wheelers, according to data from the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) released on Monday. Total sales stood at 3,208,719 units, up from 2,885,317 units in November 2023.

Two-wheeler sales jumped 15.8 per cent to 2,615,953 units, compared with 2,258,970 units a year ago, helped by the lingering impact of the festive season, FADA said.

Aster CMI Hospital partners with the Govt of Arunachal Pradesh



Itanagar: Aster CMI Hospital has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Arunachal Pradesh to provide life-saving liver transplantation services at an affordable cost. This initiative is set to benefit patients with end-stage liver disease, particularly children suffering from congenital liver conditions like biliary atresia or genetic defects. Liver transplantation is critical for survival in such cases, offering a 95% success rate, especially in children when a living donor from the family is available.

Aster CMI Hospital, in collaboration with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and crowdfunding platforms, has developed the largest

affordable pediatric liver transplant program in the country. The Aster Integrated Liver Care team, one of the nation's largest, has collectively performed over 1,000 liver transplants, including successful procedures for infants weighing less than 5 kilograms—an exceptional milestone in India. Dr. Sonal Asthana, Lead Consultant, HPB & Liver Transplant Surgery, Aster CMI Hospital, shared: "This collaboration is a testament to our commitment to making liver transplantation accessible and affordable for all." Lakshmanan, COO of Aster CMI Hospital, also remarked: "At Aster CMI, our mission is to make world-class healthcare accessible to all."

ADB slashes India's FY25 growth forecast to 6.5%, 7% in FY26



New Delhi: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Wednesday lowered India's economic growth forecast to 6.5 per cent for the current financial year from its earlier estimate of 7 per cent due to lower-than-expected growth in private investment and housing demand.

The multilateral development bank has also lowered India's growth forecast for 2025-26 financial year.

Changes in US trade, fiscal, and immigration policies could dent growth and add to inflation in developing Asia and the Pacific, according to the latest edi-

tion of Asian Development Outlook (ADO).

The report also said Asia and the Pacific's economies are projected to grow 4.9 per cent in 2024, slightly below ADB's September forecast of 5 per cent.

"India's outlook is adjusted downward from 7 per cent to 6.5 per cent for this year, and from 7.2 per cent to 7 per cent next year, due to lower-than-expected growth in private investment and housing demand," ADB said.

Last week, the Reserve Bank also significantly lowered the growth projection for current fiscal year to 6.6 per cent from 7.2 per cent

Vi Business launches Easy+, a new creative proposition on corporate post-paid plans

Mumbai: Vi Business, the enterprise arm of the leading telecom operator Vodafone Idea (Vi), has launched Easy+, a new innovative proposition on corporate post-paid plans, offering subscribers an option to select and purchase services like International roaming, OTT Subscriptions and others for their personal needs on their existing corporate plans. This service can be availed by downloading the Vi App. This first-of-its-



kind proposition introduces a simplified approach by making it seamless for

employees to purchase services of their choice on their corporate post-paid plans, thus enhancing the overall customer experience.

Commenting on the launch, Rorerich Kaushal, Executive Vice President, Enterprise Mobility Business & Marketing, said, "With Easy+, Vi Business is taking the lead to trans-

form corporate postpaid plan experience by giving employees the flexibility to select and buy services for their personal needs. In the upcoming holiday season, we look forward to our customers using Easy+ for international roaming packs, enjoying the ease and convenience it offers on their corporate post-paid plans". Vi Business's Easy+ offers include: International Roaming, OTT Subscriptions, Gifting Feature.

NSDC International and Sampo Care partner to elevate caregiver training in India

Guwahati: NSDC International has announced landmark collaboration with Sampo Care Inc. to enhance caregiver training in India and open doors to international opportunities, particularly in Japan. As part of this partnership, a cutting-edge Nursing Care Lab has been inaugurated at NSDCI's Greater Noida training center. The facility will provide a blend of practical caregiving skills training and Japanese language programs to prepare Indian caregivers for global roles, especially in Japan, where there is a high demand for skilled professionals.

Shri Ved Mani Tiwari, COO (Officiating CEO), NSDC & MD, NSDC International, expressed excitement over the collaboration, saying, "We aim to



bridge the gap in healthcare services by enhancing the skills of Indian nursing personnel and providing them with valuable opportunities in Japan's healthcare system." The nine-month program combines language and caregiving training, with the first cohort of 75 candidates set to begin.

This initiative is expected to have a significant impact

on the Guwahati healthcare sector, creating new pathways for caregivers from the region. The collaboration offers Guwahati's skilled workforce access to international job markets, especially in Japan, addressing the growing demand for caregivers globally. This partnership marks a step forward in strengthening India's presence in the global caregiving industry.

Startup contribution to economy hit \$1T by 2030

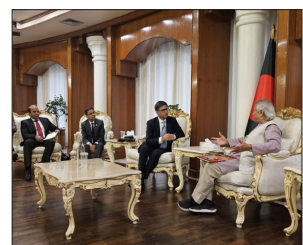
Bengaluru: From FY16 to FY23, startups contributed 10 to 15 per cent to India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth, according to KPMG's whitepaper, Exploring India's Dynamic Start-up Ecosystem.

In FY23, startups contributed about \$140 billion to the economy, a figure projected to reach \$1 trillion by 2030, according to the whitepaper unveiled by consulting company KPMG at the TiE Global Summit. India's startup ecosystem has grown significantly over the past decade due to a vast consumer market, supportive government policies, a surge in venture capital (VC) funding, talent availability, and the younger generation's entrepreneurial spirit. A strong network of incubators and accelerators further supports startups' growth.

As of June 2024, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) recognised 1,40,803 startups, leading to the creation of over 15.5 lakh direct jobs. DPIIT has also recognised startups from 56 diverse sectors. As of October 3, 2023, IT services accounted for the highest number of startups at 13 per cent, followed by healthcare and life sciences at 9 per cent, and education at 7 per cent. India's startup ecosystem, valued at over \$349 billion, ranks third globally in unicorn count as of May 2024.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Misri expresses concern over attacks on minorities

Guwahati: On an official visit to Bangladesh, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri has met with Dr. Muhammad Yunus, Chief Advisor to Bangladesh's interim government, and Foreign Affairs Advisor Mohammad Touhid Hussain. During the meetings, Mr. Misri expressed concern over the ongoing attacks on minorities in the neighboring country. He conveyed that New Delhi seeks to build "positive, constructive, and mutually beneficial" relations with Dhaka. Arriving in Dhaka on Monday, Mr. Misri also held consultations with Bangladesh's



Foreign Secretary, Masud Bin Momen. The Indian Foreign Secretary reiterated India's desire to build a positive and constructive relationship with Bangladesh based on mutual trust, respect, and sensitivity to each other's concerns and interests.

A statement released by the Ministry of External

Affairs (MEA) said, "The Foreign Secretary also discussed certain recent developments and issues and conveyed India's concerns, especially those related to the safety and welfare of minorities." This visit marks India's first high-level engagement with Bangladesh since the transition of power following the ousting of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government in August. The Foreign Secretary's mission aims to sustain and strengthen bilateral ties, addressing shared concerns while fostering progress in key areas of collaboration.

Is a Vitamin D Deficiency Causing Your Depression?

Some research suggests a link between depression or other mental health conditions and vitamin D deficiency. Try adding vitamin D-fortified foods to your diet and lifestyle changes before reaching for supplements. Vitamin D is known as the sunshine vitamin because your body produces it when your skin is exposed to the sun.

Vitamin D may also play a role in depression, as researchers have noted that many people with depression have low vitamin D levels.

Vitamin D and depression

A 2018 study found that many people who have depression also have low blood levels of vitamin D, indicating a possible connection.

Research also indicates an association between depression and low vitamin D levels in people with postpartum depression.

A small, high quality 2020 study of 56 participants with mild to moderate depression found that vitamin D supplementation was associated with an improvement in depression severity over 8 weeks.

This potential benefit in

the long term, however, isn't completely clear.

A large, high quality 2020 study of more than 18,000 people with depression found that taking 2,000 international units (IU) per day of vitamin D for 5 years didn't lead to significant differences in depression scores compared with a placebo.

More research is needed to determine how:

vitamin D deficiency and depression may be linked taking vitamin D supplements might affect depression symptoms

Risk factors for vitamin D deficiency

Limited sun exposure

Most people's primary source of vitamin D is sunlight. Limited sun exposure may lead to vitamin D deficiency. How much exposure you need depends on:

- local climate
- time of day
- time of year
- skin tone
- Diet

Few foods are naturally rich in vitamin D. You can increase your intake by eating more of these great natural sources of vitamin D:

- salmon, mackerel, other fatty fish
- fish liver oils
- animal fats



vitamin D-fortified food products such as orange juice, cereal, mushrooms, vitamin D-fortified dairy, plant-based milk, eggs

If you follow a vegetarian diet, vegan and vegetarian vitamin D sources include: fortified plant-based milk, fruit juices, grain products, ultraviolet (UV) light-exposed mushrooms

Darker skin tone

In the United States, Black people tend to be at higher risk for vitamin D deficiency than other populations.

This disparity may be because people with darker skin have more melanin, a natural skin pigment that may inhibit vitamin D production. One study using data

sun protection.

Obesity

People with obesity may be more prone to vitamin D deficiency because they may need to absorb more vitamin D to reach the recommended nutrient levels.

Consider asking your doctor about a vitamin D test if you have obesity. They can help you come up with a plan to increase your levels. Doctors often prescribe a high dose vitamin D supplement to address a deficiency.

Age

As you get older, your skin becomes less efficient at producing vitamin D. Older adults may limit their time in the sun and eat diets with insufficient amounts of vitamin D, putting them at higher risk for a deficiency.

Symptoms of vitamin D deficiency and depression

Depression and vitamin D deficiency are two distinct conditions, each with its own symptoms. If you're experiencing symptoms of either or both conditions, speak with your doctor.

Vitamin D deficiency symptoms:

- If you have vitamin D deficiency, you may experi-

ence

- aching bones
- fatigue or drowsiness
- weakness and pain in your muscles and joints

Depression symptoms

Some symptoms of depression may include:

- overwhelming feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and helplessness
- loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed
- excessive weight loss or weight gain

Treating vitamin D deficiency and depression

Vitamin D deficiency and depression require different treatments since they're separate conditions.

Treatments for vitamin D deficiency

A doctor may advise you to address vitamin D deficiency and its symptoms by increasing your intake of this vital nutrient with:

- vitamin D supplements
- sun exposure
- vitamin D-containing or vitamin D-fortified foods

Doctors commonly prescribe psychotherapy and antidepressant medications to treat depression. These approaches may be incorporated separately or in combination with dietary changes, depending on your symptoms and treatment goals.

Is winter depression real? Experts weigh in

You are not alone if the gloomy, cold weather makes you feel extra lazy. In fact, even in India, where winter often marks the season of festivities and weddings, many of us also feel our mental well-being taking a hit.

As this season approaches, our couch becomes our best friend, and leaving it - or even our bed - starts to feel like a monumental task. More often than not, all we want to do is lie around with our thoughts. Urban slang even has a name for it - seasonal depression - which hits us as sharply as the cold breeze that accompanies winter.

But is "wintertime sadness", aka "winter depression", actually real? Or is it just the weather messing with us? quick scroll through Reddit or Quora reveals



that plenty of people are asking the same thing — why does the mood shift as the sun sets or the seasons change?

Is mental health related to season change?

Jasreen Birgi, counselling psychologist at Lissun, a digital mental health platform Delhi NCR, explains that winters in India are months of several festivities, but they are also filled with gloom and melancholy due to the chilling winds

and shorter days.

She highlights that Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a form of sadness more prevalent in specific seasons, typically autumn and winter. It's commonly referred to as "winter depression," she says.

Dr Shilpi Saraswat, clinical psychologist at Sakra World Hospital, Bengaluru, agrees and tells India Today that, "SAD, is a recognised mental health condition that affects millions

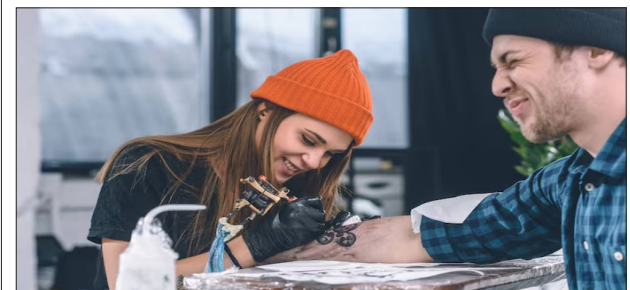
of people worldwide."

She adds that, like most depressive disorders, it "affects mood, energy levels, sleep patterns, and appetite," and its symptoms include persistent feelings of sadness, low energy, and changes in sleep and eating habits.

Dr Arvind Otta, senior psychologist and mental health activist, further points out that it "follows a seasonal pattern and typically worsens during autumn and winter months when daylight hours are shorter."

He explains that "the biological basis of SAD involves disruptions to circadian rhythms and changes in neurotransmitter levels, especially serotonin and melatonin." Experts unanimously agree that the link between weather and mood is undeniable.

How to choose a tattoo you'll never regret



Many people compare getting their first tattoo to having their first cup of coffee—once you try it, there's no turning back, and soon you'll want more. But unlike a cup of coffee, a tattoo is permanent, and that brings with it a significant commitment. You'll see that ink on your body every single day, so you need to make sure you truly love it.

For some, though, that connection fades. What once felt deeply personal can

quickly turn into a source of regret. A tattoo that was once a symbol of a moment or a trend can start to feel like a burden, and over time, the charm can wear off. When that happens, the only option seems to be to remove it, and even that process can be painful.

So, is it possible to get a tattoo you'll never regret? The answer might be more complex than you think, but it's worth considering before you make that permanent decision.

India Wins Deaf Cricket Series Against Sri Lanka

New Delhi: The Indian Deaf Cricket Team clinched a major victory against Sri Lanka in the 5-match bilateral ODI deaf cricket series held in New Delhi. The Indian squad defeated the visiting Sri Lankan team 5-0 at the DDA Roshanara Club to win the series held between 02 December to 08 December.

The bilateral series was hosted by the Indian Deaf Cricket Association (IDCA) – a member of the Deaf International Cricket Council (DICC), which works closely with International Cricket Council (ICC) for promotion of cricket amongst the hearing-impaired athletes all over the world.

Players from both the teams leveraged the unique opportunity to showcase their talents and they proved their mettle in each match of the series.

The Indian squad was led by captain Virendra Singh and included 15 players from across India.



India Emerges Victorious in Bilateral ODI Deaf Cricket Series against Sri Lanka

India Gets Tricky Group In 2027 Asian Cup Qualifiers Final Round

■ 24 Teams Drawn into 6 Groups for AFC Asian Cup 2023



New Delhi: India was on Sunday drawn in a tricky group along with Bangladesh, Hong Kong and Singapore for the 2027 Asian Cup Qualifiers final round matches, beginning March

25 next year.

The draw, which saw 24 teams divided into six groups of four, was held at the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Only the six group winners will qualify for the main tournament to be held in Saudi Arabia in 2027 and join the 18 teams who have already booked their tickets after the second round of qualifying.

The final round will be contested over six match days in a home-and-away format between March 25, 2025 and March 31, 2026.

Aiming to qualify for the third successive time, India will begin its Group C campaign at home against Bangladesh.

■ Barcelona now sit atop the La Liga standings with 37 points

Lamine Yamal inspired FC Barcelona's LaLiga comeback vs Mallorca: H Flick

New Delhi

Barcelona manager Hansi Flick hailed the return of teenage sensation Lamine Yamal to the starting lineup as the catalyst for his team's resounding 5-1 win over Mallorca on Tuesday. Yamal, who had been sidelined for four weeks with an ankle injury, played a crucial role in the victory, helping Barcelona end their three-match winless streak in La Liga.

"Today (Yamal) was very important for us, he always generates positive things for the team," Flick said in his post-match interview with Movistar Plus. "He could have scored one or two goals today, he played very well." During Yamal's absence, Barcelona had struggled in his absence, picking up only one point from three La Liga matches, which allowed the chasing pack—led by Real Madrid—to close the gap at the top to just one point.

However, with the teenager back in action, the team delivered a dominant performance. "The team is happy with how things went tonight," said Flick.



Barcelona manager Hansi Flick also praised his team's overall performance, particularly in the first half, when they created numerous chances and took control of the match. Despite Mallorca equalising through a counter-attack, Barcelona maintained their composure and pressed forward. "In the first half we had a lot of chances, and we scored, but they equalised in a counter-attack. But we kept going. The en-

Interestingly, Barcelona did not require the services of their star striker Robert Lewandowski to secure the win. Lewandowski, who has been in sensational form this season, leading the La Liga scoring chart with 15 goals, was given a rest after starting every match for Barcelona so far this season. His absence paved the way for Ferran Torres, who seized the opportunity with a well-taken goal following some poor defending by Mallorca.

Venkatesh Iyer wants to lead KKR in IPL 2025

Kolkata

Even as there are months left to go for the Indian Premier League, speculations over who will lead the defending champions is doing the rounds after the franchise let go off IPL-winning captain Venkatesh Iyer. Picked up at a whopping Rs 23.75 cr, Venkatesh Iyer addresses captaincy rumours. Claiming that he would like to lead the KKR side, Iyer said being a leader he can contribute more.

'Want to be a Leader'
"I've always maintained that I want to be a leader in any set-up that I walk into, be it Madhya Pradesh, an IPL team, or even the Indi-

an team.

"Being a leader, you want to contribute with your ideas, with your suggestions. You don't really need the captaincy tag for that.

"So I always want to be a leader in the dressing room. And if captaincy comes my way, it will be an honour to lead such a reputed franchise. Let's see what's in store for me."

Iyer is not the only solid option, there are the likes of Sunil Narine and Rinku Singh in the side as well.

Claiming that nothing can match the feeling of representing the country, Iyer reckoned it is normal for people to speak about the price tags.



Kylian Mbappe celebrates after scoring his side's second goal during the UEFA Super Cup Final soccer match between Real Madrid and Atalanta at the Narodowy stadium in Warsaw, Poland (API)

Wild extend domination of Ducks with 5-1 victory



Marco Rossi scored twice and added an assist as the Minnesota Wild extended its winning streak to a season-best five games with a 5-1 win over the host Anaheim Ducks on Friday night. Kirill Kaprizov and Matt Boldy each added a goal and two helpers and Yakov Trenin also scored for the Wild, who improved to 17-1-0 in their last 18 games against the Ducks and 12-2-0 in their last 14 trips to Anaheim.

Filip Gustavsson made 26 saves for his fifth career win over the Ducks.

Brock McGinn scored for Anaheim, which has lost three of four.

Indian motor sports great Indu Chandhok passes away

Chennai

Indu Chandhok, the doyen of Indian motorsports with which he was actively associated for over six decades, passed away in Chennai.

He was 93 and is survived by two sons, one daughter, seven grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Madras Motor Sports Club (MMS) president Ajit Thomas said, "In Indu Chandhok's demise, the MMS and Indian motorsports have lost a giant and an institutional figure. He was instrumental in providing definitive direction to motorsports in India and we are now enjoying the fruits of his untiring efforts. We deeply mourn his passing away and offer condolences to his family." Chandhok, born in Kolkata



on July 22, 1931, moved to Chennai (erstwhile Madras) a year later. He was one of the founder-members of the Madras Motor Sports Club in 1953 and later, the Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India (FMSCI) in 1971. He went on to become the president of the FMSCI in 1978.

He was also an integral part of the Trust that purchased and developed the Madras International Circuit (erstwhile Madras Motor Race Track) at Irungattkottai.