

## Five-Day Internet Ban in Manipur Security Zones

Gangtok, Feb 10: The Manipur government on February 10 ordered a temporary suspension of internet and data services in parts of Kangpokpi and Kamjong districts for five days, citing apprehensions of misuse of social media to incite unrest



amid a volatile law and order situation. According to the order, the decision was taken in view of the prevailing tension in adjoining areas of Kangpokpi, Ukhrul and Kamjong districts, where authorities fear that anti-social elements may use social media platforms to circulate inflammatory images, posts and videos. Such content, the government noted, could fuel public passions, spread false rumours and pose a serious threat to public tranquillity, communal harmony and safety of life and prop-

erty. After reviewing the situation and its possible correlation with unrestricted internet services, the State Government decided to impose the suspension as a preventive and precautionary measure. Accordingly, internet and data services, including broadband, VPN and VSAT services, have been suspended across the entire revenue jurisdiction of Lhungtin Sub-Division in Kangpokpi district and Phungyar Sub-Division in Kamjong district.

The order, issued under Rule 3 of the Temporary Suspension of Telecommunication Services Rules, 2024, stated that the Governor of Manipur was satisfied that the situation could lead to serious disturbances to public order if not addressed promptly.

The suspension came into effect from 5:30 pm on February 10, 2026, and will remain in force for five days. All internet service providers have been directed to ensure strict compliance with the order.

## Minister Chowdhury: Union Budget 2026-27 a Game-Changer for Farmers

Guwahati, Feb 9: Agartala, February 10, 2026: Tripura Tourism and Transport Minister Sushanta Chowdhury on Tuesday hailed the Union Budget 2026-27 as a decisive milestone for the agriculture sector, asserting that it would significantly strengthen farmers' welfare and accelerate India's march towards Viksit Bharat under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Addressing a farmers' meeting at Gandhigram in Bamutia constituency, attended by Union Minister Tokhan Sahu, Chowdhury said the Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman underscores the Centre's unwavering focus on inclusive growth and rural upliftment. He remarked that the financial blueprint is guided by the vision of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas, placing farmers at the core of the national development agenda.

The Minister pointed out that the Budget prioritises the strengthening of agricultural infrastructure, enhancement of productivity, and reduction of import dependence, while maintaining a careful balance between fiscal responsibility and welfare-oriented measures. According to him, the proposals offer meaningful relief to farming families and simultaneously address concerns of the middle class.

Chowdhury also welcomed initiatives



aimed at expanding skill development and equipping rural youth for emerging agri-tech opportunities. He said reforms in taxation and the banking sector would improve financial access in villages, fostering greater inclusion. Referring to social sector measures, he highlighted proposals related to healthcare and education, including medical tourism hubs, caregiver support mechanisms, and the plan to build 16,000 new secondary schools, which he said would have a direct impact on rural communities. Emphasising women-led development,

Chowdhury praised new schemes for women entrepreneurs, noting that they build upon the success of the Lakhpati Didi initiative. He further said that price relief measures, including cuts on essential medicines and solar equipment, would help reduce household expenses for farmers.

"The Budget clearly signals that India's growth will be driven by innovation, self-reliance and investment in human capital," Chowdhury said, adding that it lays a robust foundation for sustainable agricultural and rural development.

## Tripura SEC Preps for Council Polls

Agartala, Feb 10: The State Election Commission (SEC) has formally initiated the process for conducting the General Elections to the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), which are expected to be held in March or April this year. In a notification issued on February 6, the Election Commissioner for District Council, Tripura, announced the schedule for the preparation and finalisation of the list of polling stations in connection with the ensuing TTAADC elections, 2026. As per the notified schedule, the draft publication of the list of polling stations will be carried out on February 13. The last date for receiving claims, objections, and suggestions from stakeholders has been fixed for February 17. The disposal of all claims and objections will be completed by February 19, while the final publication of the list of polling stations is scheduled for February 21.



The notification stated that the process is being undertaken in exercise of the powers conferred under Rule 23 of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (Constitution, Election and Conduct of Business) Rules, 1985. Earlier, State Election Commissioner Manoj Kumar had appointed Assistant Electoral Returning Officers (AEROs) for all 28 seats of the autonomous district council, signalling the Election Commission's preparedness to conduct the

polls in a timely and systematic manner.

The present tenure of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council is set to expire on April 18, making the upcoming elections crucial for the continuation of the democratic process in the tribal autonomous body. Election officials have directed all Returning Officers and concerned departments to take necessary steps to ensure smooth execution of the election-related activities as per the stipulated timeline.

## Congress vs. Himanta: Protests Erupt Over Claims of Massive Land Accumulation

Guwahati, Feb 10: The Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) on Sunday launched a statewide protest campaign accusing Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his family of acquiring nearly 12,000 bighas of land by allegedly misusing political power. Raising the slogan "Deshotkoi Mami Dangor Nohoy," the Congress organised protest demonstrations at district headquarters across Assam, demanding a comprehensive and impartial investigation into what it described as large-scale land grabbing by the Chief Minister's family. Protests were held in multiple districts, including Biswanath, Charaideo, Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur, Darrang, Sonitpur, Nagaon, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Tinsukia, Tamulpur, Goalpara, Nalbari, Bongaigaon, Chirang, Kokrajhar, Udalguri and Dhubri. In Guwahati, hundreds of Congress leaders and workers assembled at the Manavendra Sharma Complex under the leadership of Kamrup (Metro) District Congress President Swapan Das. Demonstrators raised slogans demanding accountability from the Chief Minister over his alleged assets, with chants asserting that Himanta Biswa Sarma became the owner of vast tracts of land only after assuming office. Slogans critical of the BJP leadership were also raised during the protest.

Several senior Congress leaders and of-



ference-bearers took part in the demonstration, including Kushal Sharma, Gopal Sharma, Ramen Sharma, Mahila Congress President Meera Borthakur, APCC Media and Communication Department Chairman Bedabrat Bora, APCC Secretary Imdad Hussain, Kridip Barman and District Congress General Secretary Rupak Das, among others. Police personnel were deployed at the protest site in Guwahati as the gathering swelled, though the demonstration remained peaceful. Reiterating their allegations, Congress leaders demanded an immediate, independent probe into the alleged acquisition of 12,000 bighas of land by the Chief Minister's family and called for strict action if the charges are substantiated.





### Sikkim CM Meets FM: Thanks Her for Buddhist Circuit Project

**Gangtok, Feb 9:** Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Monday expressed his gratitude to Union Finance Minister Nirmla Sitharaman and the Central Government for the Union Budget's emphasis on the North-Eastern region, highlighting the announcement of the Scheme for Development of Buddhist Circuits. The Chief Minister noted that the recognition of the North-East as a civilizational confluence of the Theravada and Mahayana/Vajrayana traditions, along with plans to preserve Buddhist sites and monasteries, improve connectivity, and enhance pilgrim amenities, aligns with Sikkim's

rich cultural and spiritual heritage. He also mentioned that he had the opportunity to meet Finance Minister Sitharaman to discuss various developmental issues concerning Sikkim, describing the interaction as "enriching and encouraging," reflecting the Centre's continued support for inclusive and sustainable development. CM Tamang further conveyed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his "visionary leadership and constant encouragement," which he said helps states like Sikkim receive consistent support for holistic, people-centric development.

## CM Himanta Demands Explanation Over Gaurav Gogoi's Rawalpindi Visit

**Guwahati, Feb 9:** The political spat between Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi escalated on Monday, with Sarma demanding a "transparent explanation" regarding Gogoi's 2013 visit to the Rawalpindi district of Pakistan. The Chief Minister alleged that Gogoi's visa was restricted to Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad, raising questions about how he accessed a "high-security" district. Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Sarma asserted that under Pakistan's immigration rules, travel beyond designated cities requires specific authorization. He highlighted that Takshashila (Taxila), which Gogoi admitted to visiting, is located in the Rawalpindi District rather than the Islamabad Capital Territory. Sarma further suggested that because Rawalpindi houses the Pakistan Army's General Headquarters, the visit might have been facilitated through "institutional arrangements" rather than standard civilian permissions. Responding to the charges during a press conference,



Gogoi dismissed the Chief Minister's claims as "mindless and bogus," stating that Sarma was "floundering and sinking in his own web of lies." Gogoi clarified that he accompanied his wife on a 10-day trip to Pakistan in December 2013 for her work-related purposes. He noted that Takshashila is a routine "day's trip from Islamabad" and a significant archaeological site in Indian civilization. Gogoi further pointed out that his original general passport, which contains all travel details and stamps from the visit, was submitted to the Government of India in 2014 when he applied for a diplomatic passport. "It lies with them and it contains all the details of my Pakistan visit,"

the Congress MP asserted, suggesting the government already has the facts. The controversy follows Sarma's allegations on Sunday, where he claimed Gogoi and his family had "Pakistani links" and suggested a "deeper connection" involving a Pakistani national and the secret passing of intelligence. Gogoi has vehemently denied these claims, labeling the Chief Minister's press briefings as "worse than C-grade cinema." As the verbal duel continues, the Chief Minister maintains that the lack of a specific visa endorsement for a restricted district like Rawalpindi remains a "legitimate and factual" question that warrants a clear response.

### New Mizoram-Assam Train Service Launched

**Mizoram, Feb 9:** Chief Minister Lalduhoma and Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Monday flagged off the inaugural Silchar-Sairang passenger train, creating the Barak Valley's first direct rail link to Mizoram's capital, Aizawl. The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) launched the service from Sairang Railway Station at 12 noon, following persistent efforts by Rajya Sabha MP Kanad Purkayastha. Union Minister Vaishnav participated via video conference, emphasizing the train's significance in enhancing regional integration. The event also saw the inauguration of upgraded passenger facilities at Guwahati Railway Station, including sleeping pods, an air-conditioned lounge, and a multi-cuisine restaurant to improve commuter comfort. Divisional Railway Manager Samir Lohani of the Lumding Division described the new train service as a milestone for socio-economic development in the region, projecting benefits in trade, tourism, and connectivity between Assam and Mizoram.

## Amit Shah to Visit Tripura on Feb 20 for Poll Push



**Agartala, Feb 9:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah

is expected to arrive in Tripura on February 20 for a one-day visit, party insiders revealed, marking a significant political development ahead of the elections to the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC). Senior BJP leaders in the state indicated that while Shah's official itinerary is yet to be confirmed, preparations are underway for his arriv-

al. "We have learnt that the Union Home Minister will be in Tripura on February 20," a source within the party said. During his stay, Shah is likely to attend a government programme showcasing developmental initiatives led by the Centre in the state. He is also expected to hold a closed-door meeting with the BJP's state leadership to discuss organisational strategies and campaign plans for the upcoming council polls. The visit is being viewed as a morale booster for the BJP, particularly in tribal-dominated regions where the TTAADC elections carry considerable weight. Party functionaries believe Shah's presence will energise grassroots workers and strengthen outreach efforts in the run-up to the crucial polls.

## MP Subba Reviews Sikkim Highway



**Gangtok, Feb 10:** Dr. Indra Hang Subba, Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) from Sikkim, met Lieutenant General Harpal Singh, Director General of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), at the BRO Headquarters in New Delhi. During the meeting, Dr. Subba congratulated Lt Gen Harpal Singh on his new role and discussed ongoing and proposed road infrastructure projects in Sikkim, highlighting their importance for regional connectivity, development, and strategic requirements. Dr. Subba also raised

concerns about the monsoon preparedness of the BRO, focusing on the North Sikkim highway, which often faces disruptions during the rainy season. He stressed the need for advance planning, preventive measures, and prompt response to ensure safe and uninterrupted movement. Lt Gen Harpal Singh briefed the MP on the BRO's preparedness measures and initiatives and assured continued commitment to maintaining and strengthening critical road infrastructure in Sikkim, especially during the monsoon period.

## Arunachal: Dy CM Chowna Mein in Colombo to facilitate Devnimori Buddha relics return

**Guwahati, Feb 9:** Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein arrived in Colombo on Monday as part of an official Indian delegation to facilitate the return of the sacred Devnimori relics of Lord Buddha from Sri Lanka. Describing the occasion as one of immense spiritual and national significance, Mein said the event transcends national boundaries and holds deep civilisational importance for followers of Buddhism worldwide. He expressed his privilege in being part of the del-

egation tasked with bringing back the revered relics. The Devnimori relics, excavated in the 1960s from an ancient stupa at Devnimori in Gujarat's Aravalli region, are among India's most venerated Buddhist antiquities. Dating back to the 3rd-4th century CE, the stupa contained caskets with sacred remains associated with Lord Buddha, along with inscriptions and artefacts linked to early Buddhist worship. Officials said the relics symbolize devotion, the continuity of faith, and the historical spread of Bud-



dham across regions. Their return carries not only profound spiritual and cultural value but also diplomatic sig-

nificance, strengthening ties between Buddhist communities and nations connected through shared heritage.



## HMSI celebrates 5 years of Guwahati safety centre, trains over 1 lakh riders; expands road safety push

**Guwahati:** Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) on Thursday marked the fifth anniversary of its Safety Driving Education Centre (SDEC) in Guwahati, highlighting the training of over 1,00,000 individuals since the centre's launch in February 2021 in partnership with the Assam Transport Department. District Transport Officer Gautam Das attended the event and appreciated the centre's contribution to promoting disciplined and safe riding practices.

The Guwahati SDEC has provided structured theoretical and practical training



to school students, college youth, working professionals and driving licence applicants through scientifically designed modules covering road signs, riding posture, safe riding etiquette, simulator-based risk exposure and Kiken Yosoku Training (KYT) for danger prediction. HMSI

operates six SDECs and ten Traffic Training Parks nationwide, impacting more than 10 million Indians through its road safety initiatives.

Aligned with Honda's global vision of achieving zero traffic collision fatalities by 2050 and India's target of halving fatalities by 2030,

HMSI is also strengthening digital outreach through its multilingual "E-Gurukul" platform for children aged 5-18 to build a safety-first mindset.

In Guwahati, the growing adoption of two-wheelers in the city, particularly among youth and delivery-based services, is increasing the demand for structured rider training. Industry observers note that HMSI's sustained investment in safety education is likely to enhance brand credibility while supporting safer mobility practices across Assam's expanding two-wheeler market.

## MSDE-IPE Global pact aims to scale women-centric skilling, boost employability

**Guwahati:** In a move expected to strengthen India's human capital pipeline, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IPE Global Limited to build a gender-responsive and future-ready skilling ecosystem for young women across the country.

The collaboration focuses on improving programme design, increasing women's participation in aspirational job roles, and strengthening the linkage between skilling, employability and inclusive economic growth. It will adopt evidence-based, gender-responsive interventions to address structural barriers, better align training with industry demand, and enhance placement pathways through deeper private sector engagement.

MSDE Secretary Debashree Mukherjee said women's skilling is central to India's inclusive growth and workforce transformation, noting that the partnership aims to create an enabling ecosystem where young women, especially from underserved regions, can access dignified employment and sustainable career pathways.

The MoU also provides for a multilingual national awareness campaign to promote women's participation in skilling and formal employment. Additional measures include employer engagement through gender-inclusive hiring commitments and strengthened monitoring systems to support data-driven governance. The initiative will reinforce MSDE's special skilling efforts for adolescent girls, making programmes more outcome-oriented and future-ready.

Businesses in Guwahati view the partnership as a positive signal for the regional labour market, particularly in services, retail and emerging enterprise segments. Industry observers say improved access to skilled women workers could help firms address talent gaps, support productivity, and encourage greater female participation in the city's formal economy.

## Nestlé India marks 50 years of MAGGI with commemorative postal stamp

**Kohima:** Nestlé India marked a major milestone with the unveiling of a commemorative postal stamp celebrating 50 years of MAGGI in India, underscoring the brand's long-standing presence in the country's packaged food sector. The stamp was unveiled by Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Chirag Paswan along with Nestlé India Chairman and Managing Director Manish Tiwary.

Over the past five decades, MAGGI has evolved beyond instant noodles into a diversified portfolio that includes masalas, sauces, soups and ready-to-cook products, becoming a key contributor to India's growing processed food ecosystem. The "50 Years of Togetherness" stamp celebrates the brand's association with everyday meals, family gatherings and shared food moments across generations. "India's processed food sector has come a long way in earning the trust of households over decades. I congratulate MAGGI on completing 50 years as part of this remarkable journey," Paswan said. Tiwary added that completing five decades reflects "the trust, affection and everyday love that millions have showered on the brand."

Distributors in Kohima reported steady demand for MAGGI products, particularly among students and young working consumers, with retailers noting consistent growth driven by expanding modern retail networks and strong brand recall across urban and semi-urban areas.

## Companies push inclusive workplace policies as mental health becomes key business priority

**Guwahati:** Indian companies are increasingly recognising that inclusive workplace practices and employee mental wellbeing are closely interconnected, particularly for LGBTQIA+ employees whose sense of belonging and identity significantly shapes their work experience. Industry experts note that progressive organisations are moving beyond traditional mental health programmes and adopting inclusive frameworks that acknowledge how gender, sexuality, disability, and neurodiversity influence employee wellbeing.

Businesses are being encouraged to embed inclusion into everyday policies rather than relying on symbolic diversity campaigns. Key initiatives gaining traction include extending healthcare benefits to partners, offering access to mental health professionals trained in LGBTQIA+ issues, implementing gender-affirmation policies, and establishing safe channels for dialogue and grievance redressal. Organisations are also advised to respect employee privacy and avoid pressuring individuals to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity, ensuring support systems remain accessible to all employees. In Guwahati, HR consultants and corporate leaders report a gradual rise in companies integrating inclusive benefits and psychological-safety programmes as part of workforce-retention strategies. Local businesses say such policies are helping improve engagement, attract diverse talent, and strengthen organisational productivity in a competitive hiring environment.

Corporate leaders believe that sustained leadership commitment, cultural change, and continuous learning will be essential to building resilient and inclusive workplaces, contributing to long-term economic growth and the broader vision of a developed India by 2047.

## Organic India launches wellness-themed Valentine's Day gift edit to tap premium gifting demand

**Guwahati:** Organic India, part of Tata Consumer Products Limited, has introduced a curated "Valentine's Day Gifting Edit" featuring wellness-oriented hampers designed to combine mindful indulgence with everyday nutrition. The collection focuses on health-conscious gifting, bringing together organic pantry essentials and herbal tea experiences for consumers seeking meaningful alternatives to conventional presents. The Savoury Sweetheart Gift Box, priced at ₹1,999, includes certified organic staples such as Himalayan multifloral honey, premium cow ghee, quinoa, brown rice, chia and flax seeds,



jaggery powder, nuts, raisins and Organic India's signature Tulsi detox kahwa, aimed at encouraging nourishing meal and tea rituals. The Wooden Gift Box - 100 Tea Bags (₹1,299) features assorted organic Tulsi tea variants including Original, Ginger, Masala Chai and Green Tea Classic, packaged in an elegant wooden case for pre-

mium gifting. Meanwhile, the Exotic Brew Gift Box, priced at ₹1,079, offers select Tulsi loose-leaf blends paired with a stainless-steel infuser, targeting tea enthusiasts seeking refined brewing experiences.

Retailers in Guwahati are witnessing steady growth in demand for premium organic gifting hampers, particularly during festive and seasonal occasions. Industry stakeholders note that rising awareness about wellness products and conscious consumption is encouraging urban buyers to opt for organic food and herbal tea gift boxes, a trend expected to boost Valentine's Day sales across the region.

## NCB enters Northeast luxury jewellery market with Guwahati flagship launch



**Guwahati:** The luxury jewellery retail segment in Northeast India is set for a notable expansion with Nemichand Bamalwa Jewellers (NCB) launching its flagship showroom in Guwahati, strengthening the region's premium retail landscape. The nearly 40-year-old jewellery brand has opened its new store at Ganeshguri, GS Road, with public access beginning February 7, 2026, following an unveiling by noted personality Nishita Goswami.

NCB, widely regarded as a pioneer of the 22/22K gold jewellery standard, has positioned itself around transparency and purity assurance. The company's innovation ensures jewellery maintains full 22K purity even after melting without deduction in gold weight, addressing earlier industry practices where lower-purity solder reduced overall gold content to 18K-20K and impacted customer value.

The Guwahati flagship outlet will offer wedding, bridal and party wear collections, including jewellery crafted in natural diamonds, gold, jadau and polki designs, targeting customers seeking high-value, heirloom-grade products. Directors Pramod Bamalwa, Vinay Bamalwa and Ravi Bamalwa said the company invested three years preparing for the Northeast expansion, aiming to build a market presence anchored in fair pricing, transparency and long-term customer trust.

## Maharashtra orders statewide crackdown on illegal mosquito agarbattis 'Comfort' and 'Sleep Well'

The Maharashtra Department of Agriculture has directed insecticide inspectors across the state to initiate enforcement action against the sale of illegal mosquito agarbattis marketed under the brand names "Comfort" and "Sleep Well." Authorities have ordered raids, seizures, and prosecution of violators under the Insecticides Act, 1968, and the Insecticides Rules, 1971, while cautioning retailers and distributors that stocking or selling unregistered insecticide products is punishable under law. The action follows earlier laboratory investigations in Andhra Pradesh and Mumbai that confirmed the presence of illegal and unapproved insecticides in the two products. Within 15 days of the Mumbai raid and ban on "Comfort," the Director of Agriculture issued a fresh statewide circular mandating strict enforcement



only products carrying a valid CIBRC registration number. Retailers and distributors in Guwahati said the crackdown could prompt stricter compliance checks across the country, encouraging traders to stock only properly registered mosquito repellent products. Market participants noted that increased regulatory vigilance is likely to strengthen consumer trust and drive demand for certified household insecticide brands in the northeastern region.

and reporting of all actions to the Commissionerate of Agriculture.

The Home Insect Control Association (HICA) welcomed the move. Its Honorary Secretary Jayant Deshpande said the enforcement would protect consumers from spurious mosquito repellents and urged buyers to purchase

only products carrying a valid CIBRC registration number. Retailers and distributors in Guwahati said the crackdown could prompt stricter compliance checks across the country, encouraging traders to stock only properly registered mosquito repellent products. Market participants noted that increased regulatory vigilance is likely to strengthen consumer trust and drive demand for certified household insecticide brands in the northeastern region.

## Shringla pushes rail connectivity, tourism and investment rollout to unlock Northeast growth

New Delhi: MP Harsh Vardhan Shringla on Thursday highlighted infrastructure expansion, rail connectivity and tourism development as key drivers of economic transformation in the North Eastern Region, calling for stronger monitoring of ongoing projects and effective utilisation of central funds. Raising the issue in Parliament, he sought details on the progress of initiatives announced at the Rising North East Summit and urged the government to ensure that investment commitments translate into employment, trade expansion and sustainable regional growth.

Shringla emphasised that improved rail and road con-



nectivity linking remote areas of the Northeast to the rest of the country is already symbolising greater integration and opportunity, bringing markets closer, boosting tourism and strengthening national unity. Stressing the tourism potential of the region, he described the Northeast as a hub of eco, cultural and adventure tourism sup-

ported by rich tribal heritage and natural beauty.

Quoting his intervention, Shringla said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has displayed a deep and heartfelt connection with the Northeast... During the recent Northeast Investors' Summit inaugurated by him, investors committed investment interests of Rs 4.3 lakh crore."

## Medanta Q3 FY26: Revenue up 19%, volumes strong; Noida ramp-up and one-time labour code cost weigh on margins

Gurugram: Global Health Limited reported a strong operating performance in Q3 FY26, with consolidated total income rising 19.1% year-on-year to ₹11,428 million, reflecting robust patient volumes, improved realizations and steady execution across its hospital network.

EBITDA excluding the newly commissioned Noida hospital grew 10.9% to ₹2,814 million, with healthy margins of 25.4%. However, consolidated EBITDA including Noida declined 1.7% to ₹2,494 million, as the Noida facility—operation-

al since September 2025—posted revenue of ₹343 million and an EBITDA loss of ₹320 million during the quarter. Consolidated margins stood at 21.8%.

Profit after tax for the quarter came in at ₹950 million, impacted by depreciation and finance costs related to Noida, initial operating losses, and a non-recurring exceptional expense of ₹366 million due to the statutory implementation of new Labour Codes.

Operational metrics remained firm, with inpatient volumes rising 14.3% and out-

patient volumes up 19.5% year-on-year. Average length of stay improved 6.6% to 3.02 days, ARPOB increased 9.9% to ₹67,361, and occupancy stood at around 59% on expanded capacity. The company added 144 beds during the quarter.

For 9M FY26, total income rose 17.6% to ₹33,131 million, EBITDA (including Noida) increased 8% to ₹7,654 million, and PAT grew 8.5% to ₹4,124 million, supported by strong growth in developing hospitals, international patient revenue, and OPD pharmacy sales.

## ITC's Sunrise Spices launches first-of-its-kind Til Chicken Masala in Assam

Guwahati: ITC Ltd.'s Sunrise Spices, a leading spice brand in eastern India, has launched Sunrise Til Chicken Masala in Assam, introducing a first-to-market spice blend aimed at simplifying the preparation of the region's popular traditional dish, Til Chicken. The ready-to-use masala is designed to preserve the authentic regional taste while offering convenience for modern households.

The launch strengthens Sunrise's region-focused portfolio, which already includes Assam-specific spice blends such as HaahSalkumra (Duck Curry with Ashgourd) masala and other traditional meat masalas developed using local consumer insights. Til Chicken, a winter favourite widely served during family meals and festive occasions, typically involves a time-consuming preparation process requiring sun-drying, roasting and grinding sesame seeds. Made using pre-roasted black til and a curated blend of spices, the new masala aims to deliver the dish's signature nutty flavour, smoky aroma and thick blackish gravy with consistent taste and freshness.

Commenting on the launch, Piyush Mishra, Business

Head, Sunrise Spices, ITC Ltd., said the product seeks to preserve Assamese culinary traditions while making the cooking process simpler and more accessible. The brand has also introduced a WhatsApp-based chatbot experience that allows consumers to create personalised avatars with a Til Chicken thali,



**Feast Mode**  
**TIL CHICKEN**  
**THALI**

adding an interactive engagement layer.

In Guwahati, retailers expect steady traction driven by rising demand for convenient regional spice mixes. Priced at Rs. 20 for an 18g pack, Sunrise Til Chicken Masala is now available across retail stores in Guwahati.

## TAFE rolls out MASSEY DYNASTAR Season 3, offers Rs 8.2 lakh tractor to fuel farm innovation



Guwahati: Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited, one of the world's largest tractor manufacturers, has announced the launch of Season 3 of the 'MASSEY DYNASTAR Contest 2026 - #SabseBadeAllrounder Ki Talaash', aiming to strengthen innovation-driven growth in India's agriculture and rural enterprise ecosystem.

After two successful editions, the third

season has been expanded as the biggest yet, positioning the contest as a national innovation platform for farmers, entrepreneurs, students, startups, academicians and rural changemakers. The initiative invites original and practical ideas powered by any Massey Ferguson tractor, spanning agriculture, allied sectors and rural businesses.

Shortlisted participants will gain nation-

al visibility and the opportunity to present their ideas before an expert jury comprising industry specialists and senior TAFE leaders. The winner will receive a Massey Ferguson 254 DYNASTAR tractor, valued at around ₹8.2 lakh, known for its performance, versatility and design, along with exciting cash rewards.

Entries can be submitted online in video or text format, in English or any Indian regional language. Each submission must demonstrate a feasible application that improves farming efficiency, creates new business opportunities, or delivers measurable social and economic impact. Finalists will present their solutions at a Grand Finale event. The contest is open to Indian citizens above 18 years of age.

Agri-industry stakeholders in Guwahati see the contest as timely for the Northeast, where demand is rising for customised mechanisation and farm-linked enterprises. Dealers and agri-entrepreneurs believe MASSEY DYNASTAR Season 3 could encourage locally relevant innovations using Massey Ferguson tractors, supporting productivity, rural livelihoods and agri-business expansion in the region.



# Attractions to explore in Tsavo West National Park, Kenya



Tsavo West and Tsavo East National Parks together form one of the largest national parks in the world, covering 4% of Kenya's total land area. It's about the same size as Jamaica, Michigan, Wales or Israel. The park is named after the Tsavo River that flows from west to east. For administrative purposes, it has been divided into Tsavo East and West with a division line going by the Nairobi to Mombasa road. Tsavo West is 9000 km<sup>2</sup> in size, characterized by a rugged arid landscape. It ranges from 200-1000 metres in altitude. This park is marked with a number of rocky outcrops and volcanic hills. It's lesser known due to its large size and a smaller concentration of wildlife compared with other parks. A great

advantage of Tsavo West National Park is more than 2,000 kilometres of well-maintained roads.

1) Beautiful scenery Tsavo West is marked by a number of rocky outcrops and volcanic hills. Tsavo West National Park's landscape is dominated by giant baobabs reputed to live a thousand years. After the rain, Tsavo West National Park is showered with white and pink ipomea and acacia trees of white and pink blossom. The desert rose, somewhat like a miniature baobab, has pink flowers of striking beauty at almost any time of the year. On a clear day, the park offers lovely views of the snow-capped peaks of Mount Kilimanjaro.

2) Shetani lava flow When entering Tsavo West through Chyulu gate, one

of the first things you see in the park is Shetani lava flow. Shetani means 'devil' in Kiswahili. When the locals first saw 'fire' erupting and 'flowing' on the ground some 500 years ago, they believed that it was the devil himself emerging from the earth. The Shetani black lava flow is 8 km long, 1.6 km wide and 5 meters deep. The sight is quite special and spectacular.

3) Chaimu volcanic crater and lava field Notice how the road color changes from red to black as you get closer to Chaimu. Chaimu crater, or "the devil's crater" in Kamba tribe language, is a tall rising hill clad in the bright black colour of the lava stones. You can climb this recent volcano as there is a path leading to the top. Climbing the hill is not easy as it is not

stable and can be slippery.

4) Five sister's hills One more volcanic feature of Tsavo West is 'Five Sisters,' the five almost identical cone-shaped hills located in one area and resembling one another. The scenery is stunning – a low ridge of black lava outcrop, long luscious grass and conical hills that make the Five Sisters.

5) Mzima springs Mzima Springs are replenished with two hundred and twenty million litres of crystal-clear water every day. It comes from the underground streams flowing from the nearby Chyulu Hills. Mzima in Swahili means 'Life'. It attracts rich

fers magnificent game viewing. Thick vegetation makes it more difficult compared to more open parks, for example, the Masai Mara, but with some patience, visitors can see some of the big five along with a wide range of antelope species, hippos, and spectacular birdlife. Just make sure you have the best binoculars for your safari.

7) Serena Kilaguni lodge If there is just one reason to go to Tsavo West, it's Serena Kilaguni lodge. Kilaguni was the first lodge inside Tsavo West National Park, opened by Britain's Duke of Gloucester in 1962. It is located at the centre of the park and



wildlife including elephants, hippos, crocodiles, gazelles, zebras and giraffes wandering around the banks through the thick acacias and raffia palms together with a large number of monkeys and birds. Mzima is also the main source of Mombasa's city water supply. There are well-marked nature trails, an observation platform and an underwater glass tank. You can take a walk guided by a ranger there.

6) Animal viewing Tsavo West of-

has an excellent game viewing in all directions. The lodge and its waterhole have an almost permanent population of ground squirrels, warthogs, hyraxes, mongooses and other birds. The traditionally decorated dining room overlooks the Lodge's waterhole where herds of elephants, buffaloes and graceful antelopes collect to drink while guests enjoy dishes of ethnic cuisine, internationally-themed dishes, and traditional safari favourites.

## Within Meghalaya's exceptionally unique hamlet, each individual's name possesses a distinctive melody

Nestled within the East Khasi Hills of Meghalaya, Kongthong is renowned as the "Whistling Village of India." In this village, individuals refrain from using names to address one another; rather, they opt for melodic tones that resonate throughout the hills and valleys. This



method of communication transforms ordinary dialogue into a harmonious experience, establishing the village as one of the most distinctive cultural environments in India. In Kongthong, every individual has a personal tune instead of a spoken name. The tradition, called jingrwai lawbei or 'whistling lullaby',

begins before birth. Mothers compose a melody inspired by nature, birds, wind, and leaves, which becomes the child's lifelong identity. No two tunes are alike, making each whistle as unique as a fingerprint. Kongthong is home to the Khasi community, an indigenous group living across the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. They trace their roots to Southeast Asia and speak the Khasi language. The society is divided into clans and is deeply connected to nature and tradition. The Khasi follow a rare matrilineal system where lineage and property pass through women. The youngest daughter typically inherits ancestral property, and Khasi women enjoy a high social status, playing central roles in family, economy, and community decision-making, which is an exception in many patriarchal societies. Khasi cuisine is simple, earthy, and meat-centric, with rice and pork as staples. Vegetarian food is rare in daily meals. Cooking focuses on natural flavours, minimal oil, and local ingredients, offering a distinct taste that reflects the hills and the lifestyle of the people.

## INDIAWOOD 2026 emerges as key market indicator for India's expanding wood working and furniture industry

**New Delhi:** The Indian woodworking and furniture manufacturing market is set for a significant upswing, with INDIAWOOD 2026 scheduled to take place from February 26 to March 2 at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre, Bengaluru. Organised by Nürnberg Messe India and supported by EUMABOIS, the 26th edition is projected to be the largest in the event's history and a key barometer of sectoral growth.

The exhibition will feature more than 1,000 brands from over 50 countries, draw upwards of 90,000 industry professionals, and span 85,000 square metres—representing a 15 per cent expansion over the previous edition. The scale of participation reflects growing global confidence in India's manufacturing ecosystem and



aligns with the Viksit Bharat vision focused on advanced manufacturing, exports and global integration.

Market sentiment has also been strengthened by progress on the India-EU Free Trade Agreement, described by policymakers as the "mother of all deals". The pact is expected to ease tariffs, expand access to European markets, boost exports of engineered wood products, and enable smoother inflows of advanced machinery.

From a technology per-

spective, INDIAWOOD 2026 will highlight automation-led manufacturing, Industry 4.0 solutions, advanced CNC processing, compact and upgradeable machinery, sustainable materials, and certified low-emission products. Co-located platforms such as the India Mattresstech& Upholstery Supplies Expo and Wood+ in Architecture & Design further reinforce an integrated industry ecosystem, supporting a furniture market projected to reach USD 40 billion by 2030.



## Joint-friendly exercises facilitate fat loss in a manner that is both easier and safer

As individuals age, the process of losing weight frequently becomes increasingly difficult. Factors such as knee pain, the fear of injury, reduced stamina, and a declining metabolism can render regular exercise challenging. This is particularly applicable to those over the age of 50 or individuals weighing 80, 90, or even 100 kg. High-impact workouts, jumping exercises, and rigorous gym sessions may seem risky. Nevertheless, specialists assert that significant weight loss does not necessarily demand strenuous effort. Consistent engagement in simple, low-impact activities can yield lasting results. Fitness coach Neha addresses these concerns in an Instagram post.

To people who avoid exercise due to knee pain or injury risk, she explains that safe and sustainable movement is more effective than pushing the body too hard. According to her, these home workouts are ideal for beginners and older adults. Exercise 1: Standing Heel-To-Hip Touch The first exercise involves standing straight and bending one leg at a time,

trying to touch the heel to the hip. Arms remain straight and active. This movement activates the thighs and glutes while keeping stress off the knees, making it suitable for people with



joint issues. Exercise 2: Low-Impact Jumping Jack This is a modified version of the classic jumping jack. Instead of jumping, you step one leg out to the side while raising your arms, then switch sides. It gently increases heart rate,

burns calories, and improves coordination without putting pressure on the joints. Exercise 3: Side-To-Side Walk In this move, you walk from side to side in a controlled manner. It strengthens hip muscles, improves balance, and supports overall joint stability, which is important as you age. How Often Should You Do These Exercises?

Neha suggests doing each exercise 20 times and repeating the routine five times. She says it is more important to exercise every day than to go fast or very hard. Over time, these easy exercises can help build stamina, support weight loss, and keep the knees healthy. Why Low-Impact Workouts Work After 50 Health experts say low-impact exercises are good after the age of 50. As people get older, muscles become weaker, and belly fat is harder to lose. These gentle exercises help keep muscles strong, improve blood flow, reduce swelling and prevent injuries. The main idea is to choose exercises that are safe, easy, and can be done for a long time.

## The Importance of Daily Food Habits Over Ideal Diets



"Accomplished is preferable to flawless," states Priyasha Saluja, Founder of The Cinnamon Kitchen, Hormone Health Coach, and Plant-Based Chef. "This is a phrase we frequently employ in both our professional and personal lives, and it is equally relevant to the culinary realm." For many years, the concept of healthy eating has been portrayed as something that must be executed flawlessly. The ideal diet. The correct guidelines. The appropriate moment to begin. However, individuals do not cease to eat healthily due to a lack of concern. They discontinue because perfect meal plans are not practical in everyday life. On a regular weekday, meetings run late. Lunch gets delayed. By evening,

energy is low and cooking feels like too much effort. In moments like this, strict food rules tend to break down not because of poor discipline, but because the plan simply doesn't fit the day. The same thing happens around workouts. "People plan to eat before exercising," Saluja says. "Then work runs over, traffic builds up, or energy drops. The choice becomes simple, go to the gym without eating or skip the gym altogether." According to her, this isn't a willpower issue. It's a practicality issue. Track briefly, not obsessively. Short-term tracking can be useful. "It helps you understand what you're actually eating and highlights gaps in protein or fibre," Saluja explains. Once awareness is built, occasional tracking is enough. Keep two meals consistent. Fixing two meals around protein and fibre every day reduces daily decision-making. "It keeps eating balanced without feeling restrictive," she adds. The third meal can remain flexible. Don't eliminate snacks or desserts. "Total restriction doesn't last," Saluja says. Planning small portions of snacks or desserts helps with portion control and makes eating feel realistic rather than punitive. This philosophy also shapes how food is designed at The Cinnamon Kitchen. "Instead of creating products for ideal routines, I focus on how food fits into real moments," Saluja explains. The Almond Flour Cacao Cookie, for instance, works as a practical pre-workout option on rushed mornings. Methi Millet Crackers quietly replace habitual tea-time snacks without demanding a lifestyle overhaul.

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## Alterations in Personality, Behavior, and Memory Loss Disturb Daily Life

If you or an individual you are acquainted with has been noticing abrupt alterations in behavior, memory, or cognitive functions, it is important not to simply attribute it to stress, exhaustion, or the natural process of aging. When accompanied by symptoms such as unaccounted-for anger, confusion, or memory loss that starts to disrupt everyday activities, this could indicate the initial phases of dementia.

### Early Warning Signs

Memory loss usually serves as the initial warning sign for early dementia. People usually display their first dementia symptoms through minor changes in their emotional state and their behavioural patterns. A person who was previously calm may develop sudden irritability or anger without a clear trigger. People with this condition experience confusion in places they know, have difficulty understanding spoken language or making simple decisions. Increasing forgetfulness, such as repeating the same questions, being unable to recognise people and getting lost, are common early indicator that should not be ignored. These symptoms develop because the brain cells which control memory, reasoning, and emotional control are progressively destroyed and unable to function. While Alz-

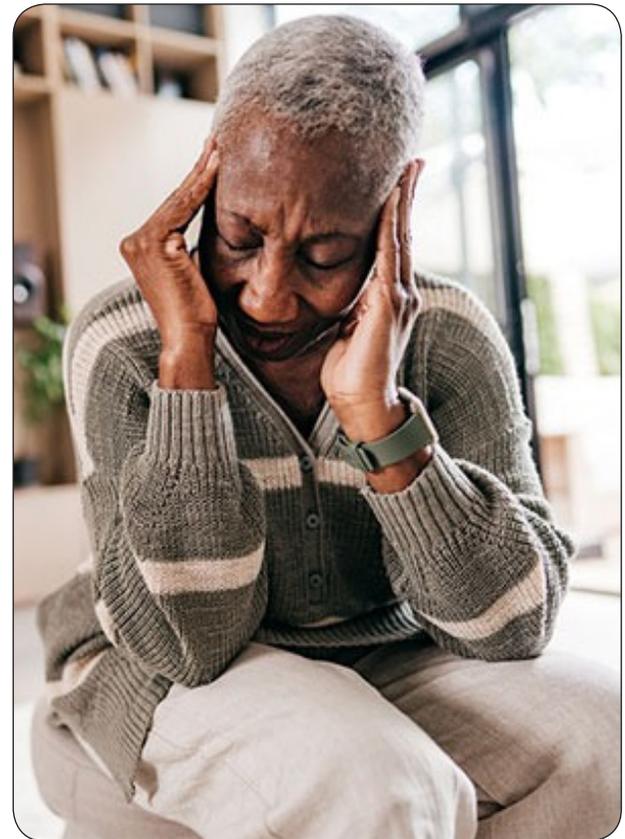
heimer's disease is the most common in the population, other forms, such as vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia, and frontotemporal dementia, can also present with behavioural and personality changes in the early stages.

### Causes of Dementia

Several risk factors may contribute to the development of dementia, including advancing age, genetic predisposition, uncontrolled hypertension, diabetes, obesity, smoking, physical inactivity, poor sleep, and long-term stress. Increasing evidence also links social isolation, depression, and untreated hearing loss with a higher risk of cognitive decline.

### Tips On Managing Memory Loss

The essential aspect of effectively managing dementia is early identification and prompt medical assessment. Although a cure for dementia is not always possible, an early diagnosis enables treatment to decelerate its progression, alleviate symptoms, and enhance the quality of life. Lifestyle interventions, including consistent physical activity, a nutritious diet abundant in fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats, sufficient sleep, mental engagement, and robust social interaction, are crucial in safeguarding brain health.



## Punjab Law Student Shoots Classmate and Self in Classroom

**Chandigarh, Feb 09:** A 19-year-old woman, a first-year student at a private law college in Tarn Taran district, was allegedly shot dead by her classmate inside a classroom on Monday. The assailant, identified as 20-year-old Prince Raj, subsequently turned the weapon on himself and is reported to be in critical condition. The incident occurred at the Mai Bhago Law College in Usma village before classes had commenced. According to police, the victim, Sandeep Kaur, a resident of Naushehra Pannuan, died on the spot. Prince Raj, a resident of Mallian village, was rushed to a nearby hospital where he remains under medical supervision. CCTV footage from the classroom reportedly shows Prince Raj, Sandeep Kaur, and another student seated together.



Suddenly, Prince is seen standing up, firing at Sandeep's head, and then shooting himself. The footage shows other students fleeing the room in panic upon hearing the gunshots. The victim's mother, Harjinder Kaur, a daily wage labourer and the sole breadwinner for her eight children, questioned the college's security measures. "How was a student allowed to enter the premises with a firearm?" she asked.

She further said that her daughter had recently been engaged and alleged that Prince had been "troubling" Sandeep for some time, even visiting their house previously. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Surendra Lamba stated that a preliminary investigation suggests a "friendship angle" as the primary motive. "We have seized the mobile phones of both students for forensic examination to understand the nature of their relationship. CCTV footage has been secured, and statements from staff and students are being recorded," he said.

## SC terms siphoning of over Rs 54,000 cr by digital fraud 'dacoity', asks Centre to frame SoP

### Digital Fraud Loot Exceeds Small State Budgets: SC

**New Delhi, Feb 09:** The Supreme Court on Monday described the siphoning of over Rs 54,000 crore by digital frauds as absolute "robbery or dacoity" and asked the Centre to draft a standard operating procedure in consultation with stakeholders like the RBI, banks and the Department of Telecommunications to deal with such cases. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and N V Anjaria observed that the amount siphoned off by digital fraud is more than the budgets of many small states. Noting that such offences may be due to either collusion by or the negligence of bank officials, the top court stressed the need for timely actions from the RBI and the banks. Issuing a slew of fresh directions, it asked the Ministry of Home Affairs to consider the Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) of the Reserve Bank of India and similar SoP or decisions of the Department of Telecom (DoT) and come up with a draft MoU in four weeks to effectively deal with such offences.

The bench has also noted that the RBI has crafted an SOP prescribing action by the banks to temporarily hold debit cards to prevent cyber-enabled fraud. It directed the CBI to identify digital arrest cases and asked the Gujarat and Delhi governments to accord sanction to the



federal probe agency to proceed with the investigations in the identified digital arrest cases. The Supreme Court also asked the RBI, the DoT and others to jointly hold a meeting to come up with a framework for providing compensation in digital arrest cases.

It said a pragmatic and liberal approach is needed to deal with the award of compensation to digital arrest victims and posted the plea for a further hearing after four weeks. It asked the authorities to file fresh status reports before the next date of hearing. On December 16, the bench asked the Centre to look into the suggestions put forward by the amicus curiae in ensuring compensation to vic-

tims of digital arrests, while voicing its concern over the enormous amounts taken out from the country by cyber criminals. Digital arrest is a growing form of cybercrime in which fraudsters pose as law-enforcement officers, court officials or personnel from government agencies to intimidate victims through audio and video calls.

They hold the victims hostage and put pressure on them to pay money. On December 1, the top court asked the CBI to carry out a unified pan-India probe into digital arrest cases, and asked the RBI why it is not using artificial intelligence to trace and freeze bank accounts used by cyber criminals.

## Bihar Legislative Council witnesses verbal duel between CM Nitish Kumar, LoP Rabri Devi

### Heated Debate Over Patna Student Death and Darbhanga Rape

**Patna, Feb 09:** Bihar Legislative Council on Monday witnessed sharp exchanges between Chief Minister, Nitish Kumar, and Leader of Opposition (LoP) in Upper House, Rabri Devi, over the suspicious death of a NEET aspirant in Patna and the rape of a six-year-old girl in Darbhanga. Amid the uproar, CM Nitish stood up and strongly reprimanded the Opposition, particularly targeting members of the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), including former chief minister Rabri Devi. Targeting RJD, Nitish said, "When they (RJD) were in power, they did not do any work. They did nothing for women."

Nitish contended that the state's development began after NDA came to power in 2005. "After we came to power in 2005, all-round development of Bihar has taken place, and the state is progressing on all fronts," he asserted. The Upper House witnessed noisy scene as soon as the proceedings start-

ed. RJD MLCs targeted the state government over the rape and murder of a six-year-old girl in Darbhanga and the suspicious death of a NEET aspirant in Patna and demanded the government's reply on it. Leader of opposi-



tion and RJD member Rabri Devi demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who was present in the House.

She alleged that there was not a single district in Bihar where girls were safe, as the Opposition members started raising slogans against the CM. Rabri Devi also accused BJP member Devesh Kumar of using abusive language

against her and demanded an apology from him. Upon this, Nitish rose from his chair and accused RJD of not doing anything when they were in power, asking whether they had ever sent girls to schools. "You people have done noth-

ing. You only know how to create a ruckus. And these three women who are making noise — what do they know? Do they know anything at all?" he asked. Pointing towards Rabri Devi, he said, "What does this girl know?" His comments prompted RJD members to create a ruckus in the house. RJD members also entered into the well of the House when CM was

speaking.

The deputy chairman, who was in the Chair, tried to bring normalcy to the House as some formalities were completed before the House was adjourned. After the House was adjourned for the day, RJD wrote the chairman of the house, demanding an apology from BJP MLC Thakur. Meanwhile, Rabri Devi's daughter Rohini Acharya wrote on 'X', "It has become a habit for the Honourable chief minister to cross the boundaries of parliamentary language etiquette." "Dozens of times, chief minister has used indecent language in the House and on public platforms, especially in reference to women. Looking at the chief minister's statements and remarks over the past few years, it is clear that he suffers from mental and ideological frustration towards women, and his statements regarding respect for women are merely political and electoral posturing," she added.

## Sengar Case: SC Warns Against Parallel Trials; Sets 3-Month Deadline

**New Delhi, Feb 09:** Warning the lawyers engaged in conducting a parallel trial outside the court in the Kuldip Sengar case, the Supreme Court on Monday in its order refused to grant bail to the expelled BJP leader and directed the Delhi High Court to hear his pending criminal appeal preferably within three months, in connection with the custodial death of the father of Unnao rape victim case. The three-judge Bench of Chief Justice of India, Justice Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi and N.V. Anjaria also declined to suspend his jail sentence in the case, as it upheld the HC order. The HC had convicted and sentenced Sengar to 10 year jail sentence in the custodial death case of father of Unnao rape victim case. "Why do we suspend a jail sentence? Only when we are uncertain about the time that will be taken in deciding the appeal," the Court observed, after noting that the period of incarceration alone is not the sole criterion for suspension of sentence, especially when the appeal is already listed for final hearing. The apex court during the hearing on Monday, requested the HC to take up the matter on a day-to-day basis and decide it expeditiously, preferably within three months, after taking note of the submissions that the appeal is fixed for hearing on February 11.

The court also came down heavily on the attempts -- made by some lawyers -- to influence proceedings outside the court through public commentary.

Warning them of heavy consequences, the Court said, "As a Chief Justice of India, I can't tolerate these things. You are arguing here, and at the same time conducting a parallel trial outside the court. This is not acceptable. If you indulge in this kind of drama, there will be consequences." The bench in its order added that the appeal by Sengar against his conviction is pending before the HC and said that thereby the same can be taken up and heard on priority along with the victim's appeal to enhance the sentence.



## India stun Netherlands, advance to next round in Davis Cup

### The Road to Victory: Suresh's Triple Haul



**Bengaluru, Feb 09:** India's Dhakshineswar Suresh did the star turn for the hosts as he produced a memorable performance in the fifth and final rubber against The Netherlands to help India advance to the next phase of the Davis Cup. Suresh, playing the last singles rubber after Sumit Nagal had lost his match, needed a win to take India into a second round qualifier against South Korea later in the year. That's exactly what the World No. 470 did as he beat Guy den Ouden 6-4, 7-6(4).

Nagal's loss had erased the advantage India had secured through Yuki Bhambri and Suresh's doubles win. Nagal was playing much better than on the first day. He was serving better and had created multiple opportunities. Nagal had a one-set advantage but lost 7-5, 1-6, 4-6 to World No 88 Jesper de Jong in an energy-sapping reverse singles that lasted nearly three hours.

In the first match of the day, a gutsy three-hour battle between Yuki Bhambri, Suresh and David Pel, Sander Arends took place. With the powerful serves from Suresh and perfect-timing from Bhambri, the duo prevailed 7-6(0), 3-6, 7-6(1) in a marathon battle that swung back and forth. Certainly, it was a captain's call. Rohit Rajpal (India captain), who decided to bring Suresh in the team at the last moment, proved decisive.

It was a test of nerves for both teams. Even though Bhambri's serve came under pressure, the duo responded by raising their levels in both the tie-breaks. The momentum, however, shifted in the second set as the Dutch duo got a stranglehold. But what ultimately won the hosts the match was their vice-like grip across two tie-breakers and they won 7-6(0), 3-7, 7-6(1).

## Chasing the King: Mbappé Matches Ronaldo's Historic Goal Mark at Real Madrid

**Madrid, Feb 10:** Kylian Mbappé's latest impressive scoring run with Real Madrid has brought up comparisons to Cristiano Ronaldo. After Mbappé scored his 23rd goal in 22 Spanish league games in Madrid's 2-0 win at Valencia on Sunday, coach Álvaro Arbeloa said the France striker could be well on his way to matching the success of Ronaldo at the Spanish powerhouse. "What Cristiano achieved seemed extraterrestrial, something impossible to match and no one could come close," Arbeloa said. "Mbappé has a long way to go because Cristiano was here for many years, but he has the conditions to follow in his footsteps, and you never know if he'll be able to surpass him. But if anyone can, it's Kylian."

The 41-year-old Ronaldo, currently playing in Saudi Arabia, played for Ma-



drid from 2009-18, breaking nearly every club record. The 27-year-old Mbappé joined the Spanish powerhouse last season and quickly matched some of the numbers of the Portugal star. Mbappé scored 59 goals in 2025 to equal Ronaldo's club-record tally in 2013. At the time, Mbappé called Ronaldo his "idol, the best player in the history of Real Madrid and a reference point in world soccer. It's an honor for me." Mbappé started this year on a roll and with even better numbers, having

scored nine goals in seven matches. He needed 11 games to reach nine goals last year. He has 43 goals in 35 appearances for club and country this season. "It's a great fortune, because right now he's the best player in the world with what he's proving day in and day out, game after game," Arbeloa said of Mbappé.

Arbeloa, who took over the club's helm this year to replace Xabi Alonso, was a former Madrid defender who was a teammate of Ronaldo at Madrid, playing six seasons with him from 2009-2016. Mbappé's France and Madrid teammate Aurélien Tchouaméni also was among those saying Mbappé has what it takes to surpass Ronaldo's numbers with Madrid, according to Spanish media. Ronaldo left the Spanish club with 451 goals in 438 competitive appearances.

## Inter Milan increases Serie A lead with 5-0 demolition of Sassuolo



**Rome, Feb 9:** Inter Milan routed 10-man Sassuolo 5-0 on Sunday to extend its Serie A lead to eight points over AC Milan, which didn't play this weekend because of the Milan Cortina Olympics. Yann

Bisseck and Marcus Thuram scored in the first half for Inter. Lautaro Martínez, Manuel Akanji and Luis Henrique added second-half goals to give Inter its fifth straight win in all competitions. Federico

Dimarco contributed with three assists.

Sassuolo was coming off two straight victories after a series of seven winless games. It played with 10 men from the 54th minute after Nemanja Matic was shown a second yellow card. The hosts, sitting in 11th place, had only one attempt on target.

Second-place Milan couldn't host Como this weekend after the San Siro stadium was used for the opening ceremony of the Winter Games. That issue had prompted Serie A to consider moving the match to

Perth, Australia. The game will now be played on Feb. 18. Juve equalizes late Pierre Kalulu scored six minutes into stoppage time as fourth-place Juventus salvaged a 2-2 home draw with eighth-place Lazio after being two goals down.

Lazio went ahead with Pedro's goal in first-half added time, and doubled its lead soon after the break with Gustav Isaksen's goal in the 47th. Juventus pulled closer with a goal from Weston McKennie in the 59th before Kalulu equalized with a header. Juventus visits Inter on Saturday.

## India Secures Sixth U-19 Title Following Sooryavanshi's Record Knock

**Harare, Feb 7:** Cricket's latest wunderkind Vaibhav Sooryavanshi played arguably the most breathtaking knock in the history of U-19 World Cup to fire India to a record-extending sixth title with a 100-run drubbing of England in the summit clash on Friday. Sooryavanshi's 80-ball 175, which comprised a record 15 sixes and as many fours, propelled India to an imposing 411 for 9 after England opted to bowl first. Bruised and battered following Sooryavanshi's brutal onslaught, England's innings ended at 311 in 40.2 overs after being set an improbable target of 412 against a well-rounded bowling attack. Caleb Falconer top-scored for England with a scintillating 67-ball 115, leaving a lasting impression on the biggest stage while helping his side reduce the margin of defeat. This was after the 14-year-old Sooryavanshi produced a knock for the ages and raced to the three-figure mark in a mere 55 balls

to become the second fastest centurion in this competition.

The triumph, which ensured India's continued dominance in the age-group showpiece, could be attributed to a robust domestic structure, vast talent pool, exposure to advanced coaching, high-quality preparation, and passion for the game among the country's youth.

India had last won the tournament in 2022. Once India crossed 400 in the final, they were the overwhelming favourites to emerge victorious, and that is exactly how the script panned out, with the bowlers performing as a collective outfit. To some extent, the achievement bore resemblance to the exploits of world-class Indian U-19 teams of the past that featured the likes of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma. But this side led by Ayush Mhatre has carved a niche of its own, especially in terms of sheer ruthlessness, and no one exemplifies that better than

that raging force called Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. Sooryavanshi's knock is the record for the best individual score in a U-19 World Cup final and is also the highest team total in the summit showdown of the tournament. The opener exploded when it mattered the most, reaching his fifty in just 32 balls and continued in the same vein to torment the English bowlers with his wide range of strokes. His second fifty came off just 23 balls. As many as 150 off his 175 runs came off boundaries thanks to his 15 sixes and as many fours during a knock in which he literally toyed with the opposition attack and turned the Harare Sports Club into his playground. He now holds the record for most sixes in a Youth ODI innings, surpassing his own 14 maximums against UAE at ICCA Dubai in December. Sooryavanshi now also has the fastest 150 (off 71 balls) in U-19 cricket, bettering the 98 balls taken by England's Ben



Mayes against Scotland at the same venue earlier in the competition. To put things into perspective, Vedant Trivedi saw Sooryavanshi celebrate both his 100 and 150 while facing only four balls between the two landmarks. Such was Sooryavanshi's onslaught that India's run rate was around 10 at the halfway mark and

the projected total was 500 at that stage of the game. Sooryavanshi put on 142 runs in just 19 overs with his skipper Ayush Mhatre, who departed following a 51-ball 53 immediately after bringing up his half-century. Sooryavanshi has also become the youngest centurion in the history of the tournament.