

OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

06-01-2026

Total pilgrims: 82,022

Tonsures: 20,230

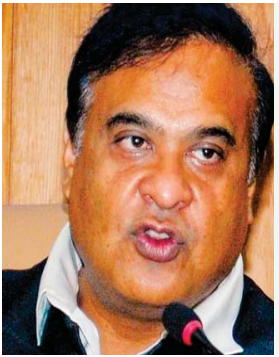
Hundi kanukaku: 3.48Cr

Waiting Situation at 6am on Outside line at Silatoranam

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens) - 20Hr

TO BOOK YOUR ADS CALL

99484 80279, 73307 78889



NATION | NEWS

Himanta meets Shah to discuss Assam polls; NDA seat-sharing likely to be finalised by Feb 15



WORLD | NEWS

Plot to kill Burkina Faso leader foiled, says junta

SPORTS | NEWS

Virat Kohli Gets Mobbed By Crowd Upon Arrival In Vadodara



INBRIF

Gold biscuits and cash worth Rs 21.87 crore seized

**Agartala (TSIT):** In a major crackdown on smuggling of gold and financial crimes, the Assam Rifles, in a joint operation with the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), seized gold biscuits and unaccounted Indian currency worth Rs 21.87 crore in Tripura, officials said on Wednesday. A defence spokesman said that acting on secret inputs, the joint operation was conducted at Shantipara in the heart of the capital city and in Dhaleswar on the outskirts of the city and arrested three persons, identified as Kunal Jaiswal, Ajay Naha and Rakesh Das. He said that during the operation, gold biscuits weighing approximately 14 kg, valued at around Rs 19 crore, along with Indian currencies amounting to Rs 2.87 crore, were recovered. "The successful seizure was carried out by Assam Rifles and DRI based on specific intelligence inputs," the spokesman said.

5 arrested for stone-pelting during demolition drive near Delhi mosque

**New Delhi (TSIT):** Delhi Police have arrested five people in connection with the stone-pelting incident during the demolition drive near a mosque, officials said. The incident occurred near the Faiz-e-Ilahi Mosque in the Turkman Gate area, close to Ramlila Ground, where authorities launched an anti-encroachment operation. According to officials of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), the drive was conducted to clear unauthorised structures from land adjoining the mosque and nearby areas, in compliance with directions issued by the Delhi High Court on November 12, 2025. The demolition exercise began in the early hours of Wednesday, with a heavy presence of civic staff and police personnel. Officials stated that between 10 and 17 bulldozers were deployed as part of the operation. As the demolition got underway, a large number of residents gathered outside the mosque, raising slogans and protesting against the action.

## CM Revanth unveils CM Cup-2025 poster



**Hyderabad (TSIT)** Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Wednesday unveiled the poster of CM Cup-2025 (Second Edition) at Jubilee Hills, marking the launch of one of Telangana's largest grassroots sports initiatives. The event was attended by Minister Vakiti Srihari, SATS Chairman Shivasena Reddy, Special Chief Secretary Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary to the

Chief Minister Srinivasa Raju, and Sports Authority of Telangana (SATG) Managing Director Sony Bala Devi. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister reiterated the state government's commitment to promoting a strong sports culture at the grassroots level and encouraging youth participation across both urban and rural areas of Telangana. According to the schedule

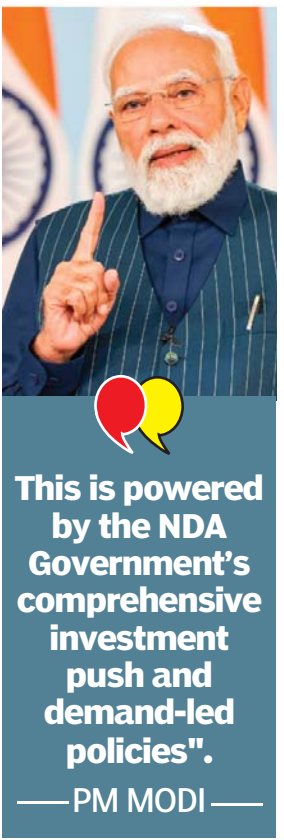
announced, CM Cup-2025 competitions will be held in phases, starting with village-level events from January 17 to 22, followed by mandal-level competitions from January 28 to 31. Constituency-level matches will take place from February 3 to 7, district-level events from February 10 to 14, and the state-level finals from February 19 to 26.

The Sports Authority of Telangana will organise competitions in 44 different sports disciplines, offering a wide platform for young and emerging talent from across the state. The CM Cup aims to identify and nurture sporting talent while promoting fitness, discipline and competitive spirit among the youth, in line with the government's vision for sports development in Telangana.

## India's 'Reform Express' continues to gain momentum: PM Modi on GDP growth

**NEW DELHI (TSIT) :** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that India's "Reform Express" continues to gain momentum, as official figures showed that real GDP has been estimated to grow by 7.4 per cent in FY 2025-26 against the growth rate of 6.5 per cent during FY 2024-25. According to the National Statistics Office (NSO), nominal GDP is estimated to grow at 8.0 per cent in FY2025-26. In an X post, PM Modi said: "This is powered by the NDA Government's comprehensive investment push and demand-led policies". "Be it infrastructure, manufacturing incentives, digital public goods or 'Ease of Doing Business', we are working to realise our dream of a prosperous India", the Prime Minister emphasised. The buoyant growth in the services sector has been found to be a major driver with a robust growth of 9.9 per cent at constant prices in FY 2025-26 for financial services, real estate, professional services, and public administration.

Trade, hotels, transport, and communication & services related to the broadcasting sector have been estimated to grow by 7.5 per cent, the official statement said. Manufacturing and construction in the secondary sector have been estimated to achieve a growth rate of 7 per



This is powered by the NDA Government's comprehensive investment push and demand-led policies". — PM MODI —

cent, while the agriculture sector growth rate is estimated at 3.1 per cent. Real Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) has been estimated to attain a growth rate of 7 per cent during FY 2025-26, backed by the income tax exemptions announced in the Budget for 20205-26 and subsequent GST rate cuts across goods and services.



**Washington (TSIT)** US President Donald Trump on Tuesday (local time) boasted about India-US defence cooperation, claiming that India's order for 68 Apache attack helicopters was delayed by five years and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi personally raised concerns over the long delivery period during a meeting with him. Speaking at the House GOP Member Retreat, Trump highlighted defence cooperation between the United States and India and criticised what he described as years-long delays in supplying defence equipment. "India ordered 68 Apache helicopters. PM Modi came to me and said 'Sir, may I see you please?' and I said yes," Trump said, while recalling his interaction with PM Modi. Trump also reiterated his good relationship with Prime Minister Narendra Modi; however, he underscored PM Modi's unhappiness over the high tariffs

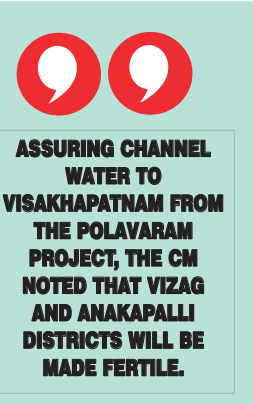
## Polavaram Project works will be completed by March 2027: Naidu

**Vijayawada (TSIT):** CM N Chandrababu Naidu said here on Wednesday that the government will ensure all Polavaram Project works are completed by March 2027 and bring it into use by December next year.

Addressing a press conference at the project site, the chief minister promised to finish construction of the diaphragm wall by February 15. "We will take steps to complete all Polavaram Project works by next March (2027). By December 2027, our goal is to bring the project to use," said Naidu, following an aerial survey and inspection of the project. Had the diaphragm wall been constructed before, it could have been completed at a cost of just Rs 440 crore and the project itself could have been completed earlier, he said. However, he alleged that the government change in 2019 ended up as a major loss to the project and accused the previous YSRCP government of neglecting the project that resulted in a



delay of six years. Observing that the alleged delays inflated the cost, Naidu said that an additional amount of Rs 1,000 crore was required for the diaphragm wall. The Andhra CM alleged that only 2 per cent of works were progressed between 2019 and 2024, after 72 per cent of works were completed between 2014-19. Likewise, he noted that the works related to the main canal were almost complete and efforts are on to finish embankment works by June. Further, the CM directed officials to complete Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) works in the next 12 months and to



hasten the acquisition of land required for resettlement. Highlighting that the 'largest' inland waterways will be established, Naidu said tunnel connectivity will be increased in the Polavaram left and right canals. Channel water to Visakhapatnam from the Polavaram Project, the CM noted that Vizag and Anakapalli districts will be made fertile. Likewise, he noted that all the minor irrigation projects and checkdams run-

ning along Polavaram Project canals will be filled with Godavari River water. Telangana govt to seek interim stay on Pollavaram project.

The project expansion is staunchly opposed by the Revanth Reddy-led Telangana government in the Supreme Court, saying that it can be executed in accordance with the original plan and that any additional works are illegal. On January 6, a bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi asked both Telugu-speaking states to consider mediation on the issue and advised Telangana to bring its objections to the notice of the statutory committee formed by the Centre. Telangana will seek an interim stay at the Supreme Court, contending that the dispute was not limited to issues of water sharing and did not fall within the jurisdiction of any tribunal constituted under the Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956.

## INDORE WATER CRISIS: Cong demands answers on WHO cholera guidelines, claims death toll has increased

**Bhopal, Jan 7 :** Congress on Wednesday asserted that the crisis involving contaminated water in the Bhagirathpura area of Indore persists, following yet another reported death. The party has inquired whether the Madhya Pradesh government has notified the World Health Organisation in accordance with international protocols, given that "cholera bacteria have allegedly been confirmed".

Congress media cell chief and former Minister Mukesh Nayak highlighted the latest fatality, stating that 20 innocent lives have been lost and



over 1,000 people severely affected due to contaminated water in Indore's Bhagirathpura and surrounding areas. Terming it "criminal negligence" by the BJP

government, Nayak accused the administration of suppressing actual death figures and showing insensitivity. Nayak highlighted that state Congress president

Jitu Patwari and Leader of Opposition Umang Singh visited affected families, who expressed deep anguish. Despite Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav being in charge of Indore, only four families have received Rs 2 lakh compensation each, he said. "With cholera bacteria reportedly confirmed," Nayak questioned, "whether the state informed the World Health Organisation as per international protocols", demanding immediate clarification from state and central health departments.

Lost Money in a Financial Fraud?

Investments lost in fraudulent schemes?

A company offered me high returns and is now untraceable!

I lost money to a fraudster online!

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# 'FESTIVAL DRAMA': NTK's Seeman on DMK–AIADMK corruption spat; targets election-time populism

ERODE: Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) coordinator Seeman on Wednesday strongly criticised Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK and the opposition AIADMK for hurling corruption allegations at each other, calling the political slugfest a "tragic farce" staged for public consumption.

Addressing reporters in Erode, Seeman said the two Dravidian majors had reduced politics to a spectacle, hurling one corruption charge after another without any genuine intent to cleanse public life. 'Look at how big a tragedy this is. One allegation follows another. It is like a drama performed during festival season. People can only watch it, laugh, and move on,' he remarked, accusing both parties of misleading voters instead of addressing



real public concerns.

Commenting on the AIADMK–PMK alliance, Seeman said it was an arrangement the parties had long hoped for and described it as their "only remaining opportunity" in the current political scenario.

He reiterated that NTK was preparing in full earnest for the upcoming Assembly elections and announced that the party would unveil its

candidates for all 234 constituencies on February 21, signalling its readiness to contest across the state.

Seeman also launched a sharp attack on what he described as election-driven populism, particularly welfare announcements linked to the Pongal festival.

If the government genuinely believed in providing cash assistance during Pongal, it should have done so last

year as well, he argued. "This is not a real Pongal gesture; this is an election Pongal," Seeman said.

Questioning the rationale behind the proposal to distribute 30 lakh laptops, he added that such announcements were motivated more by vote-bank politics than by people-centric governance.

Raising alarm over the growing drug menace in Tamil Nadu, Seeman said the use of ganja and other narcotics had increased significantly. He questioned how such a widespread drug culture could expand without the knowledge of the government.

Seeman also challenged the DMK's moral authority to speak against drugs, pointing out that the state itself promotes and profits from liquor sales.

# L&O ploy fails in Madras HC, lays bare anti-Hindu bias of DMK: TN BJP chief Nainar

CHENNAI: BJP state president Nainar Nagenthiran on Tuesday mounted a sharp attack on the ruling DMK government, hailing the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court for permitting the lighting of the deepam at the Deepathoon in Tirupparankundram hill and accusing the State of repeatedly acting against Hindu religious practices.

In a statement, Nainar Nagenthiran said the High Court, by dismissing the DMK government's appeal seeking to block lighting of lamp, had once again stood firmly on the side of justice and constitutional values.

He said the verdict had brought immense relief to devotees and reaffirmed that the deepathoon rightfully belongs to the Tirupparankundram Subramania Swamy Temple.

"The court has delivered a clear rebuke to the State government for misusing the bogey of law and order to suit its political convenience," he said, adding that projecting routine religious practices as potential flash-points was both misleading



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and unacceptable. The BJP leader said the ruling had categorically rejected the DMK's claims and exposed what he termed its manufactured narrative around public order. Nagenthran alleged that despite facing repeated judicial setbacks, the DMK government continued to pursue what he described as a persistent anti-Hindu agenda, ignoring court directions and reviving the same arguments through appeals.

"Even after being pulled up multiple times by the judiciary, the government shows no inclination to correct itself," he said.

Striking a strong political note, the BJP state president asserted that the DMK's arrogance of power and continued hostility towards Hindu beliefs would ultimately lead to its political downfall. "A government that repeatedly disrespects faith and constitutional propriety will be decisively shown the door by the people," he said. The verdict, he added, was not merely a legal win but a reaffirmation of religious rights and judicial balance in the State.

## Reading shapes character, judgement and social responsibility: Irai Anbu

CHENNAI: Reading is not a mechanical activity but a formative practice that shapes character, judgement and social responsibility, observed V Irai Anbu, former chief secretary, while addressing students in Chevalier T Thomas Elizabeth College for Women, Perambur, The lecture was part of the Chennai International Book Fair (CIBF) 2026. Irai Anbu addressed students on the theme, 'Let us read ourselves', blending Tamil linguistic philosophy with insights drawn from world literature. He also demonstrated how language itself can become a tool for

thought. He also drew examples from world intellectual history stressing on Karl Marx and Charles Darwin. He contrasted purposeful reading with reading driven by greed with examples, and also showed how literature reflects moral choices and inner conflicts, making characters from classical texts resonate with contemporary concerns. He also focused on five 'padi' (steps) for living well and drawing on the musical possibilities of Tamil in a manner reminiscent of lyricists such as Kannadasan. He outlined principles aimed at helping young people rise in life.

# TN issues SOP: Roadshows can't change route, time; must end in 3 hrs

CHENNAI: The Tamil Nadu government has notified comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for public meetings and roadshows, placing full responsibility for crowd safety on organisers and prescribing stricter conditions for roadshows.

The SOP, which has been formulated in the aftermath of the Karur stampede in which 41 people were killed on September 27 last year, stipulates that roadshows should be concluded within three hours and audiences should not be made

to wait more than two hours.

The SOPs were issued following directives from the Madras High Court to notify it not later than January 5. Additional Chief Secretary to the Home Department Dheeraj Kumar released the 56-page document, laying down detailed guidelines for organising large public gatherings in the State.

According to the government order, the SOP will apply to all public meetings, processions, roadshows, demonstrations, protests, and cultural or religious events where the



number of participants exceeds 5,000. After consultation with the police, the district collector shall notify designated locations. In Chennai, this responsibility will rest with the Commissioner of Police. If

the venue of a public gathering is located on a national highway or state highway, organisers must obtain prior permission from the authority concerned. Organisers must submit a written application to the jurisdictional police station or the sub-divisional officer, with details of the start and end points, the date and time, and the expected crowd size. For major political events where the anticipated turnout exceeds 50,000, applications may be submitted up to 30 days in advance.

After evaluation, the sub-divisional police officer shall grant permission at least 15 days before the proposed date of the event.

Emphasising accountability in the wake of the Karur tragedy at TVK chief Vijay's rally on September 27, the

additional Chief Secretary stated that organisers would be held fully responsible for crowd safety, regulation, and management. If the crowd exceeds the permitted limit or causes damage to public or private property, the organiser will be solely responsible and required to compensate for the losses, he said. Organisers must deploy first-aid booths and ambulances at the venue to prevent untoward incidents. Details of the persons in charge of civic amenities, such as drinking water, sanitation, toilets, and refreshments, must also be furnished, the notification said.

# 'Weights of gold in bullion': How the ancients invested in precious metals

"All I want is an income of 20,000 sesterces from secure investments," proclaims a character in a poem by Juvenal (1st-2nd century CE), the Roman poet. Today, 20,000 sesterces would be equivalent to about A\$300,000 in interest from investments. Anyone would be very happy with this much passive annual income.

Like today, people in ancient times understood that investing money could help them consolidate and grow their wealth. As the Roman novelist Petronius (1st century CE) once wrote, "Whoever has money sails with a fair breeze, and governs his fortune as he wishes."

So, how exactly did ancient people invest their money?

A lofty house with hidden silver

In ancient Greek and Roman times, there was no stock market where you could buy and trade shares in a company. If you wanted to invest your cash, one of the more popular options was to obtain gold or silver. People did this to protect against currency fluctuations and inflation. They usually kept the metals either in bullion form or in the form of ware like jewellery. Storing these items could be risky and prone to theft.

The Roman poet Virgil (70-19 BCE) describes the estate of a wealthy person that included "a lofty house, where talents of silver lie deeply hidden" alongside "weights of gold in bullion and in ware". A talent was the largest unit of currency measurement in ancient Greece and Rome, equivalent to about 25kg of weighed silver.

Usually the metals were stored in a special vault or security cupboard.

The Roman writer Cicero (106-43 BCE) recalls how a wealthy lady named Clodia would take gold (perhaps bars or ingots or plates) out of a security cupboard when she wished to lend money to someone. The gold could then be exchanged



for coinage.

Market booms – and busts

The price of these metals could, however, occasionally be subject to unpredictable fluctuations and crashes in price, though less often than currency. The Greek historian Polybius (c. 200-118 BCE) says that when a new gold vein was discovered in Aquileia, Italy, only two feet deep, it caused a gold rush. The new material flooded the market too quickly and "the price of gold throughout Italy at once fell by one-third" after only two months. To stabilise the gold price, mining in the area was quickly monopolised and regulated.

When people wanted to trade precious metals, they would sell them by weight. If the gold or silver or bronze had been worked into jewellery or other objects, this could be melted down and turned into bullion.

People must have delighted in owning these precious metals.

The Athenian writer Xenophon (c. 430-350 BCE) gives a clue about the mindset of ancient silver investors: "Silver is not like furniture, of which a man never buys more once he has got enough for his house. No one ever yet possessed so much silver as to want no more; if a man finds himself with a huge amount of it, he takes as much pleasure in burying the surplus as in using it."

A number of Roman wills reveal people leaving their heirs silver and gold in the form of bars, plates or ingots.

Commodities that could not be 'ruined by Jupiter'

Aside from metals, agricultural commodities were also very popular, especially grain, olive oil, and wine. To profit from agricultural commodities, people bought farmland and traded the commodities on the market. The Roman statesman Cato thought putting money into the production of essential goods was the safest investment.

He said these things "could not be ruined by Jupiter" – in other words, they were resistant to unpredictable movements in the economy. Whereas precious metals were a store of wealth, they generated no income unless they were sold. But a diversified portfolio of agricultural commodities guaranteed a permanent income. People also invested and traded in precious goods, like artworks.

When the Romans sacked the city of Corinth in 146 BC, they stole the city's collection of famous artwork, and later sold the masterpieces for huge sums of money at auction in order to bring profit for the Roman state.

At this auction, the King of Pergamon, Attalus II (220-138 BCE), bought one of the paintings, by the master artist Aristeides of Thebes (4th century BCE), for the incredible sum of 100 talents (about 2,500kg of silver).

Eccentric emperors

Political instability or uncertainty sometimes raised the price of these metals. The Greek historian Appian (2nd century CE) records how during the Roman civil war in 32-30 BCE, "the price of all commodities had risen, and the Romans ascribed the cause of this to the quarrelling of the leaders whom they cursed." Eccentric emperors might also impose new taxes or charges on commodities, or try to manipulate the market. The Roman historian Suetonius (c. 69-122 CE) tells us the emperor Caligula (12-41 CE) "levied new and unheard of taxes [...] and there was no class of commodities or men on which he did not impose some form of tariff".

Another emperor, Vespasian (17-79 CE), went so far as to "buy up certain commodities merely in order to distribute them at profit", says Suetonius. Clearly, investing in commodities 2,000 years ago could help build personal wealth – but also involved some risk, just like today.

Clix Capital Services Pvt. Ltd. (Clix)

Registered Office: W2/14, 1st Floor, West Patel Nagar, Delhi, 110008

POSSESSION NOTICE  
(Appendix IV) Rule 8(1)

Whereas the Authorized officer of CLIX CAPITAL SERVICES PVT. LTD. (Clix), a Non-Banking Financial Company duly incorporated and registered under the Companies Act, 1956, having its Registered Office at: W2/14, 1st Floor, West Patel Nagar, Delhi, 110008, under the provisions of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 OF 2002) (hereinafter referred to as "Act") and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(2) of the Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice to the following borrowers and co-borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower/Guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of Section 13 of Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on as per under mentioned Detail. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Clix and interest other charges thereon. The attention of the Borrower is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured asset.

Name & Address Of Borrower/Co-Borrower : 1. MR. P. RAJESH S/O POONGAVANAM, 2. MRS. MAHALAKSHMI P W/O POONGAVANAM, Both Res at - NO. 2842, F 14, KAMATCHI AMMAN NAGAR, KANAKKAM PALAYAM, TIRUPPUR - 641666.

Demand Notice Dated : 18.09.2025, Date of Possession : 06.01.2026

Amount of Demand Notice : Rs. 32,82,329.12/- as on 17.09.2025

Details Of Property : Tirupur Registration District, Avinashi Sub-Registration Office, Tirupur Circle, Kanakkampalayam Village, Land in S. F. No. 64/5, Consist Of 1.43.5 Punjab Hectares Or 3.54 Punjab Acres Of Land is Converted Into Layout And Divided Into House Sites And Named As "Sri Kamatchiamman Nagar" Which is Approved By Its No. 28006, 2007, In Which Site No-11, Northern Portion Of Land is Consists Of 1200 Sq Feet Of Land and Southern Side Consists Of 1200 Sq Fts Of Land And Totally 2400 Sq Fts Of Land In Which Western Portion Of Land is Bounded On - North Of - Site No 12, South Of - 23 Feet Wide East - West Layout Road, East Of - 23 Feet Wide North South Layout Road, West Of - Eastern Portion Of Land In Site 11 Belongs To.

Place : Tamil Nadu, Date : 06.01.2026

Authorised Officer, Clix Capital Services Pvt. Ltd.

Partial Cancellation of some Mail/Express trains between Andal & Durgapur stations

The locomotive reversal of the following mail/express trains at Andal station instead of Durgapur station will be continued upto 31/03/2026. Hence, these trains will be diverted via Asansol - Andal - Sainthia instead of their existing route Asansol - Andal - Durgapur - Andal - Sainthia and will remain partially cancelled between Andal & Durgapur stations.

(1) 12551 SMVT Bengaluru-Kamakhya AC Superfast Express [JCO 10/01, 17/01, 24/01, 31/01, 07/02, 14/02, 21/02, 28/02, 07/03, 14/03, 21/03 & 28/03/2026]. (2) 12552 Kamakhya-SMVT Bengaluru AC Superfast Express [JCO 14/01, 21/01, 28/01, 04/02, 11/02, 18/02, 25/02, 04/03, 11/03, 18/03 & 25/03/2026]. (3) 13417 Digha-Malda Town Express [JCO 15/01, 22/01, 29/01, 05/02, 12/02, 19/02, 26/02, 05/03, 12/03, 19/03 & 26/03/2026]. (4) 13418 Malda Town-Digha Express [JCO 15/01, 22/01, 29/01, 05/02, 12/02, 19/02, 26/02, 05/03, 12/03, 19/03 & 26/03/2026]. (5) 13425 Malda Town-Surat Express [JCO 10/01, 17/01, 24/01, 31/01, 07/02, 14/02, 21/02, 28/02, 07/03, 14/03, 21/03 & 28/03/2026]. (6) 13426 Surat-Malda Town Express [JCO 12/01, 19/01, 26/01, 02/02, 09/02, 16/02, 23/02, 02/03, 09/03, 16/03, 23/03 & 30/03/2026]. (7) 15629 Tambaram-Silghat Town Nagaon Express [JCO 12/01, 19/01, 26/01, 02/02, 09/02, 16/02, 23/02, 02/03, 09/03, 16/03, 23/03 & 30/03/2026]. (8) 15630 Silghat Town-Tambaram Nagaon Express [JCO 09/01, 16/01, 23/01, 30/01, 06/02, 13/02, 20/02, 27/02, 06/03, 13/03, 20/03 & 27/03/2026]. (9) 15640 Kamakhya-Puri Express [JCO 11/01, 18/01, 25/01, 01/02, 08/02, 15/02, 22/02, 01/03, 08/03, 15/03, 22/03 & 29/03/2026]. (10) 15661 Ranchi-Kamakhya Express [JCO 14/01, 21/01, 28/01, 04/02, 11/02, 18/02, 25/02, 04/03, 11/03, 18/03 & 25/03/2026]. (11) 15662 Kamakhya-Ranchi Express [JCO 13/01, 20/01, 27/01, 03/02, 10/02, 17/02, 24/02, 03/03, 10/03, 17/03, 24/03 & 31/03/2026]. (12) 15929 Tambaram-New Tinsukia Express [JCO 15/01, 22/01, 29/01, 05/02, 12/02, 19/02, 26/02, 05/03, 12/03, 19/03 & 26/03/2026]. (13) 15930 New Tinsukia-Tambaram Express [JCO 12/01/19/01, 26/01, 02/02, 09/02, 16/02, 23/02, 02/03, 09/03, 16/03, 23/03 & 30/03/2026]. (14) 22611 MGR Chennai Central-New Jalpaiguri Superfast Express [JCO 14/01, 21/01, 28/01, 04/02, 11/02, 18/02, 25/02, 04/03, 11/03, 18/03 & 25/03/2026]. (15) 22612 New Jalpaiguri-MGR Chennai Central Superfast Express [JCO 09/01, 16/01, 23/01, 30/01, 06/02, 13/02, 20/02, 27/02, 06/03, 13/03, 20/03 & 27/03/2026].

Divisional Railway Manager, Asansol

EASTERN RAILWAY



# EDITORIAL

## It's Not Really About Venezuela. It's About Cuba

Something the international press ignores about what has been happening in Venezuela in recent months is that it has little to do with the country's internal problems, or its role in global geopolitics. Venezuela is already a marginal oil producer. It is politically isolated in Latin America; there is no danger of what happens in Venezuela being “contagious” for the rest of the region. The regime in Venezuela was already falling apart. Even Nicolas Maduro’s allies, Russia and China, had made it clear that they couldn’t care less about what happens in his country. And Venezuela’s other ally, Iran, has enough to worry about at home. Of course, American oil companies would love to get their hands on Venezuela’s vast reserves, especially since Donald Trump could deport the hundreds of thousands of undocumented Venezuelan immigrants in the US. But that wouldn’t justify what’s happening in that country right now. Furthermore, for Trump and his “MAGA” (Make America Great Again) agenda, domestic problems must be addressed first, not issues that are quite irrelevant to his grand American geopolitical project. In reality, Trump doesn’t even pretend this is all about “democracy” in Venezuela. I doubt the well-being of the Venezuelan people is something that keeps him up at night. In fact, he’s never had a problem allying himself with dictatorships in other parts of the world. And as his own actions at home have shown, “democracy” has never been particularly relevant to him. All he’s said so far about Venezuela is about drug trafficking and “narco-terrorism “; but at the same time, he pardons the former president of Honduras, Juan Orlando Hernández, who was convicted of being directly responsible for shipping more than 400 tonnes of cocaine to the US. We already know that consistency isn’t Trump’s strong suit, but this goes beyond the pale. Meanwhile, he had put a higher price on Maduro’s head than Osama Bin Laden’s... Besides drug trafficking and insisting that Venezuela had to return the oil it had “stolen” from American multinationals (when they were nationalised), Trump only emphasised the difficulties the Maduro regime placed on the repatriation of undocumented immigrants. Furthermore, the US midterm elections are still a way off (they’re only in November of this year), and while there is a real risk that Trump could lose control of the House of Representatives, doing this so early in the year wouldn’t make much sense if that’s what he was aiming to avoid. This is really about something else: putting more pressure on Cuba, which needs Venezuelan oil to survive economically. Venezuela not only sells Cuba oil at very low prices, but under Chávez, and later under Maduro, it has also sent such large amounts of oil for free (in exchange for doctors and professional assistance) that Cuba was even able to become an exporter of oil. What truly changed everything was the appointment of Marco Rubio, a Cuban-American from Miami who has never denied his lifelong political objective: to liberate Cuba, as Secretary of State. While regime change in Venezuela would be a marginal and temporary success for Trump, contradicting all his criticisms of US military interventions in other countries, regime change in Cuba is something else entirely, transcending even immediate political gains. Rubio has already declared that the Cuban government is now “in a lot of trouble”. As everyone knows, the economic situation in Cuba is extremely precarious and deteriorating steadily. Sixty percent of the population is already without electricity, which is impacting tourism – its main source of foreign currency. Without Venezuelan oil, which was already arriving in lower quantities than usual, and without its earnings from tourism, Cuba’s economic situation could become unsustainable. Furthermore, a regime change in Cuba would ensure Rubio a strong position as a candidate in the upcoming Republican primaries.

# US, UK Are Losing Their Professionals To A City They Once Mocked



A few years ago, a friend had the opportunity to move to Dubai, but he dismissed it outright, saying it was a "concrete jungle", "soul-less", "too hot", and that he would never swap London for Dubai. However, early last year, he did exactly that. He moved to Dubai with his family, and the business he had set up there has already begun to show results. "It wasn't Dubai's sun versus London's gloomy weather," he told me recently over the phone. "It was the ease of doing business versus endless bureaucratic hassles and crushing taxes in the UK." My friend was one of the nearly 1.9 lakh people who moved out of the UK lock, stock and barrel in 2024-25, the majority of them heading to Dubai, Qatar and other Gulf destinations. They were young entrepreneurs and salaried professionals. Dubai, indeed, is one of those cities that divides opinion here in the West almost instinctively. To its critics, it feels soulless, a concrete jungle rising out of sand. Others recoil from its curtailed political freedoms or dismiss it as a place sustained by money and mammon-worship. And yet, steadily and relentlessly, people are moving there in waves, not for its sandy beaches and sun but for job and business opportunities. Young professionals, entrepreneurs, startup founders, consultants, investors, freelancers are all moving with their families and children. They are arriving from India, Europe, Russia, Britain and other countries. Many are fully aware of what Dubai is not. But they are equally clear about what it offers. Ambition, work, utmost ease of doing business and mobility are being redefined in the 2020s. Why People Are Leaving Anyway If you disregard the rhetoric, you will find Dubai's appeal to be remarkably practical. Safety. Order. A decent standard of living without urban chaos. Infrastructure that works. Roads that are sans potholes. Public services that function predictably. The system is free of bribery. Digital systems do what they promise. Above all, it offers a business environment that does not exhaust you before you begin. The arithmetic is brutal and persuasive. No personal income tax. Very low corporate tax. Clear rules. Minimal bureaucratic the-atre. In a world where ambition is often throttled by paperwork, Dubai offers speed. And speed, today, is a form of freedom. It is, because setting up a company, for example, is not a long ordeal. In many free zones, a business can be registered, licensed and operational in five to seven working days. Visas, medical tests and Emirates ID processing are integrated into a single workflow. What takes months of coordination in labyrinths of democratic countries is compressed into a matter of days. And if you want the process to be fast-tracked against higher fees, most services can be delivered the same day or the next day. I have been there only once, almost six years ago, and my lasting impression was that the city occupies a strategic geographic sweet spot. It is neither fully Western nor fully Asian, but a bridge between the two. Eight hours from London. A little over three from Delhi. Two from Riyadh, with Doha even closer. From one base, you can service Europe, Africa and Asia without fully exiting any world. For globally mobile professionals and founders, this matters.

Perhaps most striking is Dubai's social reality. People from countries that glare at each other across borders elsewhere work side by side here, and even start companies together. Pragmatism often triumphs over border skirmishes. My broader impression was that the city felt culturally India-dominated. During my trip, I met an extremely wealthy Sheikh who effortlessly broke into fluent Hindi, spoke warmly about hosting Bollywood stars, and took pride in celebrating Holi and bursting crackers on Diwali with his Indian friends. The Pandemic That Nearly Broke Dubai It is easy to forget how close Dubai came to the edge in 2020. When Covid-19 hit, the city gasped. Lockdowns paralysed its tourism-driven economy. Hospitality collapsed. Real estate froze. Expo 2020 was postponed. A survey by the Dubai Chamber suggested that nearly 70% of businesses feared closure within months if restrictions continued. Comparisons with the 2009 debt crisis returned with force. Dubai, a city built on movement, trade and openness, had suddenly lost all three.

## A Story Not Told in 'Ikkis': What Arun Khetarpal Did With His Rs 685 Army Salary

Rohit Khanna

"My dear Dadaji... I have just received my first pay slip, so I thought that before touching the money, I should send you a present." On August 30, 1971, 2nd Lt Arun Khetarpal received his first salary, a princely sum then of Rs. 685. The same day, he penned this simple and beautifully written letter to his grandfather Chaman Lal Khetarpal - who himself had been a World War 1 veteran - gifting his entire first salary to him. Less than four months later, young Arun, just 21 years old, was martyred on December 16, the last day of the 1971 Indo-Pak war. 'Rookie' to War Hero in 5 Months Arun got his Indian Army salary for just five months. A tragically short career, but what a career. The young tank commander who destroyed 10 Pakistani tanks in a single day, who refused orders to fall back even after his tank had caught fire, and who made sure the road to Jammu and Kashmir was not threatened by the Pakistan Army, died fighting till his last breath. The heroism of India's youngest Param Vir Chakra awardee has been well captured in the film Ikkis. Directed by Sriram Raghavan, it features Agastya Nanda, Amitabh Bachchan's grandson, as Arun Khetarpal, and late actor Dharmendra as Arun's father. Arun's untimely death made this letter to his grandfather even more precious for the Khetarpal family. It has



been preserved for over 55 years by Mukesh Khetarpal, Arun's younger brother. The 17th Poona Horse The letter is written on stationery of the 17th Poona Horse Tank Regiment, Arun's first posting after being commissioned that year. Poona Horse had a proud 200-year-old history. In the 1965 war, their Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Ardeshir Taraporewala, had died in action, earning the regiment's first Param Vir Chakra. When new officers of Poona Horse were 'dined-in', Arun toasted that he would be the unit's second Param Vir Chakra awardee. The unit officers laughed it off as they had been drinking, but that is what happened. The scene has been re-created compellingly in Ikkis. Arun had excelled at the National Defence Academy in Pune and at the Indian Military Academy in Dehradun. "Arun was very bright. He had even cleared the IIT exam in 1967, but wanted to go to NDA, and fought with our dad over it, who finally agreed," recalls

Mukesh Khetarpal years later. "He was gentle and quite softspoken, but was obsessed with becoming a soldier. He loved hearing World War 1 stories from our Dadaji." The Khetarpals were a 'fauji' family. Arun's dad, Brigadier Madal Lal Khetarpal, was an Indian Army engineer, a World War 2 veteran who also fought in the 1948 and 1965 Indo-Pak wars. His great-grandfather, Ram Narain, served in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Sikh Khalsa army in the 19th century. Mukesh Khetarpal has carefully preserved young Arun's payslip from September 1971. Army salaries used to be modest back then - Rs 400 was Arun's basic pay, Rs 160 was his Dearness Allowance, and Rs 50 'Kit Allowance', to keep his various uniforms and army fatigues, his shoes, belts, beret, and his rank and service ribbons, squeaky clean. He got just Rs 30 as 'Family Separation' allowance, as army officers are often posted to sensitive border areas where their

families cannot be with them. Of Motorcycles and Johnny Mera Naam... Young Arun, who studied at The Lawrence School, Sanawar, was mindful of some of the privileges he had as a young man. "My motorcycle is running very well ... nobody else over here has got as many things as I have. Daddy and Mummy have made me most comfortable ... There is nothing else that I need today but your blessings," he wrote to his grandfather in the letter. Arun also kept some time aside for 'extra-curriculars': before writing that letter, Arun had just watched the Dev Anand and Hema Malini starrer Johnny Mera Naam, a big hit back in 1970-71. The letter closes simply with Arun asking his grandfather to stay in touch: "Please do write when you find the time. Yours affectionately, Arun." We don't know whether Chaman Lal Khetarpal was able to write back to his grandson. Within two months of penning the letter, Arun had been mobilised as war clouds loomed. The 17th Poona Horse moved to the Samba district and played an extensive role in the 1971 war in that sector. The regiment was deep inside Pakistan on the morning of December 16; they even heard over the radio that the Pakistan Army was surrendering in Dhaka, and that a ceasefire was imminent. However, as fate would have it, the Battle of Basantar did rage on that day, claiming many lives on both sides. One of them was 2nd Lt Arun Khetarpal.

## There's A Question About Trump India Hasn't Asked Yet After Venezuela

The strategic dilemmas facing Europe and India today originate from an increasingly unpredictable and unilateral US foreign policy. Beyond mere criticism of alliances, Donald Trump has created deep insecurity among partners once reliant on American stability. With Washington shifting toward a transactional "MAGA Imperialism", both regions are navigating a harsher security environment defined by US disengagement and the aggressive reassertion of spheres of influence. For Europe, the shock has been swift and profound. The 2026 renewal of US claims to annex Greenland, framed as a "national security necessity" following the military intervention in Venezuela, has shattered the illusion of a rules-based transatlantic order. By suggesting that Denmark cannot handle the strategic demands of the era, Trump has signalled that his "Donroe Doctrine" (a 21st-century expansion of the Monroe Doctrine) now views even European soil through a lens of American acquisition. This follows the dramatic January 3, 2026, capture of Nicolás Maduro during Operation Absolute Resolve, where the Venezuelan leader was extrajudicially rendered to the USS Iwo Jima.

● **The Growing Russia Threat For Europe** European leaders now view the US not as a protector but as a direct threat to continental sovereignty. Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk issued a sharp warning on January 5, 2026, stating that "no one will take seriously a weak and divided Europe" and that without unity, the continent



is "finished". Tusk emphasised that such large-scale events as the US strike in Venezuela affect the entire globe, forcing Europe to "react and prepare for a new situation". This shift comes as Russia's threat grows through cyberattacks and military pressure. Consequently, Europe is rearming and distancing itself from China's economic influence. The threat is no longer just a pullback from NATO; it is an active encroachment on European sovereignty that makes the drive for strategic autonomy a survival necessity. India faces a similar challenge. With waning US support in the Indo-Pacific, New Delhi faces increased pressure from China. While Beijing may publicly seek tactical harmony, it continues to strengthen the military capacity of India's neighbours. A 2025 Pentagon report confirmed China delivered 36 advanced J-10C fighter jets to Pakistan, effectively compressing India's decision-making timelines and eroding traditional

air superiority buffers. This collusion underscores that Beijing's diplomacy cannot be equated with strategic trustworthiness. These insecurities are collateral effects of a US policy focused on leverage over stability. Ironically, they create a basis for new alignment: Europe searches for partners beyond the Atlantic, and India seeks to diversify its cooperation in defence, technology, and supply chains. Yet, Russia complicates this emerging Europe-India alignment.

● **Moscow's Growing Dependence On China** For decades, Russia helped India maintain strategic independence. However, Moscow's growing dependence on China now limits its autonomy. A partner unwilling to help India earlier is even less likely to do so now, as Beijing likely sees Russian passivity as a green light for coercion. Recent high-level summits have been high on symbolism but delivered little substance, highlighting Russia's limited current offer-

ings From a European perspective, Russia is now the principal security threat. Grey-zone coercion and long-term decoupling have pushed Europe into its most serious military mobilisation since the Cold War. In this context, India's deep defence integration with Moscow limits the speed and depth of its integration into sensitive Western technology ecosystems. India faces a tough choice: Russian equipment remains vital, but overreliance on a weaker, China-aligned Russia is risky. Phased diversification toward European suppliers offers a balanced path forward. The "American variable" adds further uncertainty. Trump's current stance, exemplified by the Donroe Doctrine and the forceful removal of Maduro, has unsettled all allies. While this may offer India transactional energy opportunities in a US-controlled Venezuelan oil market, it reinforces the danger of relying on a Washington that prizes unilateral leverage over global stability.



# Marwadi University to Host Vibrant Gujarat Regional Conference

January 2026: Building upon the success of Vibrant Gujarat, Marwadi University is set to become the host venue for the prestigious Vibrant Gujarat Regional Conferences (VGRC). Organised by the Government of Gujarat, the conference will be scheduled from 11th to 12th January 2026. With the objective of taking not only Saurashtra but the entire state of Gujarat to global prominence in the field of education, the university has submitted a proposal of ₹1,000 crore investment MoU to the Education Department, Government of Gujarat. The proposed investment will support the development of state-of-the-art academic infrastructure, including new academic blocks with advanced laboratories, modern sports facilities, and next-generation hostels. Additionally, a dedicated 10,000 square feet centre for innovation and start-ups will be established, along with a separate academic block for continuing education aimed at working professionals and entrepreneurs. Emphasizing the theme “Vocal for Local”, VGRC will be organised across



four zones of Gujarat — North, Saurashtra-Kutch, South, and Central Gujarat. The event is also set to witness global participation from countries including Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, and the Netherlands, along with organizations like JETRO, ICBC, USISPF, World Bank, and the Russian Federation. Expressing delight at this auspicious opportunity, Dhruv Marwadi, Trustee, Marwadi University, shared, “It is a matter of

great pride for us to host the Vibrant Gujarat Regional Conferences for the Kutch-Saurashtra region. As an institution rooted in innovation, industry engagement, and skill development, we are proud to provide a platform that fosters collaborations between local enterprises, start-ups, government bodies, and global investors. We aim to continuously co-create Gujarat’s growth story and contribute to the vision of Viksit Bharat.”R.B. Jadeja,

Provost, Marwadi University, shared, “We are proud to contribute to Gujarat’s progress and the larger vision of Viksit Bharat@2047. VGRC embodies the true spirit of connecting local potential with global opportunities. Hosting this event is our commitment to building these bridges and contributing to Gujarat’s emergence as a globally competitive and inclusive growth engine.”Over the course of two days, participants will engage in semi-

nars, exhibitions, MoU signings, B2B-B2G meetings, buyer-seller meets, and vendor development programs. The itinerary will cover topics including AI, Digital Marketing, Sustainability, Circular Economy, Auto & Precision Engineering, etc.Inspired by the legacy of 10 successful Vibrant Gujarat Global Summits, the event will position Gujarat as a global investment hub and will give fresh momentum to the state’s overall economic development. With a strong focus on key sectors including MSMEs, start-ups, skill development, tourism, culture, and food processing, the conference aligns with the visions of Viksit Bharat@2047 and Viksit Gujarat@2047. About Marwadi University: Established as a leading private institution in Gujarat, Marwadi University is committed to providing world-class education across undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programs. With NBA accreditation and a NAAC A+ grade, the university emphasizes academic excellence, research innovation, and holistic student development.

# Saudi Arabia to open its stock market to foreigners from Feb 1



Foreign investors will now be permitted to access Saudi Arabia’s capital market starting February 1, the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) announced on Tuesday, January 6, as part of its broader effort to attract international capital. The country’s financial markets regulator stated that the changes to existing stock market laws will help broaden and diversify the range of investors allowed in the main market, in turn supporting investment flows and improving market liquidity. The amendments further eliminate the concept of “Qualified Foreign Investor,” which had pre-

viously restricted direct market access to international institutions or companies that were required to meet certain size and experience standards. This means the international investors can invest directly in the country’s capital market without qualifying for the previous system, the statement read. International investment exceeded SAR 590 billion According to the CMA statement, international investors’ ownership in the capital exceeded SAR 590 billion by the end of the third quarter in 2025. While investments in the main market reached approximately SAR 519 billion during the same peri-

od, showing exponential growth compared to 2024, when the data stood at SAR 498 billion. The financial markets regulator said the approved amendments are likely to contribute to attracting additional international investments. In 2025, the Saudi benchmark index, referred to as TASI, fell 12.8 per cent, and is down a further 1.9 per cent as of this year. Currently, the Saudi Exchange, also known as Tadawul, has 262 listed companies, with the market capitalisation reaching SAR 9 trillion. The changes in the existing stock market are aimed at supporting investment flows and market fluidity.

# CCI finds Tata Steel, SAIL, JSW breached antitrust law: Report

The Competition Commission of India (CCI), the country’s competition regulator, has found Tata Steel, JSW Steel, state-run Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL), and 25 other firms in breach of antitrust law by colluding on steel selling prices, according to a Reuters exclusive report published on Tuesday, December 6. The October 6, 2025, order by the CCI also holds 56 top executives liable for price collusion over varying periods between 2015 and 2023, putting companies and their senior leadership at risk of heavy fines. Among those named in the CCI’s confidential order are JSW Steel’s billionaire Managing Director Sajjan Jindal, Tata Steel Chief Executive TV Narendran, and four former chairpersons of SAIL, Reuters reported. The order, which has not been made public, marks a critical stage in one of the most high-profile antitrust cases involving India’s steel sector.



What started the investigation The probe began in 2021 after the Coimbatore Corporation Contractors Welfare Association alleged in a Tamil Nadu court that steel companies had hiked prices by 55 per cent during a six-month period to March 11 that year. The association, whose members are involved in road and highway construction, claimed companies were artificially boosting prices by restricting supply to builders and consumers. After the public prosecutor determined the matter fell under competition law, the judge directed the

CCI to take appropriate action. In 2022, the watchdog had raided some steel companies as part of its probe. The investigation was subsequently expanded to cover as many as 31 companies and industry bodies, as well as dozens of executives, according to the October order reviewed by Reuters. An internal CCI note from July 2025 said officials had examined WhatsApp messages exchanged among regional industry groups of steel product makers, which suggested companies were involved in fixing prices and cutting down production, the

report said. Penalties ahead JSW Steel and SAIL have denied the allegations before the CCI, according to sources familiar with the matter who spoke to Reuters. One source said JSW had submitted its response and rejected the claims. India is the world’s second-largest producer of crude steel. JSW Steel holds about 17.5 per cent of the market, Tata Steel around 13.3 per cent and SAIL close to 10 per cent. Under competition rules, the CCI can impose penalties of up to three times a company’s profit or 10 per cent of its turnover for each year of wrongdoing, whichever is higher, with individual executives also facing fines. The findings will now be reviewed by senior CCI officials, after which companies and executives will be given an opportunity to submit objections before a final order is issued. Given the scale of the case, this process could take several months, Reuters reported.

# NRoute Launches Heartisafe: A Revolutionary Natural Supplement for Preventive Heart Health

Featuring the patented Fruitflow® extract, Heartisafe is the only natural antiplatelet with an EFSA-approved health claim Mumbai, January 06,

leading health and fitness supplement company, has announced the launch of its latest innovation, Heartisafe. Designed to enhance cardiovascular

potent proprietary blend of Fruitflow® (a patented tomato extract) and Grape Seed Extract. While conventional heart health advice often focuses on cholesterol and blood pressure, Heartisafe targets a critical but overlooked factor: blood flow. The supplement harnesses natural bioactive compounds to smooth blood platelets and maintain healthy circulation, which is essential for a healthy heart. Science-Backed Preventive Care Heartisafe distinguishes itself through rigorous scientific backing. The key ingredient, Fruitflow, is a water-soluble extract derived from the jelly surrounding the seeds of sun-ripened tomatoes. It is the result of years of research and over 90 clinical studies. Developed by Dr. Asim K. Duttaroy, an internationally recognized scientist holding several global patents in cardiovascular health, Fruitflow is the only natural antiplatelet with an EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) approved health claim. It works by preventing platelet aggregation, while the added Grape Seed

Extract strengthens blood vessel walls. Bridging the Gap in Heart Health Nimish Thaker, CEO of NRoute, highlighted the urgent need for preventive solutions in the Indian market. "India has a very high heart disease burden risk given current lifestyles and comorbid conditions," said Mr. Thaker. "While we have seen significant progress on the curative side, there is little available in terms of preventive daily heart support. Heartisafe fills that gap." He added, "We often overlook the importance of blood flow, which can change hourly based on our lifestyle. Healthy blood flow requires clear vessels and smooth circulation to prevent dangerous clots. Including Heartisafe in your daily routine is a simple way to manage this." Availability and Dosage Heartisafe is fast-acting, starting to work within 1.5 hours and lasting up to 18 hours. The recommended usage is two capsules per day. The product is available now on the official NRoute website and through select retail partners across India.



2026: NRoute, a health, Heartisafe is a

# Scoot’s January Thematic Sale Offers Discounted Fares as Low as INR 5,900

January 2026 : Scoot, the low-cost subsidiary of Singapore Airlines, today announced the launch of ‘Scoot’s January Thematic Sale’ starting from 7-12 January 2026, offering attractive fares across its extensive network. Customers can book one-way economy class fares from India to Singapore starting at just INR 5,900, with onward connections to popular destinations across the Asia-Pacific and beyond. Promotional fares are available for booking for travel between 28 January 2026 and 24 October 2026, covering exciting destinations such as Bangkok, Phuket, Bali, Hong Kong, Seoul, Sydney, and many others. With this limited-time sale, travellers from Amritsar, Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, and beyond can now enjoy exciting getaways at exceptional value.

Some of the featured fares include:

- **Chennai to Singapore from INR 5,900**
- **Tiruchirappalli to Chiang Rai from INR 11,900**
- **Thiruvananthapuram to Melbourne from INR 14,900**
- **Visakhapatnam to Bali (Denpasar) from INR 9,000**
- **Amritsar to Hong Kong from INR 12,000**
- **Coimbatore to Bangkok from INR 8,900**

Travellers from Amritsar and Chennai can also enjoy an

enhanced flying experience on Scoot’s Boeing 787 Dreamliners with ScootPlus, available from INR 14,900\*. ScootPlus offers priority check-in and boarding, spacious seating with extra legroom, 15kg cabin baggage and 30kg checked baggage allowances, as well as 30MB of onboard Wi-Fi. Additionally, KrisFlyer members booking tickets during the sale can earn miles on their Scoot flights, adding extra value to their journeys Visit Scoot’s website or use the Scoot mobile app to discover available flights and plan your next trip. With an extensive network of over 60 destinations, customers can take advantage of these special fares and immerse themselves in diverse cultures, enjoy delightful cuisines, and check off their travel bucket list!

# IDFC FIRST BANK LAUNCHES ZERO-FOREX DIAMOND RESERVE CREDIT CARD

Hyderabad, January 2026: IDFC FIRST Bank today announced the launch of Zero-Forex Diamond Reserve Credit Card, a premium travel and lifestyle offering primarily for affluent global travellers who would like to get a proposition of Zero Forex Markup, travel lounges, accelerated travel rewards and lifestyle privileges. The key travel and lifestyle features of the Diamond Reserve Credit card are: 0% forex markup on all international spends. Earn up to 60 Reward Points for every ₹150 spent on hotel bookings via the app. With each Reward Point valued at ₹0.25, that’s ₹15 back on every ₹150 spent—an effective 10% value back on hotel stays. Earn up to 40 Reward Points for every ₹150 spent on flight bookings via the app. That’s ₹10 back on every ₹150 spent—an effective 6.6% value back on flight bookings. Earn up to 10 Reward Points for every ₹150 spent on monthly spends. With each Reward Point valued at ₹0.25,



that’s ₹2.5 back on every ₹150 spent—an effective 1.66% value back. 2 domestic lounge visits and 2 international lounge visits per quarter. Up to 2 complimentary golf rounds or lessons per month. One Complimentary Meet and Greet Airport service on annual spends of USD 1,000

Buy-One-Get-One movie ticket every month. ITC Hotels: Book 2 nights and get the 3rd night free. Free trip cancellation cover of Rs. 25,000. Insurance cover for lost baggage, delayed flights, Air Accident cover of Rs. 1 crore. Personal accident cover of Rs. 10 lakhs. Other Special Unique features of IDFC

FIRST Credit Cards continue to apply as follows: Dynamic interest rates starting at 8.5% p.a., among the lowest in the category. 0% Interest on ATM Cash withdrawal globally till payment due date. Nominal fee of ₹199 per withdrawal. No expiry of reward points. Lifetime validity. Freedom to redeem

Reward Points across any e-commerce or online purchase. Unlimited earning — no caps or artificial limits on reward point accrual. Up to 10X rewards points on Credit Card spends above Rs. 20,000 per billing cycle. Fuel surcharge waiver at select fuel stations. Priced at ₹3,000 + GST, the Diamond Reserve Credit Card delivers a compelling premium proposition with an annual fee waiver at ₹6 lakh annual spends, making it effectively free from the second year onwards. Shirish Bhandari, Head – Credit Cards, FASTag & Loyalty, IDFC FIRST Bank, said: Diamond Reserve is an ideal choice for customers with significant international travel exposure, who want a premium card that works seamlessly both overseas and in India. With zero forex mark-up, a strong travel-led rewards proposition, and an annual fee waiver at ₹6 lakh spends, it becomes a natural companion and the primary card for global travel and lifestyle.



# US seizes Russian-flagged tanker in Atlantic and second vessel linked to Venezuela in Caribbean Sea

The US Coast Guard boarded two “ghost fleet” tanker ships in a “meticulously coordinated” operation, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem says. Noem says one ship was in the North Atlantic Sea while the other was in international waters near the Caribbean. The operations took place within hours of each other, she adds. The tankers, the *Marinera* and the *Sophia*—were “either last docked in Venezuela or en route to it”, Noem adds. The *Marinera* has been trying to “evade the Coast Guard for weeks”, she says. Her post includes a short video showing thermal imagery of people appearing to board the *Sophia* by descending from a helicopter. Around 10 people are then seen on an upper deck of the vessel. We have just heard from US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth on the seizure of the Venezuela-linked oil tankers. In a post on X, Hegseth says: “The blockade of sanctioned and



illicit Venezuelan oil remains in FULL EFFECT—anywhere in the world”. He later shared a similar message alongside a video of the US seizing a second tanker in the Caribbean sea. The US has seized a second oil tanker, this time in the Caribbean sea, according to the US Southern Command. The vessel, a “stateless, sanctioned dark fleet motor



tanker”, was apprehended in a pre-dawn operation, the military adds. “The interdicted vessel, M/T *Sophia*, was operating in international waters and conducting illicit activities in the Caribbean Sea,” the US military says in a statement. “The US Coast Guard is escorting M/T *Sophia* to the US for final disposition.” The prime minister’s official spokesperson

says Downing Street won’t comment on the US operation involving the Venezuela-linked *Marinera* oil tanker. “We don’t comment on the operational activity of other nations, including the third party use of UK bases”, the spokesperson told reporters when asked about the tanker in the regular Wednesday briefing following Prime Minister’s Questions, adding

that that was “a long-standing position” of UK governments. This shows Donald Trump’s appetite for unilateral military action remains undimmed. This was proven beyond doubt with his military aggression against Venezuela, and he seems to want to reinforce that message by going after those tankers that he has sanctioned. There are lots of questions we simply don’t know the answer to, including what is being carried on the ship. This operation demonstrates the US might like to do things alone, but it also needs allies. It is only able to carry out operations like this because it has large military airbases outside the US from which it can mount these kind of operations. We can bring you some more from the US European Command now, which says the seizure of the vessel supports US President Donald Trump’s “Proclamation targeting sanctioned vessels that

threaten the security and stability of the Western Hemisphere”. “The operation was executed by DHS components with support from @DeptofWar, showcasing a whole-of-government approach to protect the homeland.” The US European Command says the US Department of Justice and Homeland Security have “today announced the seizure of the M/V *Bella 1* for violations of US sanctions”. In a post on X, they add: “The vessel was seized in the North Atlantic pursuant to a warrant issued by a US federal court after being tracked by USCGC *Munro*.” Two images published by Russian state broadcaster RT show a helicopter close to a ship that appears to be *Marinera*. Features visible on the vessel in the images, including the position of the window and the white and green colour of the metalwork, are consistent with publicly available and satellite images of *Marinera*.

## Six dead and hundreds of flights cancelled as snow causes chaos across Europe



Intense snowfall and icy weather conditions have caused widespread travel disruption across Europe, with six reported killed in weather-related incidents on the continent. Five people died in two separate regions of France as a result of treacherous driving conditions, authorities said, while one woman was also killed in Bosnia’s capital, Sarajevo, after 16in (40cm) of snow fell on the city. Hundreds of flights have been cancelled across Europe, with thousands left stranded at airports in Paris and Amsterdam. Disruption is expected to continue into

Wednesday. In France, three people died in two separate incidents in Landes, in the south-west, due to black ice, authorities said. Two more died in separate motor accidents in the Paris region. One was the result of a collision between a driver and a heavy goods vehicle in east Paris, police said. The other was killed after a taxi driver hit a kerb due to snow and plunged into the Marne river, the outlet said. The Balkans has also seen snow and heavy rain. A woman died in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo on Monday after a tree weighed down with wet snow fell on her, police said.

## Families shocked Swiss ski bar was not inspected for years before deadly fire



Families of the victims of a fire at a Swiss bar on New Year’s Eve have expressed shock after officials admitted the venue had not undergone safety checks for five years. Romain Jordan, who represents some of the families, said the “staggering number of breaches and shortcomings in the inspections raises the question of whether the municipality should be investigated with even greater urgency”. Other lawyers also urged officials to take responsibility for the disaster at Le Constellation bar in Crans-Montana in which 40 people died and 116 were injured. Prosecutors believe the fire started when champagne bottles with sparklers attached set light to sound-insulating foam on the ceiling. The two bar managers have been placed under criminal investigation, but not in custody. French couple Jacques and Jessica Moretti are suspected of manslaughter by negligence, bodily harm by

negligence and arson by negligence. In their first statement since the fire, they said they were “devastated” and pledged “full co-operation” with the investigation. Venues like Le Constellation should have been checked annually, but the mayor of Crans-Montana, Nicolas Feraud, said on Tuesday he could not explain why it hadn’t been checked in so long. “We regret that - we owe it to the families and we will accept the responsibility,” he said. He added that sparklers would be banned in local venues. Most of the victims of the fire were young - eight under the age of 16. Many of the injured have severe burns and are being treated in Switzerland and other European countries. The funerals of some of those who died have been taking place. Under Switzerland’s political system, power is distributed among three levels of the confederation, 26 cantons and then about 2,131 municipalities.

## Plot to kill Burkina Faso leader foiled, says junta



A plot to kill Burkina Faso’s military leader, Capt Ibrahim Traoré, has been thwarted, the West African nation has announced. The sophisticated plan had been hatched by Lt Col Paul Henri Damiba, the military officer ousted by Traoré in September 2022, the security minister said in a late-night broadcast. “Our intelligence services intercepted this operation in the final hours. They

had planned to assassinate the head of state and then strike other key institutions, including civilian personalities,” said Mahamadou Sana, further alleging that the plot had been funded from neighbouring Ivory Coast. There has been no comment from either Col Damiba or Ivory Coast. Since seizing power, Capt Traoré has faced at least two coup attempts and is also grappling with growing jihadist violence that has forced millions from their homes. Despite these challenges and his authoritarian reputation, the 37-year-old military leader maintains strong popular support and has gained a following across the continent for his pan-Africanist vision and criticism of Western influence.

## US discussing options to acquire Greenland including using military, White House says

US President Donald Trump has been discussing “a range of options” to acquire Greenland, including use of the military, the White House said. The White House told the BBC that acquiring Greenland - a semi-autonomous region of fellow Nato member Denmark - was a “national security priority”. The statement came hours after European leaders issued a joint statement rallying behind Denmark, which has been pushing back against Trump’s ambitions for the Arctic island. Trump repeated that the US “needed” Greenland for security reasons over the weekend, prompting Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen to warn that any attack by the US would spell the end of Nato. The White House said



on Tuesday: “The president and his team are discussing a range of options to pursue this important foreign policy goal, and of course, utilising the US military is always an option at the commander-in-chief’s disposal.” Nato is a trans-Atlantic military group in which allies are expected to go to each other’s aid in case of external attacks. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio also told

lawmakers at a classified briefing on Capitol Hill on Monday that the Trump administration did not plan to invade Greenland, but he mentioned instead buying the island from Denmark, the Wall Street Journal and other US media reported. Then on Tuesday, a state department spokesperson told the BBC that the US was “eager to build lasting commercial relationships that

benefit Americans and the people of Greenland”. The spokesperson added: “Our common adversaries have been increasingly active in the Arctic. That is a concern that the United States, the Kingdom of Denmark, and Nato allies share.” Greenland and Denmark previously said they had asked to meet Rubio quickly to discuss the US claims on the island. Denmark’s Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen said speaking to America’s top diplomat should resolve “certain misunderstandings”. On Tuesday, six European allies expressed support for Denmark. “Greenland belongs to its people, and only Denmark and Greenland can decide on matters concerning their relations.

## OPPOSITION LEADER MACHADO SAYS HER COALITION SHOULD LEAD VENEZUELA

Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado has said her coalition should “absolutely” be in charge of the country, following the US ousting of President Nicolás Maduro last week. “We are ready and willing to serve our people as we have been mandated,” Machado said in an interview with the BBC’s US partner CBS. She thanked US President Donald Trump for his “leadership and courage” after US forces stormed Caracas and arrested Maduro, but said nobody trusted the deposed president’s ally, who has been appointed as interim leader. Machado and her opposition movement claimed victory

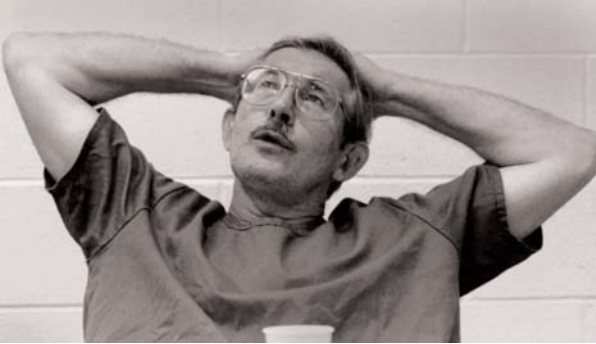


in 2024’s heavily disputed elections, but Trump has refused to back her, saying she lacks popular support. The former legislator, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last year, described US military action in Venezuela over the weekend as “a major step towards restoring pros-

perity and rule of law and democracy in Venezuela”. She said she had not spoken with Trump this year, but expressed gratitude to him for deposing Maduro. “President Trump’s leadership and courage has brought Nicolás Maduro to face justice and this is huge,”

she told CBS. Despite her overtures, the US president has publicly dismissed Machado as a credible successor to Maduro. “I think it would be very tough for her to be the leader,” Trump told a news conference days ago, referring to Machado. “She doesn’t have the support within or the respect within the country. She’s a very nice woman, but she doesn’t have the respect.” Machado, who has been in hiding for months after being barred from running in the 2024 presidential elections in Venezuela, has previously called for the opposition’s Edmundo González to assume power after Maduro’s arrest.

## Aldrich Ames, CIA agent who sold secrets to the Soviets, dies aged 84



Aldrich Ames, a CIA officer who became one of America’s most damaging double agents, has died aged 84. The former counterintelligence officer, who was serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole, died on Monday at the Federal Correctional Institution in Cumberland, Maryland, CBS News, the BBC’s media partner in the US, reported. Ames was jailed on 28 April 1994 after he admitted to selling secret information to the Soviet Union and later Russia. He compromised more than 100 clandestine operations and divulged the identities of more than 30 agents spying for the West - leading to the deaths of at least 10 CIA intelligence assets. Seeking money to pay debts, Ames said he began providing the KGB with the names of CIA spies in April 1985, receiving an initial payment of \$50,000. Known to the KGB by his code name, Kolokol (The Bell),

Ames went on to identify virtually all of the CIA’s spies in the Soviet Union, for which he was well rewarded. “To my enduring surprise, the KGB replied that it had set aside for me \$2 million in gratitude for the information,” he said in an eight-page statement he read to the court. Over the course of nine years, Ames admitted receiving a total of about \$2.5 million from the Soviet Union for his betrayal of the US. The cash fuelled a lavish lifestyle, with Ames splashing out on a new Jaguar car, foreign holidays and a \$540,000 house - despite never having a salary of more than \$70,000 a year. Ames’s 31-year career at the CIA began when his father, an analyst at the CIA, helped him land a job there after dropping out of college in 1962. He married his first wife, fellow CIA agent Nancy Segebarth, in 1969, before being sent to Turkey as a counterintelligence officer to recruit foreign agents.

# YEMEN SEPARATIST LEADER ACCUSED OF TREASON AS SAUDI ARABIA STRIKES FORCES

The Saudi-backed presidential council in Yemen has expelled the leader of a separatist group and charged him with treason after he failed to fly to Riyadh for talks. Six other members of the presidency accused Aidarous al-Zubaidi, head of the United Arab Emirates-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC), of “undermining the independence of the republic”. A Saudi-led military coalition said Zubaidi “fled” after not joining STC officials on a flight from Aden and “moved a large force” to al-Dahle province. Coalition aircraft launched strikes on the forces in response, it added. The STC said the strikes, which reportedly killed four

people, were “unjustified” and that Zubaidi was still in Aden. It also expressed concern that contact had been lost with the group’s delegation in Riyadh. The past few weeks have seen southern Yemen moving to the brink of a new conflict, pitting factions battling the Iran-backed Houthi movement in the country’s decade-long civil war against each other and deepening a rift between Saudi Arabia and the UAE. STC-aligned forces have in recent years taken control of much of the south, which they want once again to be an independent state, by pushing out forces loyal to the internationally recognised government and the Presidential Leadership



Council overseeing it. In December, the STC’s forces launched offensives to seize the eastern provinces of Hadramawt and al-Mahra from the government, saying they were necessary to “restore stability” in the south and combat the Houthis, al-Qaeda and Islamic State group.

However, Saudi Arabia warned last week that the advances near the kingdom’s borders constituted threats to its national security as well as the security and stability of Yemen. It also accused the UAE of “pressuring” its separatist allies to push into eastern Yemen and expressed support for a

demand from the presidential council for all Emirati forces to leave. At the same time, the Saudi-led coalition - which was formed in 2015 by Arab states, including the UAE, after the Houthis seized control of north-western Yemen - struck what it said was a shipment of weapons and military vehicles for the STC that had arrived from the UAE. The UAE expressed “deep regret” at the Saudi accusations and denied there were any weapons, but agreed to pull its remaining forces out of the country. Since then, forces loyal to the government have largely retaken control of Hadramawt and al-Mahra with the help of

coalition air strikes. In order to further diffuse tensions, Zubaidi and an STC delegation had been due to fly from Aden to Riyadh on Tuesday night for talks with the government. However, the coalition said the plane left three hours late without Zubaidi, who “fled to an unknown location”. “The legitimate government and the coalition received intelligence indicating that Zubaidi had moved a large force - including armoured vehicles, combat vehicles, heavy and light weapons, and ammunition - from the Jabal Hadid and al-Solban camps [in Aden] towards al-Dhale,” coalition spokesman Maj-Gen Turki al-Malki said in a statement.



# Shyam Steel appoints Harmanpreet Kaur as Brand Ambassador

7th January, India: Shyam Steel, one of India's leading producers and manufacturers of primary TMT bars, has announced the appointment of Harmanpreet Kaur, Captain of the Indian Women's Cricket Team, as its brand ambassador. The association marks a significant step for the brand, reinforcing its progressive outlook by aligning with one of India's most respected women leaders in sport. With this partnership, Shyam Steel highlights its belief that strength today goes beyond infrastructure, it reflects mindset, inclusion, and shared responsibility. Guided by its core philosophy, "Maksad Toh Hai India Ko Banana Hamesha Ke Liye Strong", the brand continues to evolve its narrative by acknowledging the growing role of women in shaping key household and construction-related decisions. As women increasingly take the lead in decisions around home building, safety, and long-term investments, Shyam Steel's associa-



tion with Harmanpreet Kaur reflects this shift. Her leadership, resilience, and sportsmanship mirror the brand's belief in strength with purpose, responsibility, and long-term commitment. At the heart of this association lies the belief that strong nations

are built on strong choices, choices made even before the foundation is laid. Today, these decisions are increasingly being led by women, who prioritise safety over shortcuts and quality over compromise. Through this partnership,

Shyam Steel reinforces its campaign thought - "Strong Woman. Strong Steel. Strong India." - a reflection of how responsible decisions build strong homes, and strong homes contribute to a stronger nation. Strengthening this commitment further, Harmanpreet Kaur will also be actively associated with Shyam Steel's Apna Ghar App - "Neev Se Pravesh Tak", a one-stop digital solution designed to simplify the entire home-building journey. From planning and material selection to expert guidance and execution support, the app enables homeowners to make informed, responsible decisions at every stage, right from the foundation to final possession. Harmanpreet's association with Apna Ghar reinforces the platform's message of trust, reliability, and confidence in making the right choices while building a home. Commenting on the association, Mr. Lalit Beriwalla, Director, Shyam

Steel, said, "This partnership represents a shared belief in discipline, determination, and reliability - values that define both Shyam Steel and Harmanpreet Kaur. As a brand, we have always stood for strength with purpose, and Harmanpreet's leadership on and off the field reflects this philosophy in its truest sense." Adding perspective on the growing influence of women in construction-related decisions, Mrs. Megha Beriwalla Gupta, Director, Shyam Steel, said, "Today, women are no longer just participants but key decision-makers when it comes to building homes and securing the future of their families. Our association with Harmanpreet Kaur, including her involvement with the Apna Ghar platform, celebrates this change. She represents confidence, leadership, and trust—qualities that resonate strongly with modern Indian women and align perfectly with Shyam Steel's vision of building a stronger, more inclusive India."

## Virat Kohli Gets Mobbed By Crowd Upon Arrival In Vadodara



Fans gathered in huge numbers to welcome India's star batter Virat Kohli as he reached the Vadodara airport ahead of the first ODI against New Zealand. The host team is set to play a three-match series against the Blackcaps in the format. The first match will be played on January 11 at the BCA Stadium, Vadodara. Kohli, who is active as an international player only in ODIs, arrived in the city of Gujarat on Wednesday. In a poor turn of events, he got mobbed by the crowd which was there to welcome him.

The security personnel struggled, taking Kohli to his car outside the airport. Kohli, the senior pro, recently returned to the Vijay Hazare Trophy, competing in the List A format for the first time in 15 years. The former India captain has been in impressive form, following a strong 131 with a smooth 77 in his two matches. Kohli also surpassed 16,000 runs in List A cricket, becoming the fastest to reach this milestone, breaking Sachin Tendulkar's record. Kohli has been in outstanding form ever since

he returned to international cricket during the Australia tour in October last year. Although his start was slow with two ducks, he has since been performing exceptionally well. In the recent ODI series against South Africa, Kohli scored consecutive centuries and was India's leading scorer. The right-handed batter is only 25 runs short of becoming the fastest cricketer to score 28,000 runs in international cricket. He could join Sachin Tendulkar and Kumar Sangakkara as the third player to reach the milestone.

## Bangladesh Board Reveals ICC's Response To Its T20 World Cup Concerns

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Wednesday broke silence on its conversation with the International Cricket Council (ICC) over security concerns pertaining to the upcoming T20 World Cup in India. The ICC has "conveyed willingness to work closely" with the BCB to address concerns related to the team's participation the showpiece event. This was after hostilities rose between India and Bangladesh following Bangladeshi pacer Mustafizur Rahman's ouster from the IPL on BCCI's instructions. The move prompted a livid BCB to demand that its four World Cup matches in India be shifted to co-host Sri Lanka in a written submission to the ICC. "The Bangladesh Cricket Board has received response from the ICC regarding the



Board's expressed concerns over the safety and security of the Bangladesh National Cricket Team in India for the ICC T20 World Cup, including the request for relocation of the team's matches," the BCB said in a statement. "In its communication, the ICC has reiterated its commitment to ensuring the full and uninterrupted participation of the



Bangladesh team in the tournament. "The ICC has conveyed its willingness to work closely with the BCB to address the concerns raised and has assured that the Board's inputs will be welcomed and duly considered as part of the detailed security planning for the event," it added. The ICC has not issued a public response to the BCB

on this subject. The T20 World Cup starts on February 7 and Bangladesh are due to play their four games in Kolkata and Mumbai. According to ICC sources speaking to NDTV, the governing body has explicitly rejected the BCB's proposal to shift the scheduled venues away from India. While tensions remain high regarding the hosting arrangements, the ICC is opting for a diplomatic approach, scheduling a series of high-level meetings intended to resolve the crisis and ensure the matches can proceed under mutually agreeable conditions. In a move to stabilise the situation and maintain the integrity of the competition, the ICC has clarified that it has not asked Bangladesh to forfeit any points at this stage.

## Bangladesh's Strong Reaction After ICC's Letter On T20 World Cup Venue Change Row

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) top officials held a high-level meeting on Wednesday regarding their stance of not playing T20 World Cup matches in India. The meeting was attended by BCB president Aminul Islam Bulbul and Asif Nazrul, the Bangladesh government's advisor on Youth and Sports. In the meeting, it was decided that Bangladesh will try to convince the ICC to shift its T20 World Cup matches to Sri Lanka. Bangladesh are scheduled to play four T20 World Cup group stage matches in India (three in Kolkata and one in Mumbai). The venue row started after Bangladesh



pacer Mustafizur Rahman's release from the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026. On the instructions of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), Kolkata Knight Riders released the veteran seamer, leaving the Bangladesh government and its cricket board fuming. The ICC on

Tuesday had sent a letter to the Bangladesh Cricket Board after its request regarding venue change. "In its communication, the ICC has reiterated its commitment to ensuring the full and uninterrupted participation of the Bangladesh team in the tournament," the BCB

claimed. "The ICC has conveyed its willingness to work closely with the BCB to address the concerns raised and has assured that the Board's inputs will be welcomed and duly considered as part of the detailed security planning for the event." In Wednesday's meeting, Nazrul reiterated Bangladesh's stand of not wanting to play in India. "We don't want to play the T20 World Cup in exchange for the honour of our country or in exchange for the security of our players and journalists. The letter that we have received from the ICC, after reading that we feel there is a major security concern in India regarding Bangladesh cricketers.

## Arjun Tendulkar Set To Marry Saaniya Chandhok, Report Confirms Wedding Date



Wedding bells are ringing for the Tendulkar family, with a report confirming that the wedding date of Arjun and Saaniya Chandhok has been finalised. After months of quiet whispers and private celebrations, it has been confirmed that Arjun is set to marry his fiancée, Saaniya, this March. Arjun, who was recently traded from the Mumbai Indians to the Lucknow Super Giants in the Indian Premier League (IPL), is all set to take a big step forward in his personal life. Saaniya is a successful entrepreneur and comes from a prominent background herself. She is the granddaughter of the well-known Mumbai businessman Ravi Ghai. She has reportedly been a close part of the Tendulkar inner circle for quite some time. The couple actually took the first step toward marriage back in August 2025 as they held a secret engagement ceremony attended only by their closest family members. The

news only became public knowledge after Tendulkar himself confirmed it during a Reddit AMA (Ask Me Anything) session. When a fan asked if Arjun had really got engaged, the 'Master Blaster' responded: "Yes, he did, and we are all very excited for the new phase in his life." The wedding festivities are scheduled to kick off on 3 March, with the main ceremony expected to be held on 5 March 2026. While the world might be watching, the event itself is expected to stay intimate. A report in the Times of India has claimed that the celebrations will be held in Mumbai and will remain a private affair, with a highly curated guest list consisting of family, close friends, and select members of the cricketing community in attendance. Arjun Tendulkar's Cricketing Career Arjun has carved out a distinct path in domestic cricket, transitioning from his early days in Mumbai to becoming a vital bowling all-rounder for Goa.

## Nicholas Pooran And Jason Smith Power MI Cape Town To Dramatic First Season 4 Win

Unseasonal rain could not prevent MI Cape Town from clinching a dramatic four-wicket (via Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method) victory over Joburg Super Kings at Newlands on Tuesday evening. MI Cape Town edged past JSK's revised target of 128 with four balls remaining to claim their much-needed first victory of the competition. The Newlands faithful had been waiting patiently for Nicholas Pooran to explode, and the West Indies dynamo delivered a power-hitting show of the highest calibre. Pooran smashed five sixes in a thrill-a-ball 33 that rewarded the crowd that had waited patiently despite the consistent drizzle. Each six was bigger than the previous, with Pooran's massive heave onto the top tier of the Members



Stand off Richard Gleeson destined to live in the memory of those who witnessed it for a long while. Pooran ultimately fell on his sword, being caught on the deep cover boundary, which left Rassie van der Dussen (35 off 24 balls, 3x6) having to hold it together before Jason Smith injected the momentum MI Cape Town required with a boundary-laden 22 off just six

balls, taking the home side to the brink before Karim Janat closed out the victory with four balls remaining. Intermittent weather had earlier delayed the match by an hour before the Super Kings could begin their innings after being inserted by MI Cape Town. JSK captain Faf du Plessis and his

new opening partner James Vince stormed out of the starting blocks with a 32-run partnership off just 2.4 overs before Vince (15 off 9 balls, 2x4, 1x6) was caught in the covers off George Linde. Du Plessis has shown already that he was in a destructive mood, striking MI Cape Town spearhead Kagiso Rabada for four successive boundaries in the second over, and continued to lead JSK's charge after Vince's dismissal. The four Player of the Match candidates were Corbin Bosch, Faf du Plessis, Rashid Khan and Nicholas Pooran, with 'Nicky P' winning 59.7% of the fan vote. After striking Linde over long-on, Du Plessis set his sights on New Zealander Trent Boult in the final over before the conclusion of the Powerplay.

## Neymar extends Santos deal in bid for World Cup spot

Brazil forward Neymar has extended his contract with Santos until the end of 2026 as he seeks to earn a World Cup call-up. The 33-year-old, who returned to his boyhood club in January 2025, has not represented five-time World Cup winners Brazil since 2023 amid his struggles with injuries. The former Barcelona and Paris St-Germain forward played through pain to help Santos avoid relegation from Brazil's top flight last season, scoring five times in their last five matches. He then had surgery on his left knee, to repair a damaged meniscus, to boost his hopes of being included in Brazil coach Carlo

Ancelotti's plans this summer. "Santos is my place, I'm at home," Neymar said in a video posted on the club's social media. He told the fans: "It's with you that I want to achieve the dreams that are still missing." Ancelotti said in October that Neymar, Brazil's all-time leading goalscorer with 79 goals, must be fully fit to earn a recall. Neymar spent 12 months out after he ruptured his anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in October 2023. He was due to make his return to the national team last year after a 17-month absence but was forced to withdraw from the squad with a muscle injury.

Brazil will face



Scotland, Morocco and Haiti in Group C at the World Cup, which begins on 11 June across Canada, Mexico and the United States.

## "Cricket Deserves Truth": Ridhima Pathak, Indian Presenter, On Her Bangladesh Premier League Exit



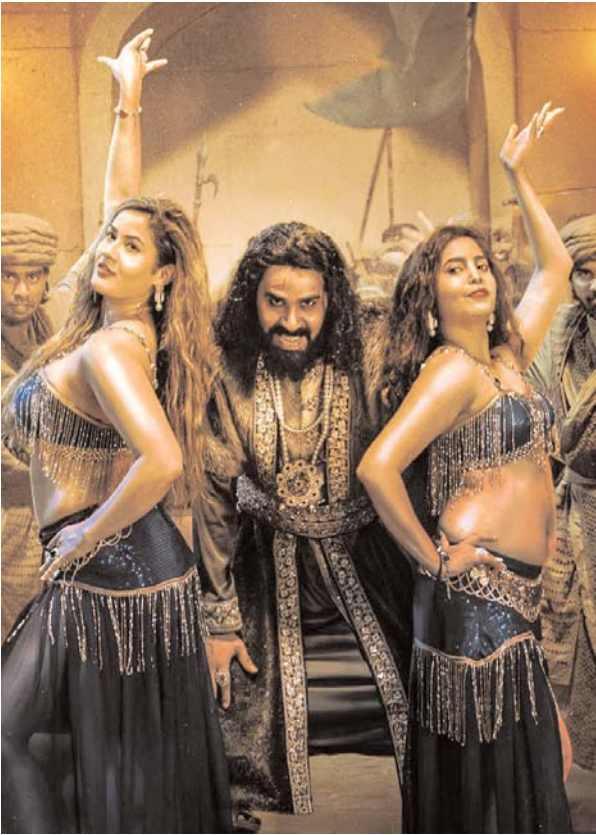
The sporting ties between India and Bangladesh have taken a sharp downturn following reports that the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officially removed Indian presenter Ridhima Pathak from the hosting panel of the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). This move is viewed as the latest ripple effect in a rapidly escalating diplomatic and sporting row between the two nations. However, Pathak—a prominent figure in Indian sports broadcasting—has refuted these reports, stating that she voluntarily withdrew from the T20 league due to the current political climate. The friction intensified on 3 January, when the Board

of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) reportedly directed the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) to release Bangladeshi pacer Mustafizur Rahman from their squad. In response to this decision, the Bangladesh government announced a nationwide ban on the telecast of the Indian Premier League (IPL) and demanded that its T20 World Cup matches be shifted to Sri Lanka. Amidst this back-and-forth between the BCCI and the BCB, various Bangladeshi media outlets reported that Pathak had been ousted from the BPL. Pathak quickly moved to clarify that the decision to leave the competition's panel was her own.



## ‘Tarasuki Ram’ Lyrical from Draupathi 2 Reflects Celebration Shaped by Faith and Power

The lyrical song “Tarasuki Ram” from Draupathi 2 has been unveiled as a composition built on contrast, using celebration not as ornamentation but as narrative language. Rather than functioning as a conventional festive number, the song positions itself firmly within the film’s historical and ideological framework, presenting parallel emotional worlds that quietly underline the divisions shaping its story. The lyrical serves as a tonal bridge, offering insight into the film’s larger conflicts without spelling them out. Structured around two distinct stanzas, Tarasuki Ram moves fluidly between spectacle and conviction. The opening section, “Tarasuki Tarasuki,” captures the sultanate clan immersed in exuberant celebration. Driven by pulsating rhythm, scale-driven choreography, and dynamic movement, this portion leans into excess and momentum, presenting celebration as an assertion of authority and dominance. The energy is outward-facing and expansive, marked by collective fervour, rhythmic intensity, and a visual language that privileges scale and power. The



song then transitions into its second stanza, “Jai Rama Rama Hare Ram,” unfolding during the pra’a prati??ha celebrations. This movement features Richard Rishi’s character carrying the idol of Rama alongside others from his clan. While celebratory in spirit, the emo-

tional register shifts decisively toward faith, unity, and shared purpose. Here, celebration becomes an act of consecration and collective resolve rather than display, grounded in belief and participation. The contrast between the two stanzas is allowed to exist without commentary, letting

emotion and imagery carry the meaning. Choreographed by Thanika Tony, ‘Tarasuki Ram’ binds these opposing emotional registers through movement, ensuring continuity while preserving distinction. The choreography functions as a connective thread, allowing both worlds to coexist within the same musical frame while retaining their individual identities. Produced by Sola Shakkaravarthi under Netaji Productions, in association with G. M Film Corporation, Draupathi 2 expands into a broader and more historically layered canvas. Set in the 14th century, the film navigates an era shaped by imperial conflict, regional resistance, and cultural upheaval, drawing from the reign of Hoysala emperor Veera Vallalar III and the legacy of the Kadavarayas of Sendhamangalam. The release of Tarasuki Ram, following the emotional response to the earlier lyrical “Nelaraaje,” further reinforces the film’s approach to music as an extension of storytelling rather than a standalone attraction.

## Let's have fun this Sankranti with the movie 'Bharta Mahasayaluku Vijyapthi'. Let's be fully entertained: Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja at the trailer launch event

-Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja, Kishore Tirumala, Sudhakar Cherukuri, SLV Cinemas grandly launch the trailer of their 'Bhartha Mahasayaluku Vigyaapthi' Directed by Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja and Kishore Tirumala, the family entertainer 'Bhartha Mahasayaluku Vigyaapthi', produced by Sudhakar Cherukuri under the banner of SLV Cinemas, is set to have a grand release on January 13. Starring Dimple Hayathi and Ashika Ranganath in the lead roles, the film has already created a huge buzz with its teaser and first three songs. Continuing this momentum, the film team has now launched the much-awaited theatrical trailer. The trailer starts with a catchy dialogue saying, "Enough with Ravi Teja's action movies." This is a fun indication that he is returning to the family zone that the audience has been missing for a long time. The story begins with his love for Ashika Ranganath on a foreign tour, and his married life with Dimple Hayathi takes an unexpected turn. His journey, torn between two women and two different questions, is hilarious and



emotional at the same time. Director Kishore Tirumala, who handles family stories brilliantly, has enhanced the humor this time with his trademark freshness. Comedy, as the main force driving the story forward, provides a lively feel-good vibe to the film. The way Ravi Teja's soul shows his difficult situation in the last sequence sets the humor tone of the film perfectly. After mass and action roles, it is refreshing to see Ravi Teja in a clean, family-friendly avatar. He combines class with swag and elevates

every scene with excellent comic timing. His acting is charming and natural. While Dimple shows strong intensity in the role of the possessive wife, Ashika's role with a modern edge also stands out. The heroines impressed in both these roles with contrasting personalities. On the comedy front, Satya entertained with laugh-riot moments. Sunil and Vennela Kishore further elevated the fun. Technically, the film is vibrant and rich. Prasad Moorella's cinematography provides a glossy, colorful

texture, while Bheem's music elevates the humorous emotion. SLV Cinemas' production values are top-notch. Sreekar Prasad's editing and AS Prakash's production design add further strength to the film. Overall, the trailer promises to be a must-see entertainer for family audiences in theaters, with comedy, drama, emotions, and relatable relationship confusions. Speaking at the trailer launch event, hero Ravi Teja said, "Hi everyone. Let's celebrate this festival with fun and excitement."

## UV Concepts "Couple Friendly" , Starring Santosh Sobhan, Set for Grand Theatrical Release on February 14

Couple Friendly, starring Santosh Sobhan in the lead role with Manasa Varanasi as the female lead, is gearing up for a grand theatrical release on February 14, marking Valentine's Day. The film is presented by the renowned production house UV Creations and is being produced on a grand scale by UV Concepts in both Telugu and Tamil. Ajay Kumar Raju P. serves as the co-producer, while Ashwin Chandrashekar directs the film. Designed as a musical romantic love story, Couple Friendly aims to appeal to young and family audiences alike. The makers officially announced the release date today, confirming that the film will hit theatres on Valentine's Day. To mark the announcement, Santosh



Sobhan and Manasa Varanasi released a special promotional video, which has been receiving positive attention. Couple Friendly

will release simultaneously in Telugu and Tamil, bringing its romantic narrative to audiences across both languages.



## I have played a character that I can personally relate to in 'Nari Nari Nadu Murari'. It is a full fun entertainer. The whole family can enjoy it together: Heroine Sakshi Vaidya

Charming Star Sharva and Ram Abbaraju are starring in the wholesome family entertainer 'Nari Nari Nadu Murari' directed by Ram Abbaraju. Produced by Anil Sunkara and Ramabrahmam Sunkara in association with Adventures International Pvt. Ltd. under the banner of AK Entertainments, the film stars Samyukta and Sakshi Vaidya as the female leads. The promotional content has already created a good buzz. The film will hit the theatres on January 14. On this occasion, heroine Sakshi Vaidya shared the film's features at a press conference.

### How did you get into this project?

-While the Agent movie was going on, producer Anil garu said that he would do another movie with me. He kept his promise. Anil garu and the director finalized me for the character of Nitya in this movie.

-Nitya's character, I really liked this story. This character is very relatable to me personally. She is an innocent-looking girl. She is honest.

### How did it feel to act with Sharwa?

It was a great pleasure working with Sharwa. His comedy timing is also amazing. It was a great experi-

ence acting with him.

-All of them are very good costars. Watching Vennela Kishore's performance during the shooting was very surprising. Because when he was in character, he looked like a completely different person. Also, Nareesh's character is also very good in this. It was a great pleasure to work with everyone. Isn't there a language barrier when acting in Telugu? Speaking in Telugu is a barrier. Otherwise, there is preparation in advance when it comes to dialogue. Director Sai took a lot of care in timing. He gave enough time and was very supportive. Saigari's strength is comedy. He is very funny even during the shooting. He keeps laughing. The same is seen in the movie too.

### How did you prepare for this character?

-I have a very good character in this movie. We did a workshop for this movie for almost a month. I understood everything about the character. What was your reaction when you heard this story? -When I heard this story, I felt like I had the opportunity to make a very good story. I immediately signed on to do this film. The story is king for this film.

## A real life story that Impress millions made by Film Maker Dolly Tomar!!



Filmmaker Dolly Tomar brings heartfelt storytelling to the screen with Omsheel Productions' documentary “Ziindaagi in Two Shades.” For Dolly, filmmaking is life itself ...a journey of emotions, truth and human connection. The film follows the inspiring story of "Iftekhar Sharif", the first Overseas Citizen of India, showing how he beautifully balances two countries and two cultures.

Hyderabad was chosen for the premiere because the journey begins here.. it is his birthplace, his emotional ground, and a city deeply connected to his success. Dollye's inspiration came when she witnessed Iftekhar in Chicago helping Indians who had lived abroad without documents for years, ensuring their safe return home ...a gesture that touched her deeply and sparked this documentarv. Directed

with sensitivity by Rajneeshh Dubey, the film gains emotional depth through strong editing by Devu Namdev and a soulful background score shaped by Dollye herself. Supported by producers Khurram Syed and Kalpana Rajput, the documentary is receiving appreciation and interest from film festivals and international audiences, proving its emotions truly universal.

## 'Assalu Cinema' Song Released from Action King Arjun's Seetha Payanam

Sri Ram Films International presents Seetha Payanam, a cinematic extravaganza directed by the multi-talented Action King Arjun. The film boasts an impressive cast, including Aishwarya Arjun, Niranjana, Sathyaraj, Prakash Raj, Kovai Sarala, with Action King Arjun himself making a special appearance and his nephew 'Action Prince' Dhruva Sarja, a super star from kannada film industry playing a special cameo, adds to the star-studded ensemble. The makers are thrilled to unveil the energetic song "Assalu Cinema," composed by Melody King Anup Rubens, with captivating lyrics by Chandrabose and soulful vocals by Shreya Ghoshal. The track showcases Aishwarya Arjun's captivating screen presence and glamour, perfectly complemented by Anup Rubens' vibrant tunes. Seetha Payanam is scheduled for a grand pan-India release on February 14, across Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Hindi. The film's technical team includes G. Balamurugan (cinematography), Dr. Sai



Madhav Burra (dialogues), Ayoob Khan (editing), and Mohan B. Carey, Shiva Kamesh D, and CH Krishna (art direction).

### Cast:

Aishwarya Arjun, Niranjana, Sathyaraj, Prakash Raj, Kovai Sarala, Action King Arjun, Action Prince Dhruva Sarja Stay tuned for more updates on Seetha Payanam!

## Samantha’s Maa Inti Bangaram Teaser Trailer Arrives on January 9th

The makers of Maa Inti Bangaram have officially announced that the film's much-awaited teaser trailer will be unveiled on January 9th at 10 AM, setting the stage for what promises to be a powerful and intense cinematic experience. Headlined by Samantha, Maa Inti Bangaram marks her reunion with acclaimed director Nandini Reddy after the massive success of Oh! Baby, a film that continues to enjoy enduring popularity among audiences. This new collaboration, however, ventures into a completely different emotional and narrative space, promising a bold and gripping family action drama. Samantha not only plays the lead role but also serves as a producer on the project, alongside Raj Nidimoru and Himank Duvvuru, under the banner of Tralala Moving Pictures. The first-look poster, featuring Samantha in a fierce and commanding avatar, has already generated strong buzz across social media, hinting at a character driven by intensity, strength, and purpose. Samantha now pushes the envelope further with a role that combines raw, high-impact action with a deeply Indian aesthetic. The teaser trailer is expected to offer the first glimpse into this compelling world. Maa Inti Bangaram features Diganth and Gulshan Devaiah in prominent roles, with veteran actress Gautami and Manjusha playing key characters. The technical team includes cinematographer Om Prakash, music composed by Santosh Narayanan, with screenplay and dialogues penned Vasanth Maringanti and Raj Nidimoru with Creative Supervision from the acclaimed Sita R Menon .

