

Arunachal CM orders multi-level probe into frontier highway issues in East Kameng



ARUNACHAL PRADESH, JAN 06: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister on January 6 said that the state government has initiated multiple measures to address the problems related to the Frontier Highway project in East Kameng district, including administrative reviews and an anti-corruption investigation.

Interacting with the media, the Chief Minister said a one-man committee had earlier been constituted to assess the situation concerning the Frontier Highway. He informed that the committee has submitted its report to the state government, which is currently under examination. In parallel, the Chief Minister said

the matter has also been referred to the Anti-Corruption Department, which is conducting a separate investigation into the alleged irregularities linked to the project. He added that the government is treating the issue with seriousness and has adopted a multi-pronged approach to ensure accountability. From the state government's side, four additional committees have been constituted to re-assess various aspects of the project, including implementation and oversight mechanisms. The Chief Minister said these committees will independently review the findings and submit their recommendations.

Assuring strict action, he said anyone found guilty during the investigations would be held accountable as per law. "Those responsible will not be spared," the Chief Minister said, reiterating the government's commitment to transparency and proper execution of key infrastructure projects in the state.

Republic Day 2026: Sikkim CS Holds Planning Summit



GANGTOK, JAN 6: Sikkim Chief Secretary R. Telang on Tuesday chaired a meeting at the Tashiling Secretariat to review preparations for the Republic Day 2026 celebrations. The meeting was attended by Heads of Departments (HoDs) and officers from the Army and paramilitary forces. Discussions focused on the proposed sequence of events, coordination among departments, and timely execution of assigned responsibilities.

Cultural programmes featuring local artists were also discussed, with the Chief Secretary directing concerned departments to ensure smooth coordination among performers, organisers, and supporting agencies.

Departments provided updates on logistical arrangements and progress, and Mr Telang emphasized completing all tasks within the prescribed timelines to ensure successful celebrations.

Assam: Oil India pipeline burst in Tingkong

DIBRUGARH, JAN 6: A pipeline of Oil India Limited (OIL) was burst at Halmari Dighalia gaon in Assam's Tingkhong of Dibrugarh on Monday night. The incident occurred at around 10 pm on Monday. According to sources, crude oil spilled in the area after the burst in the pipeline. "We have heard a loud sound at around 10 pm. When we came out of our home, we have seen that the pipeline of OIL was burst and crude oil has been spilling. Fire tenders from OIL came immediately to control the excessive spilling of crude oil," said Monimanik Gogoi, local resident. He said, "The pipeline were too old and the Oil India should replace them. We have around 50 oil well in our village including 2 OCS and 1 DCS. The OIL should take necessary steps to replace the pipes." "A big incident can happened due to the burst in the pipeline but it was averted due to the timely intervention of the department," he said.

"Supreme Court Rejects Plea to Enforce Lyngdoh Committee Norms in Student Polls"

NEW DELHI, JAN 06: The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed a plea seeking implementation of the 2006 Lyngdoh Committee Report, which lays down the regulatory framework for student union elections in colleges and universities across the country. The central government, acting on the directive of the top court, had formed the Lyngdoh Committee whose report aimed to eliminate "money and muscle power" from campus politics while maintaining academic standards. A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi declined to entertain the petition filed by Shiv Kumar Tripathi, observing that it



lacked merit.

During the brief hearing, a counsel for Tripathi said the plea sought enforcement of the committee report to ensure fair elections for students' bodies in colleges and universities. The CJI termed the plea

a publicity interest litigation. "You just want to go out and address others (media). Only for publicity," the CJI said, before dismissing the petition after hearing the counsel.

The top court had accepted the committee recommendations, making them mandatory for all universities and colleges in the country. The committee, in its report, had fixed the age limit of 17 to 22 years for undergraduate students to fight college elections. For postgraduate students, it had fixed the age limit of 24 to 25 years for contesting university polls. Besides, it had suggested other regulatory measures for such polls.

Congress Slams Shah's "Empty Reviews" as New IED Blasts Rock Bishnupur

"New Delhi Uninterested in Peace": Congress Leader Blames Centre for Manipur Chaos

GUWAHATI, JAN 06: Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee president Keisham Meghachandra Singh on Monday criticised the Centre over a high-level meeting chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah with the state's Governor, Chief Secretary and Director General of Police, alleging that the deliberations failed to provide a roadmap for peace and normalcy in the violence-hit state. Addressing the media, Meghachandra said the outcome of the New Delhi meeting was "not favourable for restoring peace in Manipur" and pointed to a fresh incident of violence reported hours later as evidence of continued instability.

He said an IED exploded around 6 am on Monday at Nganukon, injuring two local residents. The incident, he claimed, underscored the failure of the Centre's approach even after the high-level discussions. Accusing the central government of lacking the intent to resolve the crisis, the Congress leader alleged that New Delhi was "not interested in bringing peace and normalcy to Manipur" and described the prevailing situation as "of its own making". He further claimed that the Centre was deliberately prolonging President's Rule in the state, even at the cost of constitutional principles. "This amounts to the murder of democracy in Manipur and a gross un-

derestimation of the people's will," Meghachandra said, asserting that the people do not want "direct control from Delhi". He added that continued central intervention without restoring peace was deepening public distrust and political uncertainty.

Meghachandra said that if both the Centre and the state administration failed to bring the situation under control, dissolving the Manipur Assembly and holding fresh elections would be the most democratic course of action. He blamed the BJP for the ongoing violence, calling the party the "architect of the present crisis" and accusing it of pursuing a "divide-and-rule" policy in the state. He said the Centre must adopt



firm and impartial measures on the ground if it was serious about re-

storing peace, instead of relying on prolonged central rule.



Sikkim CM Attends 40th Kagyu Monlam in Bodhgaya



GANGTOK, JAN 03: Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang attended the 40th International Kagyu Monlam Chenmo at Bodhgaya on Saturday. The event was held under the guidance of His Holiness the 12th Goshri Gyalsab Rinpoche.

The gathering brought together monks, lamas, and devotees from across the world, focusing on prayers for universal peace, compassion, and harmony. Tamang described his participation as a “deeply blessed and spiritually uplifting experience.”

The Monlam’s prayers and aspirations are aimed at fostering peace, prosperity, and well-being for humanity, while reinforcing the spiritual teachings of the Kagyu lineage and strengthening global spiritual bonds.

Amit Shah Chairs High-Level Meet on Manipur Crisis

MANIPUR, JAN 3: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday held a meeting with top officials of the Manipur government to review the security situation and the rehabilitation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the violence-hit northeastern state, media reports said.

The meeting, held in the national capital, was attended by Manipur Governor Ajay Bhalla, Security Adviser Kuldip Singh, Director General of Police Rajiv Singh, and Chief Secretary Puneet Goel. The review comes ahead of February 13, 2026, marking one year since the imposition of President’s Rule in Manipur.

Manipur has been reeling under ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities since May 3, 2023, which has led to widespread displacement and loss of lives and property. Last month, the Manipur government initiated the rehabilitation process by relocating



a group of Meitei IDPs to their homes near buffer zones adjoining the hill areas predominantly inhabited by the Kuki-Zo community. However, within 24 hours of the first relocation, militants from the hill areas reportedly opened fire towards the villages in protest against the move. Officials said nearly 50,000 people continue to reside in relief camps across the state as efforts to restore normalcy and ensure safe rehabilitation remain a major challenge for the administration.

Manipur to Host Pro MMA Bouts This April

GUWAHATI, JAN 4: Manipur will host a two-day mixed martial arts (MMA) fight night in early April, with professional bouts scheduled for April 4, as part of an initiative to provide a competitive platform for fighters from the Northeast. The event, titled “Manipur Pride MMA: The Rise of Warriors 1,” is being organised by BonJovi MMA and Fitness. Organisers said the programme will open on April 3 with amateur contests, followed by professional fights on the second day.

Addressing a press conference here, event director Rangam Chiru said the focus is on giving Manipur-based fighters exposure to structured

and high-level competition, which many currently lack. “The idea is to bridge the gap between amateur circuits and professional MMA, while also creating opportunities for



fighters to move on to national and international tournaments,” Chiru said.

Fighters from other North-eastern states are also expected to compete, making the event a regional contest rather

than a Manipur-only meet. Organisers described it as among the largest MMA fight cards planned in the state in recent years. Local MMA fighter Nongmaithem BonJovi said athletes in Manipur often face challenges due to limited access to technical coaching, structured mentorship and institutional backing. He said the event would double as a learning platform by exposing local fighters to professional standards and international-level competition.

Organisers said fighter screening and selection would be conducted about a week ahead of the event, with both amateur and professional athletes set to feature on the fight card.

RTI Filed Over ₹5 Crore MPLADS Fund of Manipur MP Bimol Akoijam

IMPHAL, JAN 4: A significant Right to Information (RTI) case was filed regarding the utilisation of Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) funds. The application seeks information on work initiated, pending, and completed, along with usage details for the financial year 2024-25, by Angomcha Bimol Akoijam, Inner Manipur Member of Parliament. Social worker Oinam Robart Singh, a resident of Bakhikhong Torban Leikai in Imphal East district, filed the RTI application in an effort to promote transparency and public accountability in development spending.

He is seeking details on the utilisation of Rs 5 crore allocated under MPLADS. The application comes amid growing public scrutiny over the utilisation of MPLADS funds in Manipur, which has also been reflected in recent discussions on social media platforms. In his application, Singh stated that Angomcha Bimol Akoijam, the Congress Member of Parliament from Inner Manipur, had earlier inaugurated several MPLADS-funded projects, including drinking water plants and other public facilities across the Manipur valley districts. Officials said

the application was submitted to the Public Information Officer of Imphal West district, seeking a comprehensive list of projects approved during the stated period, along with details of works completed so far. Singh also stated in his application that MPLADS funds are meant to be used for development projects with approval from the District Col-



lector and cannot be used for permanent structures.

He requested the concerned authority to provide copies of work orders, utilisation certificates, completion reports, and details of implementing agencies wherever available. He further sought information on the amounts sanctioned for each project, the expenditure incurred, and details of any complaints received or audits conducted in connection with the utilisation of funds during the financial year.

NGO Conducts River Cleanup, Clears 1,800 kg Waste In Arunachal



ITANAGAR, JAN 3: The Youth Mission for Clean River (YMCR) on Saturday extracted around 1,800 kg of garbage from the Yagamso River near Energy Park in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, as part of a cleanup drive aimed at restoring urban waterways. According to an NGO spokesperson, the waste collected

mainly consisted of household plastic items and construction debris, highlighting ongoing challenges related to improper waste disposal in the area.

Volunteers involved in the drive segregated the waste at the site to ensure environmentally responsible disposal and to support sustainable waste management practices.

Meghalaya: Mendipathar Railway Station loads first full freight rake

"Rail Freight Hub" to summarize the station's new status

GUWAHATI, JAN 04: The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) achieved a historic milestone in freight operations with the successful loading of the first-ever full freight rake at Meghalaya’s Mendipathar Railway Station on 28 December 2025. The coal shipment, destined for Jalalgarh, comprised 42 covered wagons and was loaded within 8 hours and 30 minutes, showcasing efficient planning, teamwork, and operational readiness of the railway staff.

This landmark event marks the first full-scale railway freight loading in the state of Meghalaya, putting Men-



dipathar station firmly on the railway freight map. Mendipathar, the only railway station in the state, had previously recorded its first freight unloading on 4 February 2025. Between February and December 2025, a total of 29

mini rakes and six full rakes, equivalent to 20.5 full rakes, were unloaded at the station, reflecting steady growth in freight operations.

With the commencement of freight loading, Mendipathar station is now fully equipped

to handle large-scale freight traffic, both for loading and unloading. Officials say these operations are expected to provide a significant boost to Meghalaya’s local economy by facilitating the inward and outward movement of goods in a reliable, cost-effective manner, particularly benefiting hilly and otherwise less accessible areas.

The freight operations are also expected to support regional industries, improve market access for local commodities, and enable efficient transportation of essential goods, strengthening the overall economic framework of the state.

President Murmu launches 'Skill the Nation Challenge' to drive AI-ready workforce; Jayant Chaudhary completes SOAR certification



Guwahati: President Droupadi Murmu on Friday announced the '#SkillTheNation Challenge', encouraging citizens, policymakers, educators, professionals and youth to enrol in the SOAR (Skilling for AI Readiness) programme on the Skill India Digital Hub to strengthen India's AI capabilities. She said the initiative

would equip the nation with future-ready AI skills and support India's drive toward a technologically empowered society. SOAR — the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship's flagship AI skilling programme launched in July 2025 — offers structured micro-credential courses for school students, educators, pro-

fessionals and lifelong learners. Over the past six months, more than 1.59 lakh learners have enrolled, with thousands successfully completing AI certifications. Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Jayant Chaudhary has completed the SOAR 'AI to be

Aware' module and nominated Andhra Pradesh IT Minister Nara Lokesh Rao, Prasar Bharati CEO Gaurav Dwivedi and All-India Chess Federation President Nitin Narang to take up the challenge. Seventeen students from PM SHRI Schools, Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas received AI certificates from the President. Notably, 15 Members of Parliament have also completed the course. In Guwahati, education institutions, IT service providers and startup founders view the initiative as a catalyst for emerging technology adoption. Local training centres expect rising enrolments in AI programmes, while industry observers believe improved AI literacy could strengthen Assam's digital services ecosystem and create new employment opportunities in the city's expanding knowledge economy.

Renault India posts strong H2 CY2025 recovery; December sales jump 33.4% YoY

Guwahati: Renault India reported a strong turnaround in the second half of CY2025, registering 18.2% year-on-year growth and signalling renewed market traction following a phase of portfolio transition. The momentum strengthened further in Q4, with sales rising 27.3%, supported by the launch of the new Tribler in July and the new Kiger in August. December 2025 emerged as one of the company's strongest months of the year, with 3,845 units sold, marking a 33.4% increase over December 2024. Stephane Deblaise, CEO, Renault Group India, said the H2 performance reflects the strategic direction undertaken for the brand. He noted that consistent recovery from Q3 onwards, culminating in the best monthly performance in December, underlines the success of Renault's course correction and sets the stage

for the next growth phase. The company will also reintroduce the iconic Duster in India, scheduled for unveil on 26 January 2026. In Guwahati, dealers report steady improvement in customer enquiries for compact SUVs and MPVs, driven by renewed brand visibility, refreshed models and improving consumer sentiment. Renault's momentum in 2025 was further supported by strategic actions including new 'R' stores, a Renault Design Centre in India, a 3-year standard warranty, and full ownership of its manufacturing facility, reaffirming long-term commitment to the Indian market.



Rising Star Programme propels Manipuri gamer Zalaikam into national esports spotlight



Imphal: Krafton India's Rising Star Programme is helping shape the country's growing esports economy, with Manipur-based BGMI player Zalaikam (Zalaikam Haokip) emerging as one of its key success stories. The 23-year-old from Saikul began gaming in 2019 and has since built a steady competitive career inspired by leading creators such as Mortal, Athena and Dynamo. His disciplined training helped him move from casual gaming to the professional circuit, reflecting the role of structured talent development in India's esports market. Currently representing Team Hope Esports as a Free

Man alongside Lmin (IGL), Corry and ClutchGod (Assaulters), he is preparing to compete in the upcoming UNIV Premiership Season 1. Zalaikam credits Krafton India's programme for supporting him with streaming tools, platform visibility and mentorship in content creation and audience engagement. The recognition has also strengthened family and community support back home. Imphal's youth segment is increasingly engaging with esports content, streaming platforms and gaming-related purchases, signalling a shift in aspiration and consumer behaviour. Local retailers say gaming culture is now part of everyday discussion among students and young professionals. With 10.7K Instagram followers and 57.5K YouTube subscribers, Zalaikam aims to join a top-tier esports team while inspiring Northeast youth to view gaming as a viable career path. Krafton India says the Rising Star Programme will continue investing in mentoring and expanding India's future-ready esports ecosystem.

MSDE wraps up week-long 'Kaushal Manthan' to finalise skilling resolutions for 2026

Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has concluded its week-long 'Kaushal Manthan', held from December 23 to 31, 2025, to chart the skilling roadmap for 2026. The closing session in New Delhi was chaired by Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education. Senior officials across divisions, institutional leaders, and key stakeholders participated in the discussions, which focused on aligning skilling reforms with national priorities and strengthening an outcome-oriented skilling ecosystem. The deliberations resulted in the finalisation of Skill Resolutions for 2026, emphasising stronger convergence with State



Governments and industry, better monitoring of assessments and certifications, and simplified institutional systems. Proposals included outcome-based grading for ITIs and delegation of powers to regional and institutional levels. Reorganisation of Sector Skill Councils, assignment of KPIs, and continuous curriculum upgradation in line with technology and market demand were also highlighted. Seamless path-

ways across skill levels—from school to employment and lifelong learning—were identified as key priorities. In Guwahati, stakeholders expect the reforms to create a more industry-ready workforce in Assam, especially for MSMEs and emerging service sectors. Increased apprenticeship integration and modernised training could help bridge the local skills gap and improve employment opportunities. MSDE reaffirmed commitments made at the CS Conference, including establishing a National Federated Skill and Workforce Registry and operationalising a National Trainer Framework, while strengthening consultations with States and industry to drive implementation in 2026.

ICICI Bank launches capital gains account scheme to help customers claim tax exemptions

Guwahati: ICICI Bank has announced the launch of the Capital Gains Account Scheme (CGAS), enabling customers to deposit un-invested long-term capital gains or sale proceeds from specified capital assets and claim tax exemptions while earning interest. The launch follows the Government's approval of ICICI Bank as an authorised institution to handle CGAS deposits. The scheme is effective from January 1, 2026, and is available to resident individuals and Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), with availability for non-individuals and NRIs to be introduced shortly.

The scheme benefits taxpayers who are unable to reinvest capital gains before the Income Tax Return filing deadline. Customers can open CGAS accounts at ICICI Bank branches, excluding rural locations as per the rules. The bank is offering two formats: Type A (savings account) with flexible withdrawals for approved reinvestment purposes, and Type B (term deposit) in cumulative and non-cumulative options for fixed tenure deposits. Depositors can temporarily park funds for up to three years while retaining exemption eligibility, with interest similar to savings or

fixed deposits. A spokesperson said the scheme reinforces the bank's commitment to offering financial solutions that support evolving customer needs. Financial planners in Guwahati expect strong uptake from property sellers and investors dealing in real estate and land transactions. With rising capital appreciation and expanding urban growth in the Guwahati market, the scheme is seen as a useful option for taxpayers seeking flexibility in reinvestment while safeguarding tax exemptions.



Gen Z drives 'concert tourism' boom as music-led travel becomes big business: Airbnb insights

Mumbai: Music is fast emerging as a powerful economic engine in India's travel sector, with Airbnb's new Experience-Led Travel Insights revealing that 62% of Gen Z plan to travel for concerts and music festivals in 2026. The report shows music is reshaping travel motivations, with live events influencing destination choice, travel companions and spending behaviour. Already, over one in three (36%) begin trip planning as soon as events are announced, while 76% say concerts have taken them to a city for the first time. More than 40% are willing to travel internationally, considering destinations across the US, Europe and Asia.

Concert tourism is also boosting local economies. Around 65% prefer staying near venues and 53% extend their stay to explore cafés,

nightlife and cultural hubs, driving business for local communities. Six in ten are prepared to spend 21-40% of monthly income on music travel, with average spending per trip hitting ₹51,000.

Airbnb India and Southeast Asia Country Head Amanpreet Singh Bajaj said music tourism is opening up new neighbourhoods to young travellers. Airbnb has partnered with Lollapalooza India 2026 in Mumbai, reinforcing music-led travel as a growing cultural and economic force. The study was conducted by YouGov across 1,102 Gen Z respondents in 10 major cities. 62% of Gen Z travelers plan trips around concerts and music festivals in 2026. Travel decisions are driven less by calendars and more by culture with live events shaping where they go, - and how they engage with destinations.

7 in 10 Indians say California Almonds support weight management, finds YouGov Survey: New Year, New Habits

Guwahati: With the New Year under way and health goals taking centre stage, weight management often tops resolution lists. As people reset their routines and look for sustainable ways to feel fitter and more energised, mindful eating and balanced nutrition take on renewed importance. Reflecting this shift, a new YouGov survey conducted in association with the Almond Board of California reveals that Indian consumers are increasingly embracing healthier choices, from exercising regularly to choosing nutrient-dense foods like almonds that support everyday wellness. Among these, California Almonds continue to feature prominently in morning routines and breakfast habits, with many associating them with improved satiety, better control over cravings, and sustained energy through the day. The survey, conducted across 16 cities in India, also highlights a broader shift toward holistic, health-focused living. A vast majority (92%) show strong interest in health and nutrition, with 51% reporting adoption of an active lifestyle with daily exercise. Additionally, 63% of respondents say they are trying to manage their weight -- often through consistent practices like daily workouts, drinking more water, and reducing sugar con-

sumption. Nearly 40% of respondents say they consume almonds daily, with about 30% eating them first thing in the morning and 22% including them with breakfast. Purchase frequency also remains strong as 43% purchase almonds monthly, while another 44% do so weekly or bi-weekly. Preferences vary, with 30% opting for soaked or soaked-and-peeled almonds and



25% consuming them raw. Among dry-fruit consumers, a remarkable 86% choose almonds, reinforcing their widespread popularity

More than half of respondents (52%) associate almonds with overall health and wellness, while 41% link them to immunity, and 39% consume them to maintain protein intake. A significant 75% say almonds are part of their daily routine for essential nutrients, while 84% agree they are a healthy option. California Almonds

offer 15 essential nutrients, including healthy fats, dietary fibre, protein, magnesium, potassium, and zinc, making them a minimally processed, wholesome addition to daily diets. 70% of respondents believe almonds support healthy weight goals, and 82% report improvement control over munching and weight after incorporating them regularly into their diets. Expert perspectives further reinforce consumer behaviour. Sheela Krishnaswamy, Nutrition and Wellness Consultant, said: "With 15 essential nutrients, almonds support satiety and mindful snacking, which is exactly what people looking to manage weight and build healthier routines are aiming for." Ritika Samaddar, Regional Head - Dietetics, Max Healthcare, added: "At the start of the year, I see many of my friends and clients setting clear health and weight-management resolutions. One of the most common challenges they face is managing hunger and staying consistent with healthier choices. Almonds fit naturally into these routines as they are filling, easy to include, and nutritionally balanced." As Indians begin their New Year health journeys with weight management, fitness, and mindful eating in focus, the survey underscores how almonds have become an integral part of these goals.

Mother's Recipe ramps up North East push with outdoor campaign for ready-to-cook spice mixes

Mumbai: Mother's Recipe, the legacy Indian food brand trusted for generations, is strengthening the visibility of its Ready to Cook spice mixes across the North East with a high-impact outdoor campaign this festive season. The initiative is built around a key consumer trend — more households are recreating flavour-packed restaurant favourites at home, while seeking convenience, authenticity and quality. The brand highlights that its all-natural spice mixes come with the assurance of no added preservatives.

The North East remains a strategic growth market for Mother's Recipe, driven by strong food culture and openness to experimenting with diverse cuisines. The campaign, running from December 20, 2025 to the first week of January 2026, features premium outdoor hoardings at landmark locations across Agartala, Imphal, Dimapur, Aizawl and Shillong, ensuring maximum festive-season visibility. The creatives showcase restaurant-style dishes with strong appetite appeal and bold, relatable messaging.

Commenting on the rollout, Sanjana Desai, Executive Director, Mother's Recipe, said today's consumers want "great taste with ease," and the brand aims to make authentic flavours accessible without compromising on quality.

Targeting families, young consumers and working professionals, the campaign focuses on driving curiosity, encouraging trials and strengthening brand recall. Mother's Recipe says the message is simple; restaurant-style taste now begins at home.

Nissan ends 2025 with highest export month in a decade; consolidated December sales hit 15,372 units



Guwahati: Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. closed calendar year 2025 with strong momentum, driven by exceptional export performance. The company shipped 13,470 vehicles in December 2025, marking its highest monthly export volume in over 10 years. Domestic wholesale stood at 1,902 units, taking total consolidated sales for the month to 15,372 units. Nissan said the results reinforce its Made-in-India, export-led growth strategy, supported largely by the New Nissan Magnite.

Managing Director Saurbh Vatsa said 2025 was a year of consolidation, with record exports and steady domestic performance. He added that Nissan is moving into a clear product-led growth phase, beginning with the launch of the GRAVITE

7-seater B-MPV on January 21, 2026, followed by the global reveal of the Nissan Tekton 5-seater C-SUV on February 4, and a 7-seater C-SUV in 2027. All upcoming models will be Made in India.

In Guwahati, Nissan dealers expect rising interest in upcoming multi-seater and SUV offerings, particularly among family buyers. The Magnite already maintains steady demand in the region, helped by its GNCAP 5-star safety rating and 10-year warranty.

Nissan is also expanding its national dealer network to 250 showrooms by FY2027. Exports remain a key pillar, with Nissan crossing 1.2 million cumulative vehicle exports from India in 2025, reinforcing the country's role as a global production hub.

Mother's Recipe unveils 'MOM FU' campaign to boost recipe sauces range across North East

New Delhi: Mother's Recipe, the legacy homegrown food brand trusted by Indian households for generations, has launched a new festive campaign for its Recipe Sauces range across the North East. The initiative, themed "MOM FU: Maakapyaar in a new avatar," runs from December 22, 2025 to the first week of January 2026 and aims to strengthen brand and product awareness by highlighting authentic flavours and convenience-led cooking.

The campaign adopts a digital-first strategy across Guwahati, Dimapur, Agartala and Aizawl, with locally relevant and season-specific content. Positioned at the intersection of comfort and experimentation, the messaging reflects a rising trend of families trying Pan Asian



favourites at home while still seeking the warmth of homestyle meals.

Sanjana Desai, Executive Director, Mother's Recipe, said the communication brings alive the sentiment of maternal care in a modern format. "With our Recipe Sauces, we are bringing together two things people care about deeply — exciting flavour and the comfort of Maakapyaar. The North East has a strong food culture and a real love for bold taste, so it felt like the perfect place to tell this story," she said.

The campaign features influencer collaborations, real-use content and easy-prep formats, reinforcing Mother's Recipe's belief that the best meals—regardless of cuisine—carry the comfort of a mother's love.



Reasons Seasonal Infections Proliferate More Rapidly During Winter

During the winter months, there is a notable increase in the incidence of coughs, colds, influenza, sinus infections, bronchitis, and gastrointestinal viruses. This surge is not simply a coincidence; the winter season establishes optimal biological and behavioral conditions that facilitate the rapid spread of infections, enhance their longevity, and



impact larger populations concurrently. Cold weather weakens our defence mechanisms. Cold temperatures reduce blood flow to the nasal passages and airways, which weakens the local immune response. The respiratory tract is lined with mucus that becomes dry and less efficient at trapping viruses and bacteria in cold weather. This allows pathogens to enter the body more easily, where they can begin to reproduce. Viruses survive longer in winter

Several respiratory viruses, including influenza and RSV, are known to survive longer in cold, dry air without losing their infectivity. Reduced humidity allows viral particles to remain airborne for extended periods, increasing the likelihood of inhalation. The use of indoor heaters further dries the air, worsening the situation. Crowded indoor spaces increase transmission. Winter forces people into enclosed, poorly ventilated spaces such as homes, offices, schools, and public transport. Close proximity combined with inadequate air circulation makes it easier for infections to spread from person to person. Winter months can suppress immune function. Decreased exposure to sunlight in winter results in diminished vitamin D levels, which are crucial for the regulation of the immune system. Furthermore, lifestyle changes associated with winter, including modified sleep patterns, dietary habits, and decreased physical activity, can further compromise immunity, rendering individuals more vulnerable to infections.

These 4 methods for consuming carrot juice can enhance your health during the winter

Homemade juices provide a level of freshness and quality that is frequently absent in store-bought alternatives. If you take pleasure in consuming juice, carrot juice stands out as a superb and adaptable option for this season. Rich in vital nutrients, it is simple to make at home and can be tailored by incorporating different fruits and vegetables to enhance the flavor. Carrots pack a nutritional punch and are loaded with beta-carotene that converts to vitamin A, which supports sharp vision and prevents night blindness. Their high fibre content aids digestion, promotes gut health, and stabilises blood sugar by slowing sugar absorption. It has antioxidants like lutein and zeaxanthin that protect eyes from age-related damage, while vitamin C boosts immunity and collagen for glowing skin. As carrots have potassium, they can help regulate blood pressure, and since they are low in calories with high water, it make them ideal for weight management – curbing hunger without excess energy. Carrots also lower cholesterol, reduce heart disease risk, and fight inflammation with falcarinol. Carrot Juice With Coriander, Mint And A Hint Of Lemon This refreshing carrot juice blends coriander, mint (pudina), and lemon to create a revitalising drink rich in minerals and antioxidants. Start by washing and chopping the carrots, then rinse the coriander

and mint leaves. Add all the ingredients to a blender or juicer and blend until smooth. Pour the juice into a glass, stir in the lemon juice, and, if desired, sprinkle with black or regular salt for extra flavour. For a chilled treat, add some ice cubes before serving. Carrot-Apple-Ginger Juice



It's ideal for a morning boost or midday refreshment. Wash the carrots thoroughly, then peel and cut the apples and carrots into medium-sized pieces. Toss the ingredients into the juicer one by one, and let it run. If you're using a blender, start with half a cup of water, then add the apple, carrots, and ginger. Blend everything until smooth and remove any leftover pieces. Put a strainer or a linen towel over a jar or bowl. Pour the combined

mixture onto a cloth or strainer to remove the juice. Discard the remaining pulp and transfer the juice to a glass. Squeeze fresh lemon juice into the juice, mix, and enjoy. Pineapple Carrot Juice Recipe This juice is high in fibre and a healthier alternative to store-bought options. Start by peeling and slicing the carrots into small pieces. Chop the pineapple and set it aside, then cut the lemon in half. If using a blender, add the carrots, pineapple, and half a cup of water to the jar and blend until smooth. Strain the juice through a fine sieve to remove the pulp or extract juice from the mixture. Pour the juice over a few ice cubes in a glass, add lemon juice, stir well, and enjoy the refreshing taste. Spinach Carrot Juice Recipe This juice is the perfect companion to the richness of seasonal vegetables on a sunny winter day. Begin by washing and cleaning the carrots and spinach, then chop them into small pieces and set them aside separately. First, juice the carrots using a blender or juicer. Next, add the spinach and blend or juice again. Strain both juices and combine them using a spoon, discarding the pulp. Pour the fresh juice into a serving glass, then season with lemon juice, a pinch of salt, and black pepper powder to taste. Serve immediately to enjoy its full nutritional benefits.

The Genuine Science Underlying Metabolic Slowdown

As temperatures decrease, numerous individuals observe recognizable trends: diminished energy levels, persistent weight gain, decreased motivation for exercise, and an overall feeling of lethargy. This change in season is frequently attributed to a slowing metabolism; however, the reality is more complex. From a scientific perspective, the body's metabolism does not significantly decrease merely due to colder weather. Rather, winter modifies our movement, eating habits, sleep patterns, and reactions to light – all of which together affect metabolic efficiency. The Role Of Light, Hormones, And Energy Levels According to Dietician Vidhi Chawla, Founder of FISICO Diet and Aesthetic Clinic, winter-related fatigue is closely tied to changes in light exposure rather than a faulty metabolism. "Shorter daylight hours disrupt the circadian rhythm, influencing hormones that regulate appetite, sleep, and energy balance," she explains. Reduced sunlight exposure during winter often leads to lower vitamin D levels, which plays a role in insulin sensitivity, muscle function and overall metabolic efficiency. Chawla also points to increased



melatonin production during darker months, noting that it may contribute to persistent sleepiness and reduced drive for physical activity, creating the illusion of a slower metabolism. One of the most significant, and often overlooked, contributors to winter weight gain is the drop in non-exercise activity thermogenesis. "Colder temperatures discourage daily movement such as walking, standing, and outdoor activity," says Chawla. This reduction in everyday motion can quietly

lower daily calorie expenditure more than skipping a workout or two. Dr Archana Batra, Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Educator, reinforces this point, emphasising that daily movement goes beyond gym sessions. "Maintaining non-exer-

se activity thermogenesis through indoor walking, stretching, household activity, and strength training helps preserve insulin sensitivity and energy expenditure," she notes. Food choices shift noticeably in winter, often leaning towards refined, calorie-dense comfort foods. Chawla explains that reduced intake of fresh fruits, vegetables, and fluids can impair digestion and metabolic flexibility, making it harder for the body to regulate energy efficiently. Dr Batra highlights protein as a metabolic ally during the winter months. "Protein intake should be prioritised at every meal, as it has a higher thermic effect compared to carbohydrates and fats," she says. Adequate protein intake helps preserve lean muscle mass, which is a key driver of resting metabolic rate. Pulses, dairy, eggs, lean meats, soy and nuts are all effective sources to support this need. Winter metabolism is also influenced by micronutrient intake. "Nutrients such as iodine, selenium, iron and B-complex vitamins support thyroid and mitochondrial function," explains Dr Batra. These nutrients can be sourced from whole grains, legumes, seeds, nuts, dairy and seasonal vegetables.



From Bamboo Shoots To Black Rice

Kelli Chana (Manipur): A beloved street-side delicacy, Kelli Chana is a straightforward yet flavorful dish consisting of boiled chickpeas mixed with fried bamboo shoots, spices, and herbs. Typically presented in small leaf cups, it provides a delightful explosion of flavor and texture. The bamboo shoots contribute a unique earthy flavor, ren-

made from fermented soybeans, is stir-fried with a variety of vegetables, ginger, garlic, and mustard oil. It is hearty, rich in protein, and boasts a profound flavor. The fermentation process imparts a unique taste, rendering it essential for those who enjoy culinary adventures. **Eromba (Manipur):** Another Manipuri staple, Eromba is a comforting mash

tangy, slightly sour flavor, making the curry unique. It's a staple in Naga kitchens and highlights the state's reliance on forest produce. **Vegetable Momo (Arunachal Pradesh & Sikkim):** Though momos are popular across India now, their origins lie in the Himalayan belt. Vegetable momos, stuffed with cabbage, carrots, and onions, are steamed dumplings served with spicy chutney. They're light, flavorful, and perfect as snacks or meals. **Dal with Lai Xaak (Assam):** This Assamese dish combines lentils with mustard greens, creating a wholesome and nutritious meal. The bitterness of the greens balances beautifully with the creamy dal, offering a comforting yet complex flavor profile. It's a staple in Assamese households. **Kosu Xaak aru Aloo (Assam):** In Assam, Kosu Xaak aru Aloo is a homely preparation of colocasia leaves cooked with potatoes and spices. The dish is slightly tangy and pairs beautifully with steamed rice. It's a classic example of Assamese cuisine's reliance on leafy greens and seasonal produce. **Chak Hao Kheer (Manipur):** This dessert is made from black rice, locally known as Chak Hao. Cooked slowly with milk and sugar, it transforms into a rich, purple-hued pudding. Chak Hao Kheer is not only delicious but also packed with antioxidants, making it a healthier alternative to regular rice puddings. It's often served during festivals and special occasions. **Khasi Pitha (Meghalaya):** A traditional rice cake, Khasi Pitha is made from rice flour and jaggery, often steamed or pan-fried. It's a festive delicacy enjoyed during community gatherings and celebrations. Its subtle sweetness and chewy texture make it a delightful vegetarian treat.



dering it a snack that is both healthy and deeply embedded in Manipuri culture. **Alu Pitika (Assam):** A beloved comfort food in numerous Assamese homes, Alu Pitika is a dish made from mashed potatoes, enhanced with mustard oil, onions, and green chilies. While it is simple, it is also quite satisfying, typically served with rice and dal. Its rustic appeal is found in its simplicity and the bold flavor of mustard oil. **Tungrymbai (Meghalaya):** This dish,

of boiled vegetables (often potatoes or yams) mixed with fermented fish chutney. For vegetarians, the fish is omitted, and the dish still retains its fiery flavor thanks to generous amounts of chili and fresh herbs. It's eaten with rice and reflects the region's love for simple, earthy meals. **Bamboo Shoot Curry (Nagaland):** Nagaland is famous for its bamboo shoot dishes, and vegetarians can enjoy Bamboo Shoot Curry prepared with seasonal vegetables. The bamboo shoots lend a



How To Prepare Fruit Loaf At Home

Filled with dried fruits, nuts, and delicate spices, a fruit loaf is both substantial and inherently sweet. The most advantageous aspect is that it is straightforward to prepare using basic pantry items and does not necessitate advanced baking expertise. Regardless of whether you are a novice or a seasoned baker, this homemade fruit loaf recipe allows you to manage the sweetness, texture, and flavors. Adhere to this step-by-step guide to create a soft, moist fruit loaf directly in your own oven. **Ingredients:** 3 cups of all-purpose flour, 2 cups of water, 2 cups of powdered sugar, 2 cups of dried fruits, 2 eggs, 2 tablespoons of butter, 1 tablespoon of baking soda, 1 tablespoon of cinnamon, and ½ tablespoon of nutmeg. Firstly, heat some water in a pan and add dried fruits and sugar till the sugar dissolves. Let the water cool for about half an hour till the fruits are plump. Whisk the dry ingredients like flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and nutmeg together. Mix the butter and eggs with the fruit mixture. Combine all the dry and wet ingredients. Now pour the batter into a greased pan and bake for about an hour. Once the fruit loaf cools down, slice it and enjoy.

Jaggery And Wheat Flour Cake Recipe

Homemade cake is not only delightful but also beneficial for your health. Particularly during winter, a sweet delicacy made with jaggery, wheat flour, and dried fruits can resemble a cake, all without the need for an oven. Homemaker Sumitra Maurya recommends

that it can be effortlessly prepared in a pressure cooker or a deep pan, rendering it a healthy and convenient choice. This cake, enhanced with dried fruits, jaggery, and wheat flour, is ideal for festivals or special events and has a wonderful taste. Today, we present a straightforward method to create a jaggery and wheat flour cake at home. It is easy, nutritious, and requires minimal effort. To prepare this cake, you will require 1½ cups of



wheat flour, just over ½ cup of grated jaggery, ½ cup of melted butter, a little more than ½ cup of milk, and 1½ cups of thick yoghurt. Furthermore, add 1 teaspoon each of baking powder and baking soda, ½ teaspoon of salt, 1 teaspoon of vanilla essence, and 1 tablespoon of vinegar or lemon juice. For the dried fruits and nuts, incorporate 1 cup of chopped raisins, dates, figs, and cranberries, along with ¼ cup of chopped

walnuts, almonds, and cashews. Start by cleaning and soaking the dry fruits and nuts in lukewarm water for 20-30 minutes to soften them and enhance their flavour. Meanwhile, heat the milk in a pan without letting it boil, then add the jaggery and stir on low heat until fully dissolved. Allow this mixture to cool completely. Once cooled, whisk in the melted butter, yoghurt, vanilla essence, and vinegar until smooth and well combined. In a separate bowl, sift together the wheat flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Gradually fold the dry mixture into the wet ingredients, mixing gently. When the batter is thick yet still spoonable, carefully fold in the soaked dry fruits to ensure even distribution. Prepare a heavy pan or pressure cooker by spreading a thick layer of salt at the base and placing a stand or an inverted bowl on top. Line a cake tin with butter paper, pour in the batter, and place the tin on the stand. If using a pressure cooker, remove the whistle and cook on very low heat for 50-55 minutes. Once baked, let the cake cool, then serve, garnished with extra dry fruits for added flavour and presentation.

Winter Recipes: 8 Punjabi Chicken Curries You Should Experience This Season

Chicken Makhanwala: This rich and creamy chicken curry is a cherished classic from Punjab. Succulent pieces of chicken are cooked in a flavorful tomato-based sauce, enhanced with kasuri methi and garam masala, resulting in an ideal harmony of spices and creaminess for a comforting and satisfying dish. The winter season in Punjab introduces the delight of robust and flavorful chicken curries that are ideal for this time of year. Abundant in spices and prepared with fresh, locally-sourced components, these curries are crafted to ensure warmth and satisfaction.

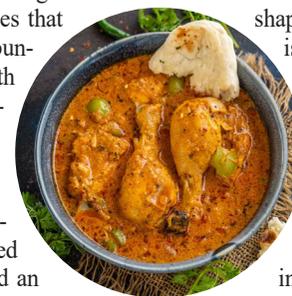
Chicken Peshwari: This aromatic and subtly spicy curry features marinated chicken prepared in a blend of yogurt, cream, and an assortment of fragrant spices. The inclusion of almonds and cashews contributes to its creamy consistency, rendering it a luxurious and satisfying dish for the winter season.

Amritsari Chicken Curry: This dish boasts a deep and rich flavor, crafted from a combination of garlic, ginger, and tangy yogurt. The chicken, cooked slowly, takes in the essence of the spices, resulting in a savory and aromatic meal that complements paratha or rice beautifully. **Chicken Do Pyaza:** This curry emphasizes the

use of onions! Prepared with an abundance of onions—both sautéed and fresh—combined with a robust blend of spices, Chicken Do Pyaza offers a savory experience with an ideal harmony of sweetness and spiciness. It is indeed a delightful dish for the winter season.

Kadhai Chicken: Kadhai Chicken is a flavorful and fragrant curry prepared in a wok-shaped vessel known as a "kadhai." It is made with bell peppers, tomatoes, and a mixture of classic spices, providing a spicy punch that is perfect for chilly winter nights. **Punjabi Chicken Saag:** This seasonal dish features succulent chicken combined with mustard greens (sarson ka saag), resulting in a unique, earthy taste. The recipe is enhanced with garlic, ginger, and green chilies, making it an excellent accompaniment to makki di roti for a satisfying and nourishing meal.

Methi Malai Murgh: This rich chicken curry incorporates fenugreek leaves (methi) to introduce a distinctive bitterness that counterbalances the cream's richness. The fragrant blend of garlic, ginger, and garam masala results in a flavorful and substantial dish, ideal for cold winter evenings.



India preparing with full strength to host 2036 Olympics: PM Modi



VARANASI, JAN 4: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday asserted that India is preparing with full strength to host the 2036 Olympic Games.

Addressing the inaugural function of the 72nd National Volleyball Championship, being held here, through video conference, Modi said, "In the past decade, more than 20 major international events have been held in various cities, including the U-17 FIFA

World Cup, the Hockey World Cup, and major chess tournaments." "The 2030 Commonwealth Game will be held in India. India is preparing with full strength to host the 2036 Olympics," said Modi.

The tournament, being held from January 4 to 11, will witness the participation of more than 1,000 players, representing 58 teams, from across the country. "The tournament is expected to showcase high standards of competition,

sportsmanship, and talent in Indian volleyball," a release said. "Hosting the National Volleyball Tournament in Varanasi underscores the growing emphasis on strengthening sports infrastructure and promoting athletic development in the city," it said. "It further enhances the city's profile as a hub for major national events, aligning with its expanding role in hosting significant cultural and sporting initiatives," the statement said.

"Haryana Drug Menace: Surjewala Targets BJP Over Failed Enforcement"

"Congress leader slams BJP for 'policy paralysis' as drug addiction hits rural areas."

CHANDIGARH, JAN 6: Congress Rajya Sabha member Randeep Singh Surjewala on Tuesday alleged that drug abuse has spread widely across Haryana, posing a serious threat to the younger generation, and held the BJP-led state government responsible for the situation.

In a post on X, he claimed that drugs have reached villages, towns and residential colonies, turning into a major social problem. He alleged that the situation has become so severe that elderly people in villages are forced to note

down the names of youths who have died due to drug addiction.

Stating that these deaths are not

while several villages are declared "drug-free" on official records, drug addiction continues unchecked on the ground, and government anti-drug campaigns are limited to paperwork and publicity.

He also claimed that drug mafias have set up a strong supply network, ranging from synthetic drugs to misuse of medical drugs, reaching almost every district and village in the state. Accusing the state government of negligence, he said drug abuse is destroying families and endangering the future of Haryana's youth.



just statistics, he said they represent broken families and ruined futures. He alleged that

Tragic Death in UP: Fatal Seizure Near Bonfire



BHADOHI, JAN 4: A 50-year-old man died here after he allegedly suffered an epileptic seizure and fell into a bonfire he was warming himself by, police said on Sunday.

The incident occurred in Bhakora village under the Chauri police station area on Saturday night. Station House Officer (SHO) Ram Sarikh Gautam said Basawan alias Kallu (50), who suffered from epilepsy, was warming himself by the bonfire outside his house around 8 pm to keep himself warm when he suffered a seizure and fell into the fire. His wife, Jaydei, was working inside the house, the SHO said. About half an hour later, villagers noticed the smell of burning flesh and went to the spot. They found Basawan lying face down in the bonfire, with half his body severely burnt. He was already dead, Gautam said.

Police said after receiving information about the incident, the body was examined and handed over to the family. Basawan's last rites were performed on Saturday night.

Venezuela crisis won't hit India's economy or energy security as trade and oil ties have shrunk: GTRI

NEW DELHI, JAN 4: The ongoing crisis in Venezuela is unlikely to have any material economic or energy impact for India, asserted India-based think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).

The GTRI, in a note, asserted that India was a major buyer of Venezuelan crude in the 2000s and 2010s. Indian firms such as ONGC Videsh held upstream stakes in the Orinoco belt. Bilateral engagement has weakened sharply since 2019 due to US sanctions, which forced India to cut oil imports and scale back commercial activity to avoid secondary sanctions. As a result, India's trade with Venezuela is now small and declining, GTRI noted on Sunday, a day after US forces carried out a large military operation in Venezuela, capturing President Nicolas Maduro and his wife and taking them to the US to face charges including alleged narco-terrorism and drug trafficking. In 2024-25, India's total imports from Venezuela were just USD 364.5 million, of which crude oil accounted for USD 255.3 million, an 81.3 per cent drop from USD 1.4 billion in crude imports in 2023-24.



India's exports to Venezuela were modest, at USD 95.3 million, led by pharmaceuticals, valued at USD 41.4 million, according to GTRI.

"Given the low trade volumes, existing sanctions constraints, and the large geographical distance, the current developments in Venezuela are not expected to have any meaningful impact on India's economy or energy security," GTRI reiterated. In this emerging global order, wars for raw materials and energy resources are likely to intensify in the coming years, GTRI opined.

GTRI suggested India must therefore act cautiously, protect its strategic autonomy, avoid deals that weaken sovereignty or long-term interests, and secure critical raw material and energy access without geopolitical pressure. Securing control of Venezuelan crude oil was at the core of the US operation, according to GTRI. Venezuela holds about 18 per cent of the world's oil reserves, more than Saudi Arabia (around 16 per cent), Russia (about 5-6 per cent), or the United States (around 4 per cent). Venezuela alone has more crude oil reserves than the US and Russia combined. "The United States has signed trade deals with partners such as the European Union, Japan, South Korea and the United Kingdom, getting commitments from them to buy U.S. petroleum products and LNG, without having sufficient crude oil or refining capacity.

Against this backdrop, Venezuela, which holds the world's largest proven petroleum reserves, represents a critical source of upstream crude for the USA. Free access to Venezuelan oil was thus a central motivation for the US," the GTRI note read.

NIA Charges Arsh Dala-Linked Shooters in Neemrana Case

Puneet and Narinder Lalli face UAPA and Arms Act charges in Neemrana hotel firing

NEW DELHI, JAN 4: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a chargesheet against two main shooters allegedly involved in the 2024 Neemrana hotel firing case linked with Khalistani terrorist Arsh Dala, officials said on Sunday. The arrested accused, Puneet and Narinder Lalli, have been named in a charge sheet filed before a court in Jaipur, Rajasthan, on Saturday for various offences under the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita, the Arms Act and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, they said. The Punjab-based shooters had carried out the actual firing, and were also involved in threatening and demanding extortion from the owners of Highway King Hotel, Neemrana (Haryana), a statement issued by the NIA alleged. With this, a total of



nine accused have so far been charge sheeted in the case. The attack at the hotel was carried out in September 2024 by the terrorist-gangster syndicate of Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) led by des-

igned individual terrorist Arshdeep Singh alias Arsh Dala and the Bambiah gang, the statement said.

Gang members Dinesh Gandhi and Saurabh Kataria were responsible for the planning of the attack, which was executed by Puneet and Narinder, who had the protection of Dala and Gandhi, the agency alleged.

The NIA, during its investigation, uncovered the alleged role of Puneet and Narinder, who had used prohibited weapons in the attack and had also issued a threat on behalf of the syndicate. It was further found that the duo had been receiving funds, shelter and weapons from the syndicate on a sustained basis in a bid to promote KTF's objectives, the probe agency alleged.



Hardik Pandya: 133 Runs, 5 Sixes in One Over!



RAJKOT, JAN 4: India all-rounder Hardik Pandya on Saturday clobbered nearly half a dozen sixes including five in an over on way to a 93-ball 133, for Baroda against Vidarbha in their Vijay Hazare Trophy contest here. Pandya hit an overall 11 sixes and eight fours to turn the tables on Vidarbha, who had taken control of the game by reducing Baroda to 71 for five at one stage and then 136 for six in the first half. However, batting as low as No 7 in his first match of the competition, Pandya came out all guns blazing to bring up his maiden List A century in his 119th match, taking Baroda to a competitive total of 293 for nine in their 50 overs. In the 39th over, Pandya went after Vidarbha spinner Parth Rekhade to collect a total of 34 runs which included five sixes and a four. The first five balls of the left-arm spinner went flying over the ropes while the final ball was hit for a boundary. Pandya's innings included only 31 singles as he launched the counter-attack, hitting most of his sixes in the midwicket region and over long-on. A few also went flying over long-off.

Pandya's domination could also be gauged with the fact that the next best batter in Baroda's innings was Vishnu Solanki, who made 26.

Bangladesh Refuses to Travel to India for T20 World Cup

DHAKA, JAN 4: Bangladesh will request their matches at next month's T20 World Cup be played in Sri Lanka, after India forced a Bangladeshi pacer Mustafizur Rahman to quit the Indian Premier League. "We will not accept any insult to Bangladeshi cricket, cricketers and Bangladesh under any circumstances," said Asif Nazrul, Youth and Sports Adviser in the interim government, in a statement carried by the state-run BSS news agency Sunday. "The days of slavery are over." Mustafizur was released by the Kolkata Knight Riders on Saturday after the IPL team were "advised" by Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to do so, following tensions between the neighbouring nations. Nazrul said he had ordered the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to write to the International Cricket Council (ICC).

"The board should inform that, where a Bangladeshi cricketer cannot play in India despite being contracted, the entire Bangladeshi cricket team cannot feel safe going to play in the World Cup," he wrote. "I have also instructed the board to request that Bangladesh's World Cup

matches should be held in Sri Lanka." The T20 World Cup begins on February 7, co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka. Bangladesh are scheduled to play their four group matches in India. Pakistan will play all their matches in Sri Lanka, part of a deal that allows both India and Pakistan to play at neutral venues in



multi-nation tournaments.

Political relations between India and Bangladesh soured after a mass uprising in Dhaka in 2024 toppled then prime minister Sheikh Hasina, a close ally of New Delhi. India's foreign ministry last month condemned what it called "un-remitting hostility against minorities" in Muslim-majority Bangladesh. Bangladesh's interim leader, Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, has

accused India of exaggerating the scale of the violence. BCB president Aminul Islam Bulbul said the board will hold an emergency meeting later on Sunday. "The dignity and security of our cricketers are our top priorities, and we will take a decision at the appropriate time keeping these in mind", he told reporters late Saturday.

Mustafizur, who has previously played in the IPL for other teams, was snapped up at auction in December by Kolkata for more than \$1 million. But BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said that "considering recent developments" Kolkata had been "advised to release" the 30-year-old. The 2026 IPL season begins on March 26. Nazrul said he would also ask that the IPL be blocked from Bangladeshi broadcasters. "I have requested the Information and Broadcasting Adviser to stop the broadcasting of the IPL tournament in Bangladesh," he said. Kolkata, majority-owned by Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan, subsequently said that Mustafizur's "release has been carried out following due process and consultations."

Meghalaya's Riiohlang Dhar selected for FIFA International Refereeing List 2026

GUWAHATI, JAN 4: Meghalaya's Riiohlang Dhar has once again earned a place on the FIFA Refereeing International List for 2026. This achievement underscores her status as one of India's leading match officials. The All India Football Federation (AIFF) Referee Department informed the Meghalaya Football Association of her selection on December 31.

An experienced FIFA-level assistant referee, Dhar has officiated at numerous international competitions and is regarded as one of India's most seasoned offi-

cial on the global stage.

In 2024, she became only the second Indian official to be appointed for a FIFA World Cup, serving at the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in the Dominican Republic. That same year, she also officiated at the AFC U-17 Women's Asian Cup in Indonesia. Dhar, who serves with the Meghalaya Police, was named Female Assistant Referee of the Year for the 2024-25 season by the AIFF in May 2025.

Her achievements were further celebrated locally in December, when she



was among about 40 individuals honoured at a Meghalaya Football Association awards ceremony.

Venus Williams Back at AO 28 Years After Debut



MELBOURNE, JAN 4: Seven-time Grand Slam singles champion Venus Williams has received a wild-card entry for the Australian Open beginning Jan. 18 in Melbourne. The tournament said Friday that the 45-year-old Williams would make a return to Melbourne Park 28 years after her first appearance. In 1998, she defeated her younger sister Serena in the second round before losing in the quarterfinals to fellow American Lindsay Davenport.

Venus had announced in November that she would play in Auckland, New Zealand, where she also received a wild card, two weeks before the Australian Open. The Australian Open said Williams was also entered to play a tournament in Hobart, Australia a week later and just before play begins at Melbourne Park. She last appeared in Melbourne in 2021 and has finished runner-up in the women's singles twice, losing to Serena in the finals in 2003 and 2017. "I'm excited to be back in Australia and looking forward to competing during the Australian summer," Williams said. "I've had so many incredible memories there, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to return to a place that has meant so much to my career." Williams' record at Melbourne Park is 54 wins and 21 losses. This year will be the 22nd time she has appeared in the main draw. The tournament said Williams is set to become the oldest woman to compete in an Australian Open main draw, surpassing the record previously held by Japan's Kimiko Date, who was 44 when she lost in the first round at Melbourne Park in 2015.

In late December, Williams married Danish-born model and actor Andrea Preti at Palm Beach, Florida.

García Shrugs Off Espanyol Jeers in Barca Derby Win

BARCELONA, JAN 4: Goalkeeper Joan García shrugged off the jeers and vitriol in his return to Espanyol and Barcelona teammate Fermín López set up two late goals for a 2-0 victory in a heated Catalan derby on Saturday. Fermín assisted fellow substitutes Dani Olmo and Robert Lewandowski in the 86th and 90th minutes to tilt the match in favor of the La Liga leaders. But the credit for the win went to García, who made superb saves to frustrate an Espanyol attack that dominated all but the final period. The final score hid a superb effort by fifth-placed Espanyol. Pere Milla and Roberto Fernández drew save after save from García, who was playing his first game at Espanyol since he left the "parakeets" last summer for its top rival. His highlight came in the 39th when García used a reflex one-hand save to paw a point-blank header by Milla over his crossbar.

Espanyol went as far as installing a



thin mesh barrier behind the goals at RCDE Stadium to impede any object from being thrown toward the goalie from the stands. That did not dissuade the section of the club's most fervent young supporters from holding up signs with the image of a rat in Barcelona's burgundy-and-blue colors while shouting at García, a former fan favorite. "Espanyol played a fantastic game. We didn't deserve it (the win),"

Barcelona coach Hansi Flick said. "I have to say thank you to Joan García. He played an unbelievable match. He is one of the best goalkeepers in the world and we had the players off the bench who showed the quality this team has." Flick also credited Espanyol coach Manolo González for having given García the "confidence" to grow last season, when he caught the eye of many top clubs in Europe.

"(García) plays for us now and he has played unbelievable all season. He played fantastic and the clean sheet today was his responsibility."

Olmo broke through for Barcelona when he used one smooth touch to lob a pass by Fermín over Espanyol goalie Marko Dimitrovic. Fermín then followed that by dribbling past his marker inside the right side of the box before laying off for Lewandowski to finish off Espanyol. Before that late burst by Barcelona, the action had mostly been in García's box where he made three stops to turn back Roberto in the second half. The loss broke a run of five straight victories by Espanyol, its best winning run since the 1998-99 season. "Today was a day to win and we let it get away from us," Espanyol's González said.

Next up for Barcelona is a trip to Saudi Arabia for the Spanish Super Cup along with Madrid, Atletico Madrid and Athletic Bilbao from Jan. 7-11.

