

Assam CM felicitates Rupamoni Gorh, the first woman from Assam to scale Mount Everest

Guwahati, July 25: Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today felicitated Rupamoni Gorh, the first woman from Assam to scale Mount Everest, at a function held at Lok Sewa Bhawan in Dispur. The Chief Minister also felicitated Assistant Commandant of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Bhanita Timungpi, who led the successful ITBP All-Women's Everest Expedition. In recognition of their outstanding achievements, the Chief Minister presented financial assistance of Rs. 10 lakh to Rupamoni Gorh and Rs. 2 lakh to Bhanita Timungpi on behalf of the Government of Assam. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said Rupamoni Gorh, a native of Na-Gaon Pathar village in the Boginadi area of Lakhimpur district, has brought immense pride to Assam through her courage, discipline and perseverance. He noted that after joining the ITBP in 2021, she successfully summited the world's highest peak on May 21 as a member of the ITBP All-Women's Everest Expedition, setting an inspiring example of determination and women empowerment. The Chief Minister said the special expedition was organised under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs' Nari Shakti Vandan initiative. He added that the 14-member team, includ-



ing 11 women climbers, was led by Assam's Bhanita Timungpi, Assistant Commandant of the ITBP. Highlighting her distinguished mountaineering career, he said Timungpi has scaled more than 30 Himalayan peaks and that her vast experience was instrumental in the expedition's success. He further noted that she has been honoured by the President of India for her achievements and has also served with the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Africa. To commemorate Rupamoni Gorh's historic achievement, the Chief Minister announced that, on the ini-

tiative of Lakhimpur MLA Manab Deka, the one-kilometre road connecting her residence to Lilabari High School will be newly constructed and named as Rupamoni Gorh Path. Reflecting on the history of Everest expeditions and the indomitable spirit of human endeavour, the Chief Minister recalled the first successful ascent of Mount Everest by Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay on May 29, 1953. He observed that failures often become the stepping stones to success and paid tribute to British mountaineer George Mallory, who lost his life during his

third attempt to conquer Everest in 1924 after two unsuccessful expeditions. The Chief Minister also highlighted Assam's rich mountaineering legacy. He said the Assam Mountaineering Association, founded in 1968 by Rohini Kumar Bhuyan and Atanu Prasad Barua, pioneered organised mountaineering in the state. He recalled that Rohini Kumar Bhuyan and Khagendra Nath Bora became the first Assamese climbers to scale Bethartoli South in 1970, followed by Ajit Sarma and Bhagat Singh, who summited Mrigthuni Peak a few days later. He also

remembered Rohini Kumar Bhuyan's pioneering contributions, including the establishment of The Adventurers in 1974, before he lost his life in a snowstorm while returning from Kedarnath Dome in 1979. The Chief Minister also proposed a major initiative to promote mountaineering in the state. He said the Government of Assam would hold discussions with the ITBP authorities and, subject to their concurrence, appoint Rupamoni Gorh as a Sub-Inspector in Assam Police so that she can inspire, mentor and train aspiring mountaineers across the state.

Arunachal Governor recalls sacrifices of Kargil War heroes

Itanagar, July 25: Arunachal Pradesh Governor, Lt Gen (retired) K.T Parnaik, participated in the Kargil Vijay Diwas celebration held at Rupa in West Kameng district on Sunday. The Governor laid a wreath at the War Memorial, 5 Mountain Division and paid floral tribute to the indomitable courage and supreme sacrifice of the brave hearts of the Indian Armed Forces personnel during the Kargil War. He also interacted with officers and junior commissioned officers who participated in the War. In his address to the troops, the Governor said that Kargil Vijay Diwas commemorates India's historic victory in the 1999 Kargil War, fought over 83 days in some of the world's most challenging high-altitude battlefields. He noted that despite extreme weather, rugged terrain, and enemy occupation of strategic heights, the Indian Armed Forces displayed unmatched bravery and determination to reclaim every inch of Indian territory. He remembered the sacrifices of more than 500 soldiers and hailed the heroism of gallant warriors such as Captain Vikram Batra, Lieutenant Manoj Kumar Pandey, Grenadier Yogendra Singh Yadav, and Rifleman Sanjay Kumar. The Governor emphasized that Kargil was not only a



military victory but also a triumph of national unity, where citizens across the country stood firmly behind the Armed Forces. He called upon the youth to draw inspiration from the courage, integrity, and selfless service of the Kargil heroes and contribute to the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047 through dedication, innovation, and patriotism. Highlighting the importance of border regions, Governor said that border villages are the nation's first line of strength and emphasized the need for infrastructure development, connectivity, and livelihood opportunities to enhance national security and resilience. The Governor also stressed the importance of modernising the Armed Forces and strengthening strategic infrastructure to meet future security challenges. He expressed gratitude to serving soldiers, veterans, and border communities for their unwavering com-

mitment to the nation. Reaffirming the enduring spirit of Kargil, the Governor called upon all citizens to uphold the ideals of courage, unity, and national service for which the Kargil heroes made the supreme sacrifice. The Governor also emphasized modernizing the Armed Forces and strengthening strategic infrastructure to meet future challenges. He expressed gratitude to serving soldiers, veterans, and border communities for their unwavering commitment to the nation. Reaffirming the enduring spirit of Kargil, Governor Parnaik called upon all citizens to uphold the ideals of courage, unity, and national service — values for which the Kargil heroes made the supreme sacrifice. The commemoration at Rupa served as a reminder that the legacy of Kargil continues to inspire India's collective resolve to safeguard its sovereignty and honor the sacrifices of its brave hearts.

Mizoram CM, church bodies unite against proposed FCRA amendments

Aizawl, July 25: The Mizoram government and the state's leading church organisations have decided to jointly approach the Centre seeking amendments to the proposed Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, stating that the legislation in its current form is not acceptable. The decision was taken at a meeting between Chief Minister Lalduhoma and representatives of the Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (MKHC) and the Council of Churches in Mizoram (CCM) at the Chief Minister's official residence on Saturday. During the meeting, participants reviewed the proposed amendments to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) and unanimously expressed concern over several provisions of the Bill. They agreed that the proposed legislation, as it stands, could adversely affect the interests of the state and its institutions. The meeting resolved that the Mizoram government would



prepare a memorandum recommending changes to the proposed Bill and submit it to the Union Government. It was also decided that Chief Minister Lalduhoma would seek an appointment with Union Home Minister Amit Shah to facilitate a joint visit by leaders of the MKHC and CCM to New Delhi for the submission of the memorandum. The Chief Minister was accompanied at the meeting by his advisers and MLAs Lalmanpuia Punte and TBC Lalvenchhunga. The development comes shortly

after the Mizoram Pradesh Congress Committee urged the state government to convene a special session of the Assembly to adopt a resolution opposing the proposed FCRA Amendment Bill. In a memorandum submitted to the Chief Minister earlier this week, the Congress alleged that the proposed amendments could adversely impact Christian organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and called on the state government to formally convey Mizoram's objections to the Centre.

Manipur DGP reviews security in Tengnoupal, visits Moreh border areas

Imphal, July 25: Director General of Police (DGP) Mukesh Singh, IPS, accompanied by Additional Director General of Police (Law & Order), visited Tengnoupal district on Friday to review the overall security situation, policing arrangements and inter-agency coordination in the border district. At the Tengnoupal District Police Office, the DGP held a comprehensive review of the prevailing security scenario and interacted with district police officers. He stressed the need for sustained operations against anti-national elements, effective investigation of criminal cases, intensified anti-drug drives, recovery of illegal arms and ammunition, and close coordination among all security agencies to maintain peace and security. During his visit to Moreh, the DGP met representatives of various



communities, including the Tamil, Kuki, Nepali and Meitei Pangal communities, as well as members of civil society organisations, and discussed issues relating to security and public safety in the border town. He also held interaction sessions with the Commandants of 36 Assam Rifles

and 3 Assam Rifles, along with officers of the Assam Rifles and Manipur Police Commandos. The discussions focused on the prevailing security scenario, operational preparedness, border management and the importance of continued coordination among all security forces. The DGP

further inspected security arrangements at Gate No. 1 and Gate No. 2 of the Moreh international border crossing to assess deployment and preparedness. On his return journey, he visited Kwatha village, where he interacted with Meitei residents, district police personnel, Central Armed

Police Forces (CAPFs) and Assam Rifles personnel deployed in the area. The visit reaffirmed the commitment of the Manipur Police and other security agencies to strengthening border security, enhancing inter-agency coordination and ensuring lasting peace and public safety in the region.

Kargil Vijay Diwas commemorated at State War Memorial, Guwahati

Guwahati, July 25: Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya, attended the Kargil Vijay Diwas programme organised by Directorate of Sainik Welfare, Assam at the State War Memorial at Dighalipukhuri, Guwahati to commemorate India's victory in the 1999 Kargil War and to honour the courage, sacrifice and unwavering commitment of the nation's armed forces. Paying floral tributes to the brave soldiers who laid down their lives in the service of the nation, the Governor said that Kargil Vijay Diwas is a solemn reminder of the indomitable spirit, valour and patri-

otism displayed by the Indian Armed Forces in safeguarding the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Addressing the gathering, the Governor stated that the sacrifices of the Kargil heroes continue to inspire generations of Indians to uphold the values of courage, discipline and national service. He urged the youth to draw inspiration from the lives of the brave soldiers and contribute towards nation-building with dedication and commitment. The Governor also interacted with veterans, serving defence personnel and the families of martyrs, expressing

the nation's deep gratitude for their selfless service and sacrifices. He reaffirmed that the country will always remain indebted to its brave soldiers, whose unwavering dedication ensures the safety and security of every citizen. The Governor felicitated Thogiram Gogoi and Dulu prabha Gogoi, parents of Captain Jintu Gogoi; Thageswari Das, mother of Gunner Udhah Das; Bharati Saikia, wife of Nk Late Someswar Saikia; Hiranya Gogoi, mother of Sep Late Rupom Gogoi, and Dhal Kumari Shrestha, wife of Havaldar Late Padam Bahadur Shrestha.



The programme was attended by senior officers of the armed forces, veterans, civil administration officials, ex-servicemen, NCC cadets, students and members of the public, who joined in paying homage to the heroes of the Kargil War. In a poignant gesture, the Governor felicitated family members of fallen heroes, including Thogiram Gogoi and Dulu Prabha Gogoi (parents of Captain Jintu Gogoi), Thageswari Das (mother of Gunner Udhah Das), Bharati Saikia (wife of Nk Late Someswar Saikia), Hiranya Gogoi (mother of Sep Late Rupom

Gogoi), and Dhal Kumari Shrestha (wife of Havaldar Late Padam Bahadur Shrestha). Their presence underscored the enduring legacy of sacrifice and the nation's collective respect for its martyrs. The programme was attended by senior officers of the armed forces, veterans, civil administration officials, ex-servicemen, NCC cadets, students, and members of the public, all of whom joined in paying homage to the heroes of the Kargil War. The gathering reflected the unity of purpose and gratitude that binds the nation together in honoring its defenders.

Women Artisans Gather to Boost Craft Market

Shillong, July 25: A two-day national buyer-seller meet kicked off Friday at the State Convention Centre in Shillong. The event, titled From Heritage to Enterprise: Empowering Women Artisans in Northeast India, aims to link local creators with investors from across the country. Organizers want to grow market access for regional goods. The state government, PRIME Meghalaya, the Meghalaya State Skill Development Society, and the Meghalaya Basin Management Agency backed the initiative.

Gambegre MLA Mehtab Chandee opened the exhibition by challenging local entrepreneurs to refine their output. She pointed toward specific areas for growth. “The Northeast possesses immense potential, local entrepreneurs must focus more on packaging and production quality.” These changes will help local goods compete on global shelves. Technical sessions dominated the opening day. MBMA Executive Director Saloni Verma



spoke on building a startup ecosystem meant to support Viksit Bharat 2047. The meet gives artisans a clear path to showcase their work and sign deals. They aim to turn traditional crafts into thriving, long-term commercial enterprises.

CJP Demands Minister Resignation as Cabinet Tightens Paper Leak Penalties

Shillong, July 25: The Cockroach Janta Party remains locked in a standoff with the federal government. On Friday, party spokespersons Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka met with Union ministers J.P. Nadda and Jitendra Singh at Vithalbai Patel House. They want Dharmendra Pradhan gone. The group insists the Education Minister must step down following widespread NEET examination irregularities.

The two-hour session failed to break the deadlock. A third round of negotiations starts Saturday at 3.30 pm. The CJP demands a formal apology for the July 20 police action against students. They also seek Rs 1 crore in compensation for the families of NEET aspirants who died by suicide after the May 3 test cancellation. The party wants immunity from legal action for all protesters. “We told the Union ministers that our demand for the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan is non-negotiable,” Das told reporters. The government stands firm. Cabinet sources confirm support for Pradhan. Simultaneously, the Union Cabinet approved a draft amendment to the Public Examinations Act, 2024. The new bill targets exam cheats. It sets a minimum five-year prison term. Organised leaks could lead to 10 years in jail and Rs 10 crore in fines. Officials intend to present this legislation to Parliament on Monday. Tensions remain high at the protest site. Delhi Police



used facial recognition technology to scan the crowds at Jantar Mantar. Sources claim the units identified over 2,500 people with criminal records. Officers insist this surveillance targets only wanted individuals and habitual offenders. Elsewhere, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant slammed media reports claiming he blocked an urgent hearing on police brutality. He confirmed no formal petition exists. The CJI called those reports reckless.

Students express their disapproval police’s actions taken against the protesters

Shillong, July 25: Student organisations across Meghalaya on Friday strongly condemned the alleged use of excessive force by Delhi police against peaceful student protesters on July 20 and extended solidarity to the nationwide agitation demanding accountability over competitive examination paper leaks and systemic reforms in the education sector.

NESO chairman Samuel B. Jyrwa termed the police response — including baton charges, the use of tear gas and the reported deployment of plainclothes personnel armed with lathis — as a “brutal and excessive” action against unarmed students.

He described the incidents as “an alarming assault on democratic values and the constitutional rights of citizens to peacefully assemble and express legitimate grievances.” Criticising the Centre for what NESO called an insensitive approach towards an issue affecting the future of millions of students, Jyrwa said that instead of addressing concerns through meaningful dialogue, the authorities had resorted to repression and intimidation. The issues raised by the protesters, including repeated paper leaks and the demand for greater transparency, accountability, fairness and integrity in recruitment and examination systems, were genuine and required immediate attention, he maintained.

In Shillong, several students of



North-Eastern Hill University carrying placards and banners attended a peaceful meeting organised by the NEHU Students’ Union and NEHU KSU in front of the Central Library. They conveyed strong support to the Cockroach Janta Party and youths demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, while expressing resentment over the handling of protesters in New Delhi. Senior professor Dr Prasentjit Biswas asserted that “murderers of democracy are ruling and spoiling the country” and said students had woken up, with the entire nation now looking at Jantar Mantar. Lamenting that a faulty National Education Policy had been imposed without discussions, he described the concept of CUET as a gate-keeping mechanism for collecting money. Prof Lakhon Kma said nobody could curtail the right to protest in a democracy and noted that NEHU itself had suffered in the last two-and-a-half years as the education system had totally

failed. Students who addressed the gathering expressed full support for the protesters and warned the government not to take the youth lightly. A candle-light vigil was organised to pay respects to the young students who lost their lives over the NEET paper-leak controversy, and a minute’s silence was observed.

NPP leader and Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma’s wife, Mehtab Chandee, asked the central government to give a sympathetic and patient hearing to the students’ concerns, terming them genuine. She said students were part of society and the next generation.

On the NEET issue, she noted that the examination had been initiated to make placements easier and bring transparency, but “the way things are going, it seems something somewhere needs to be handled and taken care of.” She stressed the need to dig further, identify where things were going wrong and take corrective measures. In East Garo Hills, the Garo

Students’ Union (Eastern Zone) organised a peaceful gathering at the parking lot in front of the Deputy Commissioner’s office in Williamnagar to express solidarity with education reformer Sonam Wangchuk and the students’ movement in New Delhi.

The programme highlighted challenges facing Meghalaya’s education system, particularly in rural and remote districts, including poor school infrastructure, inadequate classrooms and learning facilities, poor road connectivity, shortage of qualified teachers, and the concentration of coaching and career guidance programmes in urban centres. A memorandum addressed to Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma was submitted through the East Garo Hills Deputy Commissioner, urging comprehensive reforms, improvement of infrastructure and connectivity, recruitment of adequate teachers, decentralisation of educational opportunities, minimising non-teaching assignments, strengthening digital education, establishing district-level competitive examination coaching centres, and introducing meaningful career guidance and skill development programmes.

Meanwhile, members of the Voice of the People Party Youth Wing joined the ongoing CJP-led protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi and personally handed over a letter of solidarity to CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke.

Two Detained at Silchar Medical College for Blood Money Scheme

Guwahati, July 25: Ghungoor police took two men into custody at Silchar Medical College and Hospital. They allegedly demanded cash from a family for blood units. Taimun Nessa, 35, from Ramkrishnanagar, has been a patient in the maternity ward since July 25. She spent three days in the ICU.

Doctors told the family to organize blood donations. The patient’s husband, Namr Uddin, claimed a man approached him near the bed. The suspect allegedly demanded Rs 5,500 to provide the blood. Hospital staff

grew suspicious as the transaction neared completion. They stopped the deal and held the men for police.

The accused denied the extortion attempt. They claimed, “they had not demanded money for blood and had only sought a small amount for tea and refreshments.” SMCH Superintendent Dr. Bikash Sanyal stated the hospital maintains a zero-tolerance policy against middlemen and theft rings. He warned patients to ignore touts and deal only with hospital officials. Police launched an investigation to verify the facts.

Luxmi Tea Earns National Honor for Workplace Safety

Guwahati, July 25: Luxmi Tea Co Private Limited earned the Excellence in POSH Governance and Compliance Award at the 4th National POSH Conclave and Excellence Awards 2026 in New Delhi. The group, which runs 21 estates in India and four in Rwanda, received the honor for its work protecting women from harassment. The award honors firms following the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act of 2013. It is organized by the NoMeansNo initiative, which is backed by the Centre for Skill Development and Training and the Delhi government. The company hosted 144 awareness workshops over two years. Nearly 10,000 workers attended these sessions in local languages. Workers now benefit from estate-level champions and stronger internal committees. Monumoti Kalandi, a plucker at Moran Tea Estate, noted the impact of these changes. “Earlier, many of us did not know where to go or whom to approach. Today we understand our rights and know someone will listen. The training has given us con-

fidence to speak for ourselves and to stand beside other women,” Kalandi said. Beyond safety, Luxmi Tea drives community growth. Women at Makaibari Tea Estate now run beekeeping and tourism projects. Moran Tea Estate staff manage vermicomposting and snack enterprises. These initiatives include scholarships and youth sports clubs. Sudhanya Pal, an officer for sustainability, wants to push beyond simple legal compliance. Individual feels safe, respected and empowered to speak without fear,” Pal stated. North Bank Tea Estates leader Atoli Achumi emphasized that visible management makes staff more willing to report issues. Managing Director Rudra Chatterjee accepted the award on behalf of the entire workforce. “Tea is ultimately about people. Their dignity, safety and aspirations deserve the same commitment we devote to producing the finest teas. This recognition belongs to every worker and colleague who has helped build this culture, and it is a responsibility to keep raising the benchmark,” Chatterjee said.

Floods in Guwahati to unlawful construction in Jorabat hills Chief Minister of Assam attributes



Shillong, July 25: On Friday, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma directly attributed the unchecked development in the Jorabat hills of Meghalaya as a significant factor contributing to the recurring flash floods in Guwahati, cautioning that the situation is rapidly becoming unmanageable. Referencing a report from a Supreme Court-constituted empowered commit-

tee, Sarma indicated that the panel had identified illegal construction activities in the Jorabat region—especially around the USTM—as a “grave threat” to flood management and waterlogging in the capital of Assam. He further noted that even the Guwahati airport is at risk from water flowing down the hills of Meghalaya. “This matter is currently sub-judice and will be

heard in the apex court. The Supreme Court-constituted empowered committee has reviewed the issue and reported that the development in Jorabat, particularly around USTM and its vicinity, poses a significant threat to Guwahati concerning flash floods and waterlogging,” Sarma informed the media, referring to the severe flooding that occurred after heavy rainfall on Thursday. He

pointed out that Meghalaya has already suspended development activities in the Byrnihat area due to pollution concerns and now called on the neighboring state to extend the same “sympathetic consideration” to Jorabat.

“I can only appeal to the Meghalaya government to consider how development in and around Jorabat can be regulated... otherwise, the flooding situation in Guwahati will become unmanageable, as the volume of water descending from the hills of Meghalaya cannot be mitigated by any drainage system here,” the chief minister stated. Sarma specifically highlighted construction on the rear side of the USTM campus as “even more dangerous” and made it clear that Assam would advocate its position before the Supreme Court. He mentioned that he remains in communication with his counterpart in Meghalaya regarding this issue but emphasized that without restrictions on hillside development, Guwahati cannot be safeguarded.

Traffic officers will intensify efforts to address parking disorder Operation Free Flow



Shillong, July 25: In an effort to alleviate persistent traffic congestion, the Shillong Traffic Police has initiated a special enforcement campaign named “Operation Free Flow” throughout the city.

Unregulated parking has consistently been a significant factor contributing to the city’s traffic challenges. Vehicles parked carelessly along narrow streets and busy commercial areas frequently obstruct roadways, create bottlenecks, and inconvenience other drivers.

This issue is particularly severe in congested regions where limited road space and a sharp increase in private vehicles leave minimal room for

smooth traffic movement.

Residents have repeatedly highlighted that the absence of sufficient designated parking compels drivers to leave cars and two-wheelers on the roadside, which slows down traffic and occasionally blocks emergency vehicles. As stated in a press release by East Khasi Hills Superintendent of Police Vivek Syiem on Friday, the initiative aims to address such indiscriminate parking.

To ensure effective implementation, the police have established a dedicated Shillong Traffic Enforcement Team (STET). This team will carry out thorough inspections of vehicles parked in no-parking zones or in ways

that obstruct the free flow of traffic. The enforcement will be rigorous and unbiased, with exceptions made only for genuine emergencies or medical situations. SP Syiem emphasized that the goal is not solely to penalize offenders but also to foster responsible parking practices, enhance traffic discipline, and ensure safer, more efficient roads for everyone. In a call for public cooperation, the Shillong Traffic Police urged citizens to adhere to traffic regulations, park responsibly, and encourage others to do the same, underscoring that disciplined road usage is crucial for reducing congestion and restoring the free flow of traffic in the city.

During the weekend, Delhi’s liquor stores will close by 8 PM due to a CJP protest



New Delhi, July 25: Due to the student protests, liquor stores in Delhi have

been told to close by 8 p.m. until the end of the weekend, according to sources on Friday.Many were unpleasantly shocked to have to turn back without drink due to an unexpected early shutdown on Thursday.Otherwise, the city’s liquor stores close at 10 p.m.Until the weekend, the stores will close by 8 p.m. A senior Delhi government official stated, “The decision was made based on police inputs that highlighted the current situation due to the ongoing protest at Jantar Mantar.”

Over the past few days, Central Delhi has been shaken by protests over the NEET scandal.Under the name of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), students have assembled at Jantar Mantar to demand that Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resign for overseeing a paper leak that resulted in numerous student suicides.A CJP-called Parliament March on July 20 descended into violence, injuring numerous demonstrators and a few police officers.

A car falls into a drain in Delhi, killing the 20-year-old son of an army officer

New Delhi, July 25: According to authorities, a 20-year-old student who was studying in the United States died on Friday morning after losing control of his vehicle and driving it into a drain near the Nangal Dewat neighborhood of southwest Delhi.According to the authorities,

Yashvendra was the son of an Indian Army officer.He was traveling with a female acquaintance whose car it was, and she got hurt.A squad from the Vasant Kunj South Police Station discovered the automobile upside down into the drain, according to the police. According to a preliminary

investigation, Yashvendra and his buddy, a Vasant Kunj resident, were traveling to her home when the collision occurred, according to an officer. According to the officer, Yashvendra most likely lost control at a tight corner close to the Nangal Dewat traffic signal where the

road was slick, leading the vehicle to deviate off the road and plunge into the drain. Yashvendra passed away while receiving treatment after suffering severe injuries.He and the woman became friends while attending the same school in the United States.

At the Bahuda Yatra in Puri, a 57-year-old man perishes during a crowd surge

New Delhi, July 25: During the Bahuda Yatra on Friday in the temple town of Puri, Odisha, a 57-year-old devotee from Cuttack died while pushing one of the chariots during a crowd rush, according to authorities. According to authorities, the deceased, named as Abhiram Das, died in the middle of the enormous crowd gathering on the Grand Road (Bada Danda) after complaining of dyspnea while dragging the Darpadalan chariot of Goddess Subhadra.Das was transported to a local hospital by volunteers, fellow devotees, and members of the Railway Protection Force (RPF), where medical professionals pronounced him dead.According to preliminary investigations, Das died from suffocation, according to the officers. His relatives was notified and

his body was taken for a postmortem. Officers said that a number of other devotees were unwell during the procession and were taken to a hospital. The incident occurs a little more than a week after three devotees were killed on July 16 during the main Rath Yatra procession, when large crowds flocked to Puri to pull the three chariots of Goddess Subhadra, Lord Jagannath, and Lord Balabhadra.After Puri experienced more than 200 mm of rain over the preceding 45 hours, devotees flocked to the Odisha temple town on July 16 for the annual Rath Yatra despite the downpour and flooded streets. Two of those deaths were already acknowledged by the Odisha government, which stated that Anil Das of Cuttack, a devotee, had a heart arrest and a 60-year-old unidentified



man had suffocated to death. Rather than a stampede, the state authorities blamed both deaths on an unexpected surge in the crowd.After Ashok Subare Raikar, a devotee from Mumbai who had become ill during the Rath Yatra, passed away on July 16 while receiving treatment at the Puri District Headquarters Hospital, the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO) subsequently announced a third fatality.

Two individuals are detained after a Rajasthani YouTuber abducted from a studio is saved

New Delhi, July 25: Following a high-alert police blockade in Kotputli-Behror on Friday, a YouTuber who was allegedly abducted from his studio in Rajasthan’s Tonk district was rescued, leading to the arrest of two persons, according to police, who also stated that efforts are being made to locate the remaining three suspects.Police said that Mahesh Gurjar was kidnapped while sleeping with pals in his studio in the Niwai neighborhood of the Tonk district. According to police, the abductors allegedly put him in a Scorpio SUV and intended to extort a ₹20 lakh ransom from his family. The Niwai police informed the Kotputli-Behror police

about the kidnapping after learning about it. On the Neemkathana State Highway, the Sarund police established a blockade. “The Sarund police acted immediately after receiving the alert from Tonk police, leading to the victim’s safe rescue,” Kotputli-Behror Superintendent of Police (SP) Satveer Singh said. The SP added that during the operation, the suspect vehicle was spotted near the Sarund toll plaza. When police signalled the SUV to stop, the occupants allegedly sped away, driving over a road divider in an attempt to escape. Police alerted nearby checkpoints and traffic units through the wireless network. The Scorpio was eventually

stopped in a traffic snarl ahead. The accused abandoned the vehicle and fled. Gurjar was found inside with injuries, officers said. Police scanned CCTV footage from the toll plaza and surrounding areas, used technical surveillance, and arrested Ashish Meena and Aditya, both residents of Sohela village. Three others are still on the run, officers said. Four live rounds and a handgun made in the nation were also found in their possession by the police.At the Niwai police station, the main kidnapping case was filed. To capture the remaining three suspects, joint teams from Kotputli-Behror and Tonk police are conducting raids.

Typhoid has been diagnosed in CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke, who vows the agitation will go on

New Delhi, July 25: Abhijeet Dipke, the founder of the Cockroach Janta Party, announced on Saturday that he had been diagnosed with typhoid, but he pledged that his sickness would not impede the campaign for the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.Dipke said he had been sick for a few days and was receiving treatment in a video message posted on social media.Despite his illness, he expressed gratitude to CJP followers for sustaining the nationwide protests and assured them that the movement will succeed in its goal.I’ve been sick for the past few days, as you are aware. I’ve been diagnosed with typhoid, and the reports are out,” he declared.According to Dipke, he was taking intravenous medicine as part of his treatment. “The treatment is going on. I am getting IV drips every day. But I want to thank all the cockroaches who are protesting peacefully across the country,” he said.Congrat-

ulating supporters for expanding the movement, Dipke said he believed sustained peaceful protests would help them achieve their key demand Union minister Pradhan’s resignation.“Congratulations to all of you for making this movement such a big success. I am very sure that if we continue protesting like this, we will get Dharmendra Pradhan’s resignation,” he said.The CJP-led agitation, launched over alleged irregularities in competitive examinations, has been demanding accountability in the examination system, reforms in recruitment and entrance tests, and Pradhan’s resignation.The protest gathered support from several public figures, including activist Sonam Wangchuk, who joined the agitation on June 28 and observed a 26-day hunger strike. Wangchuk broke his fast earlier this week after receiving written assurances from the Center that no cases would be filed against nonviolent protestors, that examination reforms



and accountability would be discussed in Parliament, and that compensation for the families of students who committed suicide as a result of the purported NEET paper leak would be positively considered.The CJP has insisted that its demonstration at Jantar Mantar will go on till Pradhan resigns, even if Wangchuk has broken his fast.

Sonam Wangchuk Explains Why He Passed Away Without Dharmendra Pradhan’s Resignation

New Delhi, July 25: Sonam Wangchuk, an activist, stated that he chose to end his 26-day hunger strike without Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan’s resignation because his top priority was to stop any legal action against demonstrators who participated in Monday’s “Sansad Chalo” march organized by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) over alleged irregularities related to exams. Wangchuk, 59, broke his fast just after midnight on Thursday after the Center promised in writing that it would not file charges against demonstrators, that it would hold a thorough discussion on examination reforms and paper leaks in Parliament, and that it was thinking about paying compensation to the families of students who committed suicide as a result of the NEET paper leak. He had been on an indefinite fast since June 28 in solidarity with the members of the satirical political group, the CJP, who have converged at the Jantar Mantar in Delhi, demanding accountability over alleged irregularities in competitive examinations, reforms in the education system and the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan. However, Wangchuk came under fire for calling off the walkout

without Pradhan’s resignation.He stated that the resignation was “certainly a factor” in a YouTube video that was uploaded late on Friday night, but he did not demand it during talks with the Center because his top goal was to stop any legal action against demonstrators. He said, “I don’t consider it essential for me to personally bring about this resignation,” in a 24-minute video that was shot from his hospital bed.He described the Center’s refusal to resign as a “trivial matter” and claimed they are “suffering immense damage” as a result.People are furious and filled with anger, and their reputation is being damaged across the country,” Wangchuk stated. He claimed to have discussed Pradhan’s resignation with the union ministers during talks. He said, “They said they couldn’t commit just yet and wanted more time.”He said he was sure Pradhan would eventually step down.I was aware that Center wouldn’t be able to continue in this manner for very long and would eventually submit their resignation. Since they were the ones bearing the penalties, I thought the resignation issue would be resolved swiftly, so I didn’t put too much pressure on them,” he stated. ”My

main concern was that pupils shouldn’t endure hardship. He stated, “I didn’t think it was necessary for me personally to secure the minister’s resignation. My main concern was legal action and FIRs. The ongoing movement would continue to press that demand. Sonam Wangchuk refuted claims of reaching a “deal” with the Centre, stating his main aim was to protect protesting students from violence and legal repercussions. He felt urgency to end his fast due to fears of a crackdown similar to the violence in Ladakh on September 24, 2025. Despite facing criticism for concluding his fast with Union ministers JP Nadda and Jitendra Singh present, he argued that his decision was based on the dire circumstances and the need for peace. Wangchuk highlighted that while the ministers verbally agreed to compensation for families of students impacted by the NEET paper leak and discussions in Parliament, he required written assurances against legal actions against peaceful protesters before ending his fast. He expressed disappointment that many supporters, including students and MPs, could not witness his fast’s conclusion due to restrictions on their access.

Are Cockroach Janta Party Protests Associated With Foreign Funding? What the Center Said



New Delhi, July 25: On Friday, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) declared that it had nothing to say about the purported foreign financing connection and involvement in the ongoing demonstrations against the NEET paper leak in New Delhi and other regions of the nation.During a press briefing on Friday, MEA spokeswoman Randhir Jaiswal responded to a query about foreign sponsorship and involvement in the ongoing protests in the capital by saying, “I have no information to share on this matter.”The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), a satirical political organization, started the demonstration on June 6 after its founder, Abhijeet Dipke, returned from the United States. The protest gained wider attention and momentum after climate activist and educationist Sonam Wangchuk joined

with an indefinite hunger strike on June 28, which ended on July 23. The resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan due to paper leaks has been the main demand of the protests.Dipke, the 30-year-old leader, stated on Friday that Dharmendra Pradhan’s resignation is the only way the administration can halt the protest.After receiving three written assurances from the Center—no case against protesters, a thorough discussion in Parliament on examination changes and paper leaks, and consideration of compensation for the families of students who committed suicide as a result of the NEET paper leak—Wangchuk broke his fast.

AI-generated videos of Prime Minister Narendra Modi threatening students taking part in CJP-led rallies and warning them of severe repercussions were fact-checked by the Press Information Bureau (PIB) on Thursday night. This “AI-generated deepfake video” was disseminated to deceive people. According to the fact-check, Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not say anything like that.The center claims that the bogus film is being spread by Pakistani propaganda accounts. Additionally, a manipulated video showing Union Minister Piyush Goyal intimidating demonstrators has gone viral.

The footage is “fake and AI-generated,” according to PIB.Goyal further cautioned people to rely on reliable and reputable sources for information rather than falling for the phony video. In a post on X, he wrote: “My remarks to the media outside Parliament have been maliciously doctored using AI to create and circulate a deepfake video in an attempt to spread misinformation.”

Despite the CJP protest, PM Modi’s reel has received over 303 million views

New Delhi, July 25: With more over 303 million views on a single Instagram reel in only one day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi broke all previous records for digital viewing.In the midst of ongoing, high-profile student protests led by demonstrators at New Delhi’s Jantar Mantar, this huge digital turnout surpasses the previous global record of 300 million views.The Prime Minister acknowledged the historic digital response and encouraging suggestions he received from the nation’s youth by posting a follow-up video message on social media that started with the words “Thank you friends.” This most recent message comes after the Prime Minister shared a rare late-night selfie video in which he addressed growing national concerns about exam paper leaks and promised the student body that the government would take strict measures.Following recent anomalies in competitive examinations, thousands of students and young activists have gathered at Jantar Mantar to demand broad accountability and institutional reforms.Prime Minister Modi used a direct digital format to communicate with Generation Z in response to the growing protests and strong political pressure, stressing that the administration considers examination malpractices to be a serious issue rather than a minor one. The Prime Minister outlined specific actions taken over the previous two and a half months in his first midnight speech, which sparked unprecedented digital participation and resulted in an overnight surge of one million new followers.He pointed out that the administration’s main goal has been to prevent students from missing an important academic year, emphasizing the quick planning needed to effectively schedule re-examinations.In addition, he said that the Union Cabinet would proceed with a strict legal structure that would include expedited courts and harsh sanctions for people and groups engaged in exam paper leaks. In his follow-up speech, Prime Minister Modi conveyed his sincere gratitude for the conversation that the younger generation had ignited and noted that public input strengthens the relationship between the government and the people.The Prime Minister thanked supporters for their positive participation and said, “This love of yours will remain, and our bond will continue to connect with even more vibrancy.”

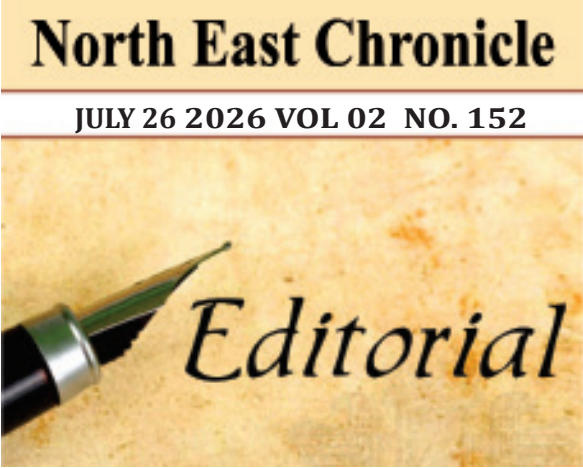


After six days, the Amarnath Yatra resumes, and 6,000 pilgrims depart Jammu Base Camp

New Delhi, July 25: After being halted for six days due to bad weather, the yearly Amarnath Yatra resumed from Jammu on Saturday. According to officials, a new group of more than 6,000 pilgrims left the Bhagwati Nagar base camp for the Baltal base camp in the Kashmir Valley.Due to persistent rainfall and unfavorable weather throughout Jammu and Kashmir, particularly along the twin routes—the shorter 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal district and the traditional 48-km Pahalgam route in Anantnag district—to the 3,880-meter-high holy cave shrine, the yatra was suspended on July 19 as a precaution.The 18th batch, which had 6,269 pilgrims, including 1470 women, 25 children, and 54 Sadhus, left for the Baltal base camp at around 2:40 am in a convoy of 223 cars under

strict protection. No convoy was dispatched for the Pahalgam route, they said. The pilgrimage resumed after the weather improved and the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway became trafficable again following a three-day closure triggered by landslides and shooting stones at several locations along the Udhampur-Ramban stretch, officials mentioned. On July 2, one day prior to the commencement of the yearly pilgrimage in the valley, Lieutenant Gover-

nor Manoj Sinha welcomed the first group of pilgrims from Bhagwati Nagar base camp.The yatra is set to end on August 28, which is also Raksha Bandhan.Approximately 1.20 lakh pilgrims began their journey from the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu, out of the approximately four lakh pilgrims who have visited the cave shrine thus far. When pilgrims choose the Jammu base camp, they are driven to Kashmir in protected convoys with strict security protocols.



Newts, Snails and Nature: Why Ponds Need Protection

Ponds may appear insignificant compared with vast rivers, lakes, and oceans, but these small freshwater habitats play a vital role in supporting biodiversity and maintaining ecological balance. Across Britain, ponds provide homes for hundreds of species, including frogs, newts, minnows, sticklebacks, dragonflies, water boatmen, water snails, and a wide variety of wetland plants. Despite their importance, these fragile ecosystems have received far less legal protection and public attention than larger bodies of water. At a time when concerns over polluted rivers, damaged coastlines, and declining wildlife populations are growing, the protection of ponds deserves urgent recognition.

The lack of proper protection for ponds reflects a wider failure to appreciate their contribution to nature. While rivers and seas often dominate environmental debates, ponds quietly support complex networks of life. They act as breeding grounds for amphibians, provide shelter for insects, and create essential habitats for plants that cannot survive elsewhere. Scientists and conservation groups have increasingly highlighted that protecting small freshwater areas is just as important as restoring larger waterways. These habitats may be small in size, but collectively they represent a significant part of the natural landscape.

The expected introduction of a new clean water bill offers an opportunity to correct the long-standing neglect of ponds. Environmental organisations, including freshwater conservation groups, have argued that ponds should receive stronger recognition within national water and biodiversity policies. Rewilding projects have already demonstrated the value of restoring old “ghost ponds” and creating new water habitats. Communities and householders have also been encouraged to build small garden ponds, showing that even limited spaces can contribute to wildlife recovery. A stronger legal framework could ensure that these efforts receive greater support and protection.

The decline of ponds is part of a larger environmental crisis affecting Britain’s waterways. Intensive agriculture, urban development, pollution, and poor land management have contributed to the loss of many freshwater habitats. Historical changes in farming practices also played a major role. As traditional methods were replaced by modern machinery, many ponds that once served agricultural purposes were considered unnecessary. As a result, countless ponds were drained, filled in, or abandoned. In England and Wales, a significant proportion of ancient ponds have disappeared over time, reducing the available habitat for many species.

The disappearance of ponds has serious conse-

quences for biodiversity. Unlike rivers, where conservation efforts often focus on water quality and pollution control, ponds provide unique conditions that support different forms of life. Many amphibians and insects depend on these isolated water bodies because they offer safe breeding environments away from larger predators. The loss of ponds can therefore lead to a decline in entire communities of species that rely on them.

Legal protection for ponds has often focused on specific species rather than the wider ecosystem. The great-crested newt, one of Britain’s protected amphibians, has been a major reason why some ponds have received attention under conservation laws. However, debates around development restrictions have sometimes portrayed protections for wildlife as obstacles to progress. Critics have argued that regulations can delay housing and infrastructure projects. Yet focusing only on individual species risks ignoring the broader ecological value of ponds themselves.

The controversy surrounding creatures such as the great-crested newt and the little whirlpool ramshorn snail reflects a larger debate about balancing development with environmental protection. While economic growth and housing needs are important, nature cannot be treated as an obstacle. Healthy ecosystems provide benefits that extend beyond individual species, including flood prevention, climate resilience, and improved environmental quality. Protecting ponds is not simply about saving rare animals; it is about maintaining natural systems that support human wellbeing.

Climate change makes the protection of small freshwater habitats even more urgent. Rising temperatures, longer droughts, and changing rainfall patterns place increasing pressure on natural water systems. In such conditions, ponds can serve as valuable sources of water and refuge for wildlife. Their ability to recover quickly through careful management makes them particularly important in efforts to restore nature.

Government policy should therefore recognise ponds as essential components of freshwater conservation. Including pond protection targets within river basin management plans would be an important step towards ensuring their survival. Authorities should also aim for higher ecological standards across selected streams, rivers, and lakes, creating a broader strategy for restoring freshwater environments.

Although ponds may seem minor compared with major environmental challenges such as sewage pollution and industrial damage, their importance should not be underestimated. Nature recovery depends on protecting habitats of all sizes.

Christopher Nolan’s Odyssey: A Spectacular Adaptation Caught Between Homer’s Darkness and Modern Morality

Christopher Nolan’s cinematic adaptation of Homer’s Odyssey has become a cultural phenomenon, demonstrating the extraordinary power of ancient stories to capture the imagination of modern audiences. Few could have predicted that a nearly 3,000-year-old epic poem would inspire such widespread enthusiasm in contemporary cinema. The film’s remarkable box-office success, renewed interest in translations of Homer’s work, and packed screenings around the world reveal that society remains deeply fascinated by the themes of journeys, identity, war, memory, and homecoming that define the Odyssey. Yet alongside the celebration of Nolan’s achievement comes a more complicated question: when adapting a classic work, how much should modern moral values shape the transformation of an ancient story?

There is an understandable temptation among admirers of great literature to defend beloved texts from adaptation. Readers often feel protective of works that have accompanied them through different stages of life, and any reinterpretation can appear to threaten the emotional connection they have built with the original. Yet absolute faithfulness is impossible. Every reader approaches a classic through the experiences, values, and concerns of their own era. Nolan’s interpretation of the Odyssey is therefore not simply a reproduction of Homer’s poem but a conversation between an ancient world and a modern one.

The Odyssey itself has always been a work shaped by change. Unlike a modern novel created by a single author at a specif-

ic moment, Homer’s epic emerged from a long oral tradition of storytelling, shaped by generations of poets who preserved, modified, and expanded its themes. The idea of returning to a single, untouched original version is therefore complicated. Every performance, translation, and interpretation has added another layer to the poem’s long history. Nolan’s film belongs to this continuing tradition of reinvention.

One of the film’s greatest achievements is the way it captures the complicated structure of Homer’s narrative. The original poem is not a simple chronological adventure story. It moves across different timelines, shifting between Odysseus’s struggles at sea, the suffering of his household in Ithaca, and memories of the Trojan War. The hero’s journey is revealed through fragments, stories within stories, and delayed revelations. Nolan, whose earlier films such as Memento, Inception, and The Prestige demonstrated his fascination with nonlinear storytelling, understands this complexity. His adaptation embraces the winding architecture of Homer’s epic rather than reducing it to a straightforward adventure.

However, Nolan’s interpretation of Odysseus also represents a significant departure from Homer’s hero. In the poem, Odysseus is not simply a warrior burdened by regret. He is a master of language, deception, persuasion, and performance. His intelligence and ability to manipulate situations are central to his identity. He survives not only because of physical strength but because he understands human behaviour and knows how to use words as effectively as weapons.

The cinematic Odysseus,

portrayed through Matt Damon’s performance, is a much more restrained and troubled figure. Nolan presents him as a man haunted by the consequences of war, carrying emotional wounds and moral doubts. This version of the character reflects modern anxieties about conflict, trauma, and responsibility. The hero becomes less a clever survivor and more a damaged veteran searching for redemption.

This transformation raises important questions about how contemporary audiences understand ancient heroes. Homer’s world operated according to different moral frameworks. War was brutal and destructive, but it was also accepted as an unavoidable reality of human existence. The Odyssey is not an anti-war poem in the modern sense; rather, it is a story created in the aftermath of war, exploring the challenges of returning home and rebuilding life after violence.

Nolan’s version, however, places a stronger moral emphasis on the costs of conflict. Odysseus is portrayed as someone who carries responsibility for the destruction around him. His relationship with violence becomes a source of personal struggle rather than simply a demonstration of heroic ability. This reflects the concerns of a modern world shaped by decades of war, political instability, and debates about the consequences of military action.

This shift also influences the portrayal of Odysseus’s relationship with his son Telemachus. In Homer’s poem, the son is introduced into the tradition of warrior identity. Odysseus and Telemachus unite to defeat their enemies and restore

order in Ithaca. Nolan’s adaptation appears more interested in breaking this cycle of violence. Instead of celebrating the continuation of a warrior legacy, the film explores whether the younger generation can escape the burdens inherited from the previous one.

Such changes may make the story more accessible to contemporary audiences, but they also alter the meaning of Homer’s world. Nolan has not merely translated the epic into another medium; he has interpreted it through his own artistic concerns. Like every great adaptation, the film reveals as much about the filmmaker’s era as it does about the original work.

One of the most significant consequences of this modernisation is the removal or reduction of some of the darker elements of the poem. Homer’s Odyssey contains moments of extreme violence and disturbing social realities, including the execution of enslaved women after Odysseus returns to Ithaca. These scenes are difficult for modern audiences to accept, and their absence from the film reflects a deliberate attempt to reshape the story according to contemporary ethical expectations.

Yet removing these darker aspects also changes the complexity of the original. Homer’s epic does not present a simple world of heroes and villains. It contains contradictions, uncomfortable truths, moments of cruelty alongside moments of humour and beauty. By softening certain elements, an adaptation may make the story more acceptable for modern viewers while also losing some of the tension that gives the original its power.

The same challenge ap-

pears in Nolan’s treatment of the female characters. Homer’s women are often complex figures who possess intelligence, independence, and emotional depth. Helen, Circe, Calypso, Nausicaa, Penelope, and Athena each contribute different dimensions to the story. They are not merely supporting characters; they represent different forms of power, desire, wisdom, and influence.

Nolan’s film offers striking interpretations of several female characters, but some of the original poem’s ambiguity and playfulness are reduced. His Helen is portrayed as a more wounded and tragic figure rather than the almost mythical beauty whose presence helped trigger the Trojan War. Circe remains a fascinating and powerful character, but some of her humour and seductive complexity are diminished. The absence or reduced role of other female figures changes the emotional balance of the narrative.

The treatment of the gods represents another major transformation. In Homer’s poem, divine forces are central to the story. Athena’s relationship with Odysseus is one of the epic’s most fascinating partnerships, blending strategy, admiration, and a sense of playful connection. The gods provide not only supernatural intervention but also a way of exploring human behaviour from a broader perspective.

Nolan’s decision to reduce the role of the gods is understandable within the language of modern cinema. A world where gods openly interact with humans can be difficult to portray without creating a sense of artificiality. By focusing on human choices and motivations, Nolan creates a more psychologi-

cally grounded story. However, this choice also removes one of the defining characteristics of Homer’s universe: the constant interaction between human ambition and divine influence.

The adaptation also changes the romantic and sexual dimensions of the epic. Homer’s poem contains complicated relationships that do not always fit modern expectations of morality or loyalty. Odysseus’s encounters with other women and Penelope’s uncertain position among her suitors create a world filled with ambiguity. Nolan’s decision to reduce these elements makes the story more aligned with contemporary ideas of relationships and responsibility, but it also removes some of the complexity that made the original so fascinating.

This raises a broader question about adaptation. Should filmmakers preserve the uncomfortable aspects of ancient works, even when they conflict with modern values? Or should they reshape those elements to create stories that speak more directly to contemporary audiences? There is no simple answer. Every adaptation involves choices about what to preserve, what to change, and what to remove.

The success of Nolan’s Odyssey suggests that audiences are willing to engage with ancient stories when they are presented through modern perspectives. The film has encouraged many people to return to Homer’s original poem, proving that adaptation and preservation do not have to be enemies. A new interpretation can introduce audiences to a classic even if it does not reproduce every aspect of the source material.

The Politics of Delivery: Why Burnham’s Small Steps Matter

Andy Burnham’s first days as prime minister have been defined by a combination of practical politics and a larger ambition to reshape the way Britain is governed. Critics may dismiss his early measures, such as the nationwide £2 cap on bus fares and the creation of No 10 North in Manchester, as modest gestures rather than major acts of government. Yet these decisions reveal a deeper political strategy: connecting national leadership with everyday concerns while attempting to shift economic and political power away from Westminster and towards regions. Whether this approach succeeds will determine whether Burnham’s premiership becomes merely a carefully managed opening performance or the beginning of a significant transformation in British politics.

The announcement of cheaper bus fares carried a particular political significance because it demonstrated the importance of what might be called “retail politics” — policies that people can immediately understand and directly experience. Public transport costs, energy bills, and household expenses are issues that affect daily life. While governments often focus on large economic strategies and long-term reforms, voters frequently judge political leadership through practical improvements they can see and feel. A cheaper bus journey may appear small compared with national economic challenges, but its simplicity gives it political power.

This approach recalls previous moments when governments introduced policies that became memorable because of their direct impact. The example of Ken Livingstone’s “Fares Fair” initiative in London during the early 1980s demonstrated how a relatively straightforward policy could create a lasting political connection. The reduction of bus fares offered residents an immediate benefit and became a symbol of a government

attempting to improve everyday life. Although the policy later faced legal challenges and was eventually abandoned, its political impact remained significant because it showed voters a clear relationship between public policy and their personal circumstances.

Burnham appears to understand this connection between policy and public experience. His early measures are not intended to represent the entirety of his government’s programme but rather to establish a political message: that government should respond to the pressures people face in their daily lives. A lower bus fare, reduced household costs, or support for local businesses communicates that national politics is not only about abstract economic indicators but also about whether ordinary citizens feel their lives are improving.

The criticism from Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch that Burnham’s policies were “small answers to big problems” reflects a wider debate about the role of practical measures in national politics. Her argument suggests that a prime minister should focus on large-scale reforms rather than initiatives associated with local government. However, this criticism also reveals a misunderstanding of the strength of municipal politics. Local leaders often succeed because they are close to communities and are able to identify issues where government intervention can have immediate effects.

The ability to deliver visible improvements is not a weakness for political leaders; it is often one of their greatest strengths. National governments frequently struggle because they appear distant from everyday experiences. Local leaders, by contrast, are judged on whether streets are cleaner, transport works better, public spaces improve, and communities receive meaningful support. Burnham’s political identity has been shaped by

his experience as mayor of Greater Manchester, and he appears determined to bring that approach into national government.

However, the challenge for Burnham is proving that local-style politics can operate successfully at a national level. Britain’s problems extend far beyond individual services. The country faces economic stagnation, regional inequality, pressure on public services, housing shortages, and productivity challenges. Addressing these issues requires more than popular short-term measures. It requires structural reforms capable of changing how power, investment, and decision-making operate.

This is where Burnham’s broader vision of devolution becomes central. The creation of No 10 North represents more than a symbolic relocation of government activity. It reflects a belief that Britain’s political system has been too concentrated in London and that regional leaders should have greater authority to shape economic development. Burnham argues that the experience of Greater Manchester demonstrates the potential of empowered local government.

His supporters believe that allowing cities and regions greater control over investment, skills, transport, housing, and economic planning could help address Britain’s long-standing regional inequalities. For decades, economic growth has been heavily concentrated in London and the south-east, while many other parts of the country have struggled with lower productivity, weaker infrastructure, and reduced opportunities. Devolution is presented as a way of allowing different regions to develop strategies suited to their own strengths.

Research into Britain’s economic challenges has increasingly highlighted the importance of regional inequality. The productiv-

ity gap between different parts of the country has become one of the central issues in debates about economic reform. Areas outside the south-east often face disadvantages linked to historical industrial decline, limited investment, and weaker connections between education, skills, and employment opportunities.

The argument behind Burnham’s approach is that central government alone cannot solve these problems. Decisions made in Westminster may fail to reflect local realities. Regional leaders, who understand the specific needs of their communities, may be better positioned to design effective solutions. Devolution therefore becomes not simply an administrative change but a strategy for economic renewal.

The success of this approach will depend on whether Burnham’s government is willing to transfer real power rather than simply create new structures. Previous governments have frequently promised decentralisation but have struggled to overcome the resistance of central departments and established systems. Whitehall has historically been reluctant to surrender control, while politicians have often hesitated to make bold changes that could reduce their influence.

Burnham’s advantage is that his government appears to have several senior figures who support a stronger regional agenda. The combination of political leadership, economic policy expertise, and support for devolution could create a rare opportunity for meaningful reform. Yet political ambition must be matched by practical action. Local governments will require funding, authority, and long-term commitment if they are expected to deliver significant change.

The timing of Burnham’s agenda is also important because public patience is limited. Many voters are frustrated by years of slow economic

growth and declining confidence in public institutions. A government that promises transformation must demonstrate progress quickly while also managing expectations about the time required for major reforms.

This creates a difficult balancing act. On one hand, Burnham must provide immediate signs that government is improving people’s lives. On the other, he must pursue deeper changes that may take years to produce results. His early policies attempt to address both needs: practical measures for immediate relief and a long-term programme of political decentralisation.

Some critics within his own political movement have compared his opening weeks unfavourably with earlier governments that introduced dramatic reforms immediately after taking office. They point to moments when previous administrations made bold decisions during their first days, arguing that Burnham’s approach appears cautious. However, supporters argue that the nature of the challenges facing Britain today requires a different strategy.

Unlike governments with greater fiscal flexibility, Burnham faces significant financial pressures. Increased demands on defence, healthcare, social care, and public services limit the room for immediate spending commitments. Economic conditions require careful management, and ambitious reforms must be balanced against financial realities.

This may explain why Burnham has chosen to begin with policies that combine symbolic importance with limited financial cost. A bus fare cap may not transform the economy, but it establishes a relationship between government and citizens. The creation of No 10 North may not immediately change Britain’s political system, but it signals a different philosophy about where power should be exercised.

Ensure convenience for honest taxpayers: FM



Mumbai: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday asked Income Tax officials to ensure convenience for honest taxpayers and firm consequences for deliberate evasion, as she urged them to focus on five priorities for responsive tax governance. Speaking at an event to mark the 167th Income Tax Day celebrations here, the minister also noted that the department’s responsibility has widened from a narrow focus on “tax collection” to a broader commitment to fairness, efficiency, ease of doing business, and service. “Over more than a century and a half, the I-T Department has evolved alongside India’s economic transformation, continuously adapting to meet the changing needs of the nation,” Sitharaman said. She said the implementation of the Income Tax Act, 2025 has simplified the law by reorganising it, reducing uncertainty and lowering compliance costs. Alongside this, Sitharaman said, the e-filing portal has significantly strengthened this filing season with expanded computing capacity, storage, bandwidth and also network infrastructure. Sharing data, the minister said these efforts enabled the portal to handle more than 1 crore taxpayer interactions in a single day, with daily interactions reaching around 1.6 crore at peak. During the current filing season till July 21, more than 3.2 crore Income Tax Returns have been filed, nearly 94 per cent verified, and 60 per cent processed. She informed that over 1.3 crore refund claims have been received, 96 per cent have been verified and 40 per cent have been processed. . . . so the department must continue reducing processing timelines. . . . Prompt refunds strengthen confidence in the fairness of the tax administration and improve liquidity for taxpayers,” she said. While lauding the I-T Department for the work it does, Sitharaman said, “We should not rest on our achievements, however high they might be”, and asked the department to focus on five priorities or 5Rs of a Responsive Tax Governance: ‘Recognise, Respond, Redress, Reflect and Reform’. “Our approach should ensure convenience for the honest taxpayer, an opportunity to correct bona fide errors, and firm consequences for deliberate evasion,” she said. The department has to be discreet, and should know to draw a line between those who are deliberately evading tax and those with bona fide errors, Sitharaman said and emphasised that the authority confirmed, conferred by the tax law, must always be exercised with humility. A taxpayer is not merely an assessee but also a citizen and a

India’s installed wind power capacity reaches 57,443 MW

New Delhi: The total installed capacity of wind energy projects in the country currently stands at 57,443 MW, the government said on Thursday. Further, the power generation from wind energy projects during FY 2025-26 was 106 billion units, said Union Minister of State for Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Shripad Yesso Naik, in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha. The power generation from wind energy projects has increased during last three financial years, said the minister. As per the ‘GWEC Report 2026’, India ranked 4th position globally in wind energy installation till December 31, 2025. The government has taken several initiatives to promote development of renewable energy, including wind energy, in the country, like laying of new transmission lines and creating new sub-station capacity has been funded under the Green Energy Corridor Scheme for evacuation of renewable power. Inter State Transmission

System (ISTS) charges have been waived for inter-state sale of solar and wind power for projects commissioned by June 30, 2025 and to be commissioned thereafter with graded ISTS charges. To augment transmission infrastructure needed for teep RE trajectory, transmission plan has been prepared till 2030. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has been permitted up to 100 percent under the automatic route, said the minister. To boost RE consumption, Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) followed by Renewable Consumption Obligation (RCO) trajectory has been notified till 2029-30. The RCO which is applicable to all designated consumers under the Energy Conservation Act 2001 will attract penalties on non-compliance. RCO also includes specified quantum of consumption from Decentralised Renewable Energy sources. “Revised Standard Bidding Guidelines for tariff based competitive bidding process for procurement of



Power from Grid Connected Solar, Wind, Wind-Solar Hybrid and Firm and Dispatchable RE (FDRE) projects have been issued, said the minister. Viability Gap Funding (VGF) Scheme for Offshore Wind Energy Projects have been launched. Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020 has been issued for net-metering up to five hundred Kilowatt or up to the electrical sanctioned load, whichever is lower. “National Repowering and Life Extension Policy for Wind Power Projects, 2023” has also been issued.

States projected to be net GST gainers by Rs 1.43L cr in FY27: SBI

Mumbai: An SBI Research report on Friday estimated that after accounting for GST collections together with states’ share in basic excise duty (BED), states are expected to be net gainers by approximately Rs 1.43 lakh crore in FY27 compared to FY26. forward, the report expects a rebound in the GST collections and yearly growth in the range of 8-9 per cent and the moderation in collection is due to rate rationalisation, which is on expected lines. the revised framework, with the compensation cess discontinued and additional excise duty (AED) introduced, states’ combined share from GST and basic excise duty is projected to increase to nearly Rs 19.1 lakh crore in FY27 from Rs 17.7 lakh crore in FY26. “There has been an increase in the overall share of the pie whose benefits will accrue to the states,” said Dr. Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic



Adviser, State Bank of India. With the introduction of AED in BED in FY27, “we have created a hypothetical scenario in which by assuming 20 per cent growth over FY26 BED numbers, and assuming that this entire amount is AED, it is estimated at Rs 35,874 crore,” Dr Ghosh added. While, under the old arrangement in FY26, this AED would have been given as compensation cess, and

hence states receive 100 per cent of it (Rs 35,874 crore). However, in the new arrangement, states receive 41 per cent of AED which is Rs 14,708 crore. This leads to a hypothetical loss of Rs 21,000 crore in FY27. This amount is miniscule when divided among all 28 states, said the report. Additionally, the impact of the revised tax structure from 28 per cent to 40 per cent on certain com-

modities such as pan and tobacco indicate that for an intra-state supply with a taxable value of Rs 100, states earlier received Rs 19.74 under the 28 per cent GST regime. Following the increase in GST on specified demerit goods from 28 per cent to 40 per cent, the states’ share rises to Rs 28.20. Thus, the revised structure results in an additional Rs 8.46 accruing to states compared with Rs 3.54 for the Centre, clearly indicating that the benefits of higher taxation accrue to States as well. “Another misnomer that needs to be corrected is that cess was never revenue of the Centre because its proceeds ultimately went to the States. That is not quite correct. The cess was levied by the Union Government and appeared as a Union tax receipt subsequently transferred to GST Compensation Fund in the Public Account of India, which finally went to states as grants,” the report argued.

Market Close: Sensex falls for 5th straight day, Nifty below 23,800

Mumbai: Market sentiment is likely to remain under pressure in the near term, as sustained oil prices in a higher range could begin to adversely impact key macroeconomic indicators and growth dynamics. The US 10-year yield has climbed to a 52-week high despite crude oil trading well below its crisis-era peak, reflecting the bond market’s concerns over energy-led inflation risks, resilient labour market conditions, and a persistently hawkish Fed. These factors have pushed the implied probability of a rate hike in September. supported by favourable valuations and credit growth outlooks.

BNP Paribas Cardif to acquire 26% stake in IndiaFirst Life from Warburg Pincus

Mumbai: French insurance major BNP Paribas Cardif has agreed to acquire a 26% stake in IndiaFirst Life Insurance Company from US private equity firm Warburg Pincus, marking another major foreign investment in India’s insurance sector. The financial details of the transaction were not disclosed, and the deal is subject to regulatory approvals. Upon completion of the transaction, Bank of Baroda will hold a 65% stake in IndiaFirst Life, followed by BNP Paribas Cardif with 26% and Union Bank of India with 9%.



support the next phase of development of IndiaFirst Life in India, with a focus on enhancing the accessibility of insurance products for the Indian population,” Pauline Leclerc-Glorieux, CEO, BNP Paribas Cardif, said in a statement.

Established in 2009, IndiaFirst Life Insurance Company Ltd is promoted by Bank of Baroda. The private life insurer reported ₹3,498.55 crore in new business premiums in FY26. Rushabh Gandhi, Managing Director & CEO,

IndiaFirst Life, said BNP Paribas Cardif and Bank of Baroda partnership, product innovation, and operations complement the life insurer’s distribution strengths and digital execution capabilities. The transaction reflects renewed interest among global insurers in the Indian market after the government raised the foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in the insurance sector to 100% last year. Germany’s Allianz has entered into a 50:50 insurance joint venture with Jio Financial Services across life, general and reinsurance businesses. UK-based Prudential plc acquired 75% stake in Bharti Life Insurance recently

Gold is down 28% from the peak. Its 30-year chart has a warning for investors

Mumbai: Gold continues to be under pressure, and the headwinds are building up once again. After reaching an all-time high of \$5,602 per ounce in late January, gold has had a rough ride. It fell to under \$4,000 at least twice in the last 30 days, and although prices have since recovered to around \$4,040, the recovery looks fragile. So what went wrong? The decline in gold prices this year is mainly linked to the Iran war and its most damaging consequence: the

blockage of the Strait of Hormuz. This single chokepoint handles approximately 20% of the world’s oil traffic. Gold’s fate is closely tied to decisions made in Washington. The US Fed’s FOMC sets the country’s monetary policy, and since gold is traded in dollars, the direction of interest rates set by the FOMC directly affects where gold prices head next. Kevin Warsh and Gold Prices Kevin Warsh replaced Jerome Powell at the helm of the central bank right in the

middle of the Iran war and walked straight into another problem. US CPI data showed that inflation had re-emerged as a threat. In his first appearance as Fed chair, Warsh made his intentions clear: bringing inflation lower is the priority. That means interest rates are likely to be kept higher, or even increased, to tame rising prices. When it was blocked, oil markets went into a tailspin, and Brent price jumped from under \$70 before the war to as high as \$119, before falling

back to pre-war levels when talks of ceasefire arrangements emerged. The other big factor that influences gold prices is interest rates, with which it has a negative correlation. If rates rise, gold prices slump, and the opposite happens when rates fall. But why does this happen? In a higher-interest-rate environment, gold tends to lose its shine. The reason is simple: gold gives no return — hold on to gold. They simply move their money elsewhere, and gold pays the price.

IndiGo experiences a net loss quarter, attributed to disturbances in Middle East

New Delhi: InterGlobe Aviation — the parent company of IndiGo — on Thursday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 238 crore for the first quarter of FY27, compared with the corresponding period last year. The airline’s earnings reversed sharply in the June quarter, with InterGlobe Aviation swinging to a consolidated net loss of Rs 238 crore from a net profit of Rs 2,176.3 crore in the corresponding period last year, reflecting a deterioration of over Rs 2,400 crore in its bottom line. The June quarter loss of Rs 238 crore erased nearly 90 per cent of the previous year’s quarterly profit before pushing the company into the red. Revenue from operations rose 19.9 per cent year-on-year to Rs 24,584 crore during the April-June quarter, up from Rs 20,496.3 crore a year earlier. However, the company posted a standalone net loss of Rs 382 crore for the quarter ended June 30. Total income increased 18.9 per cent to Rs 25,614.1 crore, while other income slipped 1.6 per cent to Rs 1,030 crore. In addition, total expenses jumped 34 per cent to Rs 25,852 crore from Rs 19,231.9 crore. Aircraft fuel expenses surged 85.7 per cent year-on-year to Rs 10,832.9 crore, an increase of about Rs 5,000 crore, outpacing the rise in operating revenue. Operationally, IndiGo’s capacity, measured in available seat kilometres (ASKs), increased 2.9 per cent year-on-year to 43.5 billion ASKs, while the number of passengers carried rose 0.7 per cent to 31.3 mil-



lion during the quarter. Commenting on the results, Rahul Bhatia, Managing Director of InterGlobe Aviation, said the first quarter was marked by a volatile operating environment, with elevated fuel costs and network-related constraints in the Middle East weighing on profitability. “At the same time, demand remained healthy and our revenue performance improved year-on-year, supported by better yields and continued customer preference for IndiGo as we served more than 31 million passengers,” Bhaia said. He added that while near-term un-

certainties persist, the airline remains focused on its long-term priorities of strengthening its network, expanding customer choice and creating sustainable value for all stakeholders. As of June 30, IndiGo’s total debt, including capitalised operating lease liabilities, stood at Rs 81,531.3 crore, while the capitalised operating lease liability alone was Rs 53,755.6 crore. The airline’s passenger fleet declined by a net nine aircraft during the quarter. Shares of IndiGo ended almost 2 per cent lower at Rs 5,023.9 on the BSE on Thursday.

UK’s largest Muslim event goes ahead with added security as hate crime rises

UK: Security has been increased by several hundred additional staff at the UK’s largest Muslim convention, Jalsa Salana, alongside enhanced coordination with police, emergency services and local authorities, against a backdrop of growing anti-Muslim sentiment.

Last month, another big Islamic gathering was forced to close early after 12 people were arrested, including three on suspicion of conspiracy to murder, over a suspected far-right threat.

“Not once. Not for a second,” said Rafiq Hayat, the head of the UK chapter of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, which organises the festival. Now in its 60th year, Jalsa Salana is expected to draw about 50,000 people from more than 100 countries to a temporary site in Hampshire this weekend. The convention opened on Friday with prayers, speeches – including an address from the community’s global leader, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad – and the raising of a union jack at the centre of the 208-acre site. MPs, bishops and other public figures are expected to attend.

Hayat says the community has weathered hostility before. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been in Britain for more than a century, having established



itself in 1913, and built one of London’s first purpose-built mosques in 1926. “I personally have been in London since 1967, so I have been through all of the various rightwing movements: from skinheads, to the ‘rivers of blood’ speech by Enoch Powell to the British National party. We have seen it all,” Hayat said.

During the construction of the movement’s mosque in Morden in the 1990s, hundreds of British National party supporters protested outside planning meetings, he added.

But rather than withdrawing, Hayat said, the community deliberately invested in relationships with its neighbours.

“We created a liaison group,” Hayat said. “We invited people from the church and from various local groups, from the local authority to the police. And we said we would hold a meeting every month at our mosque, and appointed a local councillor as the chair of the meeting.”

He added that the first two meetings were “very heated”. But, 30 years later, “they will not do anything without us being involved”.

For Hayat, that experience provides a useful lesson to how to respond to this current climate of rising anti-Muslim hatred. Latest figures show that one mosque is attacked in Britain every five days, while anti-Muslim hate crime in

England and Wales rose by 19% in the 12 months to March 2025.

“One of the things that the community has been doing over the last 60 years is to bring people of all faith, all backgrounds, all ethnicities, everyone, together,” Hayat said. “The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community reminded us that true Muslims should embody the teaching of the holy prophet Muhammad – that loyalty to the country in which you live is an integral part of your faith.”

But hostility towards the Ahmadiyya community does not come solely from the far right. Ahmadis have long faced persecution from extremist Muslims, both abroad, particularly in

Pakistan and, at times, in Britain.

In 2016, Asad Shah, an Ahmadi Muslim man, was killed outside his shop in Glasgow by another Muslim in a religiously motivated murder.

“The saddest part is that it is sometimes easier to deal with the rightwing than with some Muslim extremists,” Hayat said. “I grew up with lots of Muslims. Some of my closest friends are Muslims who are not Ahmadi. But there are some who have very extreme views.

“But when we have these conferences, lots of Muslims come. When we had the big iftar at our large mosque, about 60% were young Muslims who

weren’t Ahmadi.”

Hayat said the community’s answer to threats was not to retreat from public life but to become more visible.

“We say to our children that they must not be embarrassed about being Muslim in this country,” he said. “These misconceptions about Islam have to be dealt with. And this is what I say to the larger Muslim community: please engage with people.”

He didn’t minimise the level of threat facing the Muslim community, pointing to a recent incident in which one of their mosques was attacked, while hatred against Muslims had become increasingly visible online.

Yet, he passionately believes that personal encounters remain the most effective antidote.

Hayat recalled one visitor who admitted she had shared her live location with her husband before visiting the mosque, telling him that if he did not hear from her every 15 minutes, he should come to get her.

Afterwards, she told Hayat she found warmth at the mosque and wanted to return with her family.

“You don’t see my colour any more. You see the human being behind it. This is the key to peaceful coexistence,” Hayat said.

Trump Says Venezuela Not Ready for Elections, Calls for ‘Right Approach’ Before Polls



Washington: US President Donald Trump on Friday said Venezuela was not yet prepared to hold elections, while claiming that significant progress had been made in the country following the removal of former President Nicolás Maduro.

Speaking to reporters at the White House, Trump said Venezuela needed more time before conducting elections, adding that the process should be handled carefully to ensure the right outcome.

“As far as the elections in Venezuela, they’re not really ready for them yet, but boy, a lot of progress has been made,” Trump said.

Trump also praised Venezuela’s acting president Delcy Rodríguez, who previously served as Maduro’s deputy, saying she was “doing a fantastic job” in managing the country’s affairs. Instead of focusing immediately on elections, Trump highlighted Venezuela’s oil sector and economic recovery, saying the country had significant energy resources and that his administration’s efforts had helped revive economic activity. “I’m very popular in Venezuela because we’re

bringing tremendous economics back to the country, and they were absolutely dying,” Trump said. Trump’s remarks came more than seven months after a US military operation on January 3 that removed Nicolás Maduro and his wife from Venezuela. Maduro is expected to face trial in the United States next year.

The Trump administration has so far remained cautious about the timeline for elections in Venezuela. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio had earlier said that the country would need a free press and a new electoral authority before holding a credible election process.

Venezuela’s 2024 presidential election, which resulted in Maduro retaining power, was disputed internationally. The United States, the European Union and several Latin American nations refused to recognise the outcome, citing concerns over transparency and fairness. The future of Venezuela’s political transition remains uncertain, with Washington calling for institutional reforms before any nationwide election is conducted.

UK ‘ready to defend itself’ after Iranian threat over US bases

UK: The government has said the UK is “ready to defend itself” after Iran’s military warned that any bases being used by the US were “legitimate targets”.

The UK has allowed the US to launch “defensive” operations from British bases hosting American planes since the start of its war on Iran but has refused to help in offensive operations.

That policy has not been altered by the new prime minister, Andy Burnham, who was notified last week that a decision had been made to extend the agreement with the US.

Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said on Thursday that “any base used for aggression against Iranian territory constitutes a legitimate target for our forces”.

In a statement published on the IRGC-linked Tasnim news agency, the group said American bombing missions had been launched from RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire two days earlier.

The statement came after the US carried out a 12th consecutive night of strikes against targets in Iran. The Ministry of Defence has not commented on whether Fairford was used by the US for operations against Iran this week.

The IRGC also accused the “British monarchy regime” of causing being the “primary cause of hardships in our region with a black record of partitioning Islamic nations, widespread massacres, imposing despotic regimes, and organising the occupation of Palestine”.

A spokesperson for the British government said: “Our armed forces are ready to keep the United Kingdom safe from any kind of attacks, whether it’s on our

soil or from abroad. The UK stands ready 24/7 to defend itself. “This includes through operating a layered approach to air and missile defence, provided by Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force assets equipped with a range of advanced capabilities, working closely with our Nato allies.

“We are committed to defending our people, our interests and our allies, acting in accordance with international law and not getting drawn into the wider conflict.”

On 1 March a drone struck the RAF base at Akrotiri in Cyprus, hitting a hangar, and prompting a partial evacuation of the facility. On 19 March, Iran fired two ballistic missiles at the UK’s Diego Garcia base in the Chagos Islands. One reportedly failed mid-flight, while the other was shot down by a US airship.

Iran has launched strikes against countries in the Gulf that house US military bases, including Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, killing American service personnel in some of the attacks. Donald Trump said Iran would “pay a big price” for killing US troops.

On Thursday afternoon, the US president said he was considering ordering a “massive attack” on Iran. “I am close to making a decision,” he told Axios. “We’re all set for it.” He said he believed Iran’s leaders “want to negotiate”, but aren’t yet ready to make a deal.

In another sign of the conflict potentially escalating, Yemen’s Iran-backed Houthis rebels said they attacked two Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea on Thursday, as oil topped \$100 a barrel.

Five officers injured as police boat strikes Westminster Bridge

London: Five officers have been injured after a police boat struck Westminster Bridge in central London on Friday afternoon.

The Metropolitan police said the incident occurred at about 3.40pm and involved a boat from the marine policing unit.

A spokesperson for the Met said: “A number of officers entered the water but were recovered. Additional officers responded alongside the London ambulance service and London fire brigade. “We understand five officers were injured and are receiving treatment. We await an update on the extent of their injuries. At this stage, we don’t believe any members of the public were involved or injured.

“The circumstances of the incident will be thoroughly reviewed, but at this stage our priority is the wellbeing of the officers involved.”

Responders from the Roy-



al National Lifeboat Institution could be seen treating casualties on a boat moored at Westminster pier. A large number of police officers, fire crews and ambulances were at the scene, with a police helicopter and air ambulance circling above.

A mother and son, Cecilia Lusevic, 56, and Mateo Bilis-Lusevic, 12, said they heard a loud bang when the police boat crashed. The visitors to the UK, from Chile, were on a tour boat on the north side of Westminster

Bridge and saw what happened, before being evacuated from their boat.

Mateo told the Press Association: “Two boats were riding extremely fast through the water. Suddenly, I heard a boom. I was looking towards the boat, and I heard a boom. Then three people went flying into the water, and one of the people was really hurt.”

The police officers were in the water for an estimated 10 minutes, he said, and in that time someone threw a

life ring in for one of them.

In a post on X, the London fire brigade said: “We’re responding to an incident on the #RiverThames near Westminster Bridge alongside partner agencies. The brigade’s fire boat and three fire rescue units with water rescue capabilities have been mobilised to the scene. We were called at 15.58 and remain on scene.

“We are supporting the response and providing assistance where needed, working closely with the Metropolitan police, HM Coastguard and partner agencies to manage the situation.”

Transport for London said exits one and two at Westminster tube station were closed. Thames Clippers, which operates Uber Boat, said “some services” may be subject to disruption as a result of the incident. It said Westminster pier was closed until further notice.

US-Saudi Nuclear Deal Faces New Condition as White House Links Progress to Israel Recognition

Washington: The White House has announced a new condition for finalising the landmark nuclear cooperation agreement between the United States and Saudi Arabia, stating that the deal can move forward only if Riyadh joins the Abraham Accords and establishes diplomatic relations with Israel.

According to Russia Today (RT), White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said that US President Donald Trump’s administration views the agreement as being linked to Saudi Arabia normalising ties with Israel. She said discussions with Saudi leaders are continuing and Washington hopes Riyadh will become part of the Abraham Accords in the near future.

The condition was not



publicly mentioned when the United States and Saudi Arabia announced the nuclear cooperation agreement on Wednesday. Saudi Arabia, however, has previously maintained that it will not formally recognise Israel until there is meaningful progress towards the establishment of a Palestinian state.

According to the US Department of Energy, Energy Secretary Chris Wright and Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman signed agreements re-

lated to the so-called “123 Nuclear Agreement” and additional nuclear security arrangements. The deal would allow Saudi Arabia to develop a civilian nuclear energy programme with American technology and expertise and potentially establish nuclear reactors in the future.

Reports suggest that the agreement could also allow Saudi Arabia to pursue domestic uranium enrichment capabilities. However, the deal does not make the International Atomic Energy

Agency’s (IAEA) Additional Protocol mandatory. The protocol provides international inspectors with expanded authority to detect undeclared nuclear activities.

The provision has raised concerns among nuclear non-proliferation experts and several US lawmakers. Critics argue that allowing Saudi Arabia to enrich uranium could create risks if such technology is later diverted towards developing nuclear weapons. They warn that this could trigger a new nuclear arms competition in the Middle East.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has previously stated that if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, Saudi Arabia would consider taking similar steps.

UN Chief Warns Middle East on Brink of Losing Control



New York: United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has expressed deep concern over the rapidly deteriorating security situation in the Middle East, warning that the region is approaching a point where events could spiral beyond control. He called on all parties to immediately de-escalate tensions and pursue a diplomatic resolution to prevent a wider conflict.

Addressing a meeting of the United Nations Security Council, Guterres said the Middle East crisis is moving toward an “unthinkable situation.” He warned that the region is being drawn into an increasingly broader confrontation, where one crisis is triggering another and every new military action is further escalating tensions. He added that political solutions are steadily being pushed aside amid the growing conflict.

His remarks came as U.S. President Donald Trump indicated that his administration is considering a major military operation against Iran. Trump said a deci-

sion could be taken soon, although the U.S. administration has not yet made any formal announcement regarding military action.

Amid fears of further escalation, the United Kingdom has announced the temporary withdrawal of some of its diplomatic personnel from Iran as a precautionary measure. Germany has also decided to withdraw two of its naval vessels from the Red Sea.

Meanwhile, bomb shelters have been opened in several Israeli cities as a precaution, while the U.S. Department of State has advised American citizens in the region to remain vigilant. The department warned that any further deterioration in the security situation could also disrupt air travel.

The United Nations has once again appealed to all concerned parties to exercise maximum restraint and resolve their differences through dialogue and diplomacy in order to avert the risk of a broader regional conflict.

Here are seven vibrant and colorful kurta sets for your little princesses



In humid and sweaty conditions, it is essential to choose clothing that is lightweight and breathable. This consideration

applies to your young girls as well. Cotton kurta sets are an ideal solution. They are perfectly crisp, lightweight, and comfortable,

ensuring that your daughters remain at ease while also enhancing their ethnic charm. These outfits, being soft and breathable, allow children to stay cool while appearing effortlessly charming.

Along with this, cotton kurta sets come in a variety of cheerful prints, vibrant colours, and elegant embroidery that perfectly capture the playful spirit of childhood. Whether you prefer floral motifs, traditional block prints, pastel shades, or festive embellishments, there is a style to suit every occasion. Paired with matching palazzos, leggings, or shararas, these sets create a polished yet relaxed look that little girls can wear comfortably.

Which kurti is best for girls?

If you, too, have been looking to buy a cotton kurta set for your little girls, here are 7 options worth considering.

1. A.T.U.N. (ALL THINGS UBER NICE)

Girls Pure Cotton Floral Printed Gotta Work Flared Kurta with Sharara Set | Festive Clothing Set: Made from 100% pure cotton, this floral-printed flared kurta is designed to keep little girls cool and comfortable during warm weather. The elegant gotta work detailing adds a festive touch, making it suitable for family gatherings, celebrations, and casual outings. The breathable cotton fabric feels soft against the skin and allows easy movement throughout the day. Amazon customers appreciate its attractive print, lightweight feel, and comfortable fit, while many also mention that the fabric remains pleasant after repeated washes.

2. Biba Cotton Girl Printed Narrow Kid Salwar Suit Set (KW5279_BLUE_3): Crafted from cotton fabric, this BIBA kurta set features a tiered kurta paired with straight palazzo trousers for a stylish ethnic look. The breathable material

helps children stay comfortable during long hours of wear, whether at festive events or casual occasions. The elegant design makes dressing up effortless without compromising comfort. Amazon buyers often praise the premium finish, beautiful colours, and soft fabric. Many reviewers also find it true to size and suitable for both everyday and festive wear.

3. Pspeaches Girls Cotton 3/4th Sleeve Round Neck Floral Print Kurta And Pant With Dupatta 3 Piece Set|Ethnic Wear For Kids Girls: Made using a cotton blend fabric, this kurta and palazzo set offers a combination of comfort and style for growing girls. The lightweight material allows easy movement, while the attractive ethnic design makes it suitable for birthdays, festivals, and family functions. Its relaxed fit keeps children comfortable throughout the day. According to Amazon customer reviews, buyers

appreciate the neat stitching, vibrant appearance, and value for money. Several parents also mention that the outfit is easy to maintain.

4. Arshia Fashions Girls Ethnic Wear Salwar Suit Set | Girls Kurti and Dhoti Pant Set: Designed using a cotton blend fabric, this kurti and dhoti pant set gives a modern twist to traditional ethnic wear. The soft material offers breathable comfort, while the stylish dhoti pants create a trendy festive look. It is ideal for celebrations, cultural events, and family occasions. Amazon customers frequently praise the unique design, comfortable fit, and eye-catching colours. Many parents also mention that the fabric feels soft and allows children to move freely during celebrations.

5. rytras Women's Pure Cotton Printed Straight Kurta Set with Palazzo Pants - Ethnic Wear, Blue(RYT592-N,L): Made

from pure cotton, this printed straight kurta set offers excellent breathability and comfort throughout the day.

The lightweight fabric makes it suitable for daily wear, office use, and casual outings. Its elegant prints provide a timeless ethnic appeal without feeling heavy. Amazon reviewers appreciate the soft cotton quality, attractive prints, and comfortable fit. Many buyers also mention that the fabric remains comfortable even during hot weather and delivers good value for the price.

6. LITTLE GINNIE Cotton Kurta Sharara Set with Dupatta for Girls 5-6 Years - Ethnic Wear for Kids Girls - Yellow Pink: Crafted from cotton fabric, this kurta and sharara set combines traditional charm with everyday comfort. The breathable material keeps young girls comfortable during festive celebrations, weddings, and family gatherings. The

flowy sharara adds a graceful touch while allowing easy movement. Amazon customers often highlight the soft fabric, attractive colours, and stylish design. Many parents also appreciate its lightweight feel and mention that it offers good comfort for extended wear.

7. Naixa Girls Rayon Fabric Floral Printed 3/4 Sleeve Pink Sharara Dress Set, 8-9 Years: Made from rayon fabric, this floral-printed sharara dress offers a soft texture with a graceful drape. The lightweight material provides comfort while giving the outfit a festive appearance, making it suitable for parties, family functions, and celebrations.

The floral print adds a cheerful finish for young girls. Amazon reviewers commonly praise its elegant look, vibrant print, and comfortable feel. Many buyers also mention that the dress offers a flattering fit and good quality for its price.

How to pick the ideal monsoon fabric: Top picks for the current wet season



Maintain a cool and comfortable experience during the monsoon season by opting for breathable fabrics such as cotton, rayon, and linen blends, while steering clear of heavy materials that trap moisture.

The monsoon season can provide a refreshing respite from the sweltering summer heat; however, selecting appropriate attire for this weather can prove to be unexpectedly challenging. With high humidity, unexpected rain showers, and garments that take an extended period to dry, the choice of fabric can significantly influence your day. An elegant outfit may lose its appeal if it clings to your skin or remains wet for hours following a brief rain. There is no necessity to completely revamp your wardrobe. By opting for suitable fabrics, you can remain cool, comfortable, and fashionable during the rainy season.

Best fabrics for monsoons
1. Cotton: Your everyday hero

Cotton remains one of the safest choices for humid weather. It's lightweight,

breathable and allows air to circulate freely, helping your body stay cool throughout the day. Cotton also absorbs sweat effectively, making it ideal for long office hours or daily errands.

However, if you're expecting heavy rain, remember that cotton absorbs water easily and may take longer to dry. Best for: Office wear, Casual outings,

Everyday kurtas,Shirts and dresses.

2. Rayon: Flowy and practical
Rayon has become a favourite for monsoon wardrobes because of its soft drape and elegant appearance. It wrinkles less than cotton and usually dries faster after light showers, making it a practical choice for unpredictable weather.

It's particularly popular for kurtas, dresses and co-ord sets because it creates a flattering silhouette while remaining comfortable.

Best for:Workwear,Dinner outings, Travel,Semi-formal occasions.

3. Linen blends: Breathable with fewer wrinkles

Pure linen is wonderfully breathable but wrinkles

easily. Linen blends combine the comfort of linen with improved durability and easier maintenance. They feel cool against the skin while offering a slightly more polished appearance.

Best for:Smart casual dressing,Office meetings,Relaxed summer and monsoon wardrobes.

4. Lightweight blends
Cotton-rayon or cotton-linen blends often offer the best of both worlds. They remain breathable while drying faster than pure cotton and generally require less ironing. These blended fabrics are ideal if you're looking for practical everyday clothing during the rainy season.

5. Quick-dry performance fabrics

If your commute involves walking, riding a two-wheeler or travelling frequently, moisture-wicking performance fabrics can be extremely useful. They're designed to dry quickly and keep you comfortable even when the weather becomes unpredictable.

Best for:Active-wear,Travel, Outdoor activities, Long commutes

Fabrics to avoid during the monsoon

Heavy denim
While stylish, thick denim absorbs water quickly and can remain damp for several hours. Wet jeans also become noticeably heavier and uncomfortable.

Velvet
Velvet traps moisture, takes a long time to dry and isn't practical for humid weather.

Thick polyester
Although polyester dries quickly, heavier versions often trap heat and can feel uncomfortable during humid days.

Heavy silk
Silk can stain easily when exposed to rain and often requires delicate care after getting wet. Reserve it for indoor events instead.

What else should you look for?

Fabric matters, but so does the construction of the garment.

Look for:
Relaxed fits that allow airflow. Shorter hemlines that stay clear of puddles.

Minimal lining for improved breathability. Lightweight fabrics that don't become heavy when damp.

Monsoon styling tips
Stick to ankle-length trousers instead of floor-length bottoms.

Choose lighter colours that feel fresh despite gloomy weather.

Carry a lightweight jacket or raincoat for sudden showers.

Pair breathable fabrics with waterproof footwear. Keep a small umbrella handy, even if the forecast looks clear.

If I had to build the perfect monsoon wardrobe, I'd include a mix of cotton for everyday comfort, rayon for work and outings, and a few linen-blend pieces for polished occasions. Each fabric has its strengths, but the key is choosing clothing that's breathable, lightweight and quick to recover after unexpected rain. Once your wardrobe is built around the right fabrics, dressing for the rainy season becomes far less complicated, and much more comfortable.

Unbeknownst to you, these typical monsoon habits could be destroying your skin

While monsoon weather can be invigorating, the elevated humidity, perspiration, and moist conditions can adversely affect your skin. A common belief is that the monsoon provides relief for the skin following the intense summer heat. Nevertheless, the rainy season introduces its own array of difficulties. Elevated humidity, perspiration, wet clothing, and greater exposure to bacteria and fungi can result in skin that feels oily, irritated, or susceptible to breakouts.

Staying In Wet Clothes For Too Long
Whether you've been caught in the rain or finished a workout, staying in damp clothes creates the perfect environment for bacteria and fungi to thrive. This can lead to itchy rashes, fungal infections and skin irritation. Change into dry clothes as soon as possible.

Skippping Sunscreen Because It's Cloudy:Many people think sunscreen isn't necessary on rainy days. However, harmful UV rays can still penetrate clouds and contribute to tanning, pigmentation and premature ageing. A broad-spectrum sunscreen should re-

main a part of your daily routine.

Washing Your Face Too Often
The sticky weather may tempt you to wash your face multiple times a day. But over-cleansing can strip away your skin's natural oils, causing dryness and prompting your skin to produce even more oil. Washing your face twice a day is usually enough.

Not Moisturising Your Skin
If your skin feels oily, you may be tempted to skip moisturiser altogether. However, all skin types need hydration. A lightweight, non-comedogenic moisturiser can help maintain your skin barrier without making your skin greasy.

Touching Your Face Frequently
Sweaty hands, mobile phones and other surfaces can carry dirt and bacteria. Constantly touching your face increases the chances of clogged pores and acne breakouts.

Wearing Heavy Makeup Every Day
Heavy makeup combined with sweat and humidity can clog pores and trigger breakouts. During the monsoon, consider using lighter, breathable products and always remove your makeup before going to bed. Reusing

Dirty Towels: A damp towel can become a breeding ground for germs and fungi. Using the same towel for several days may transfer bacteria back to your skin. Wash towels regularly and ensure they dry completely between uses.

Ignoring Damp Shoes And Socks
Keeping your feet in wet shoes or socks for long periods increases the risk of fungal infections, bad odour and athlete's foot. Dry your feet thoroughly and wear clean, dry socks every day.

Sleeping Without Cleansing Your Face
Throughout the day, sweat, pollution, excess oil and makeup accumulate on the skin. Going to bed without cleansing your face can clog pores and increase the likelihood of pimples.

Picking Pimples: It can be tempting to squeeze a pimple, but doing so can worsen inflammation, spread bacteria and increase the risk of permanent acne scars.

Drinking Less Water: People often feel less thirsty during the rainy season, but your body still needs adequate hydration. Drinking enough water helps support healthy skin and overall well-being.

Use These Hair Care Advice If You Frequently Wear Helmets



hair, make sure it's completely dry before putting on your helmet. Damp hair traps moisture inside the helmet, creating the perfect environment for sweat buildup, itchiness and dandruff.

2. Keep Your Helmet Lining Clean:
The inner padding of your helmet absorbs sweat, oil and dust over time. If it's not cleaned regularly, that buildup can come into repeated contact with your scalp. If your helmet has a removable liner, wash it periodically. If not, wipe the interior with a mild cleanser and let it dry thoroughly before using it again.

3. Let Your Hair Breathe After Every Ride: As soon as you remove your helmet, leave your hair open for a few minutes. This allows trapped sweat to evaporate and helps your scalp cool down naturally. Avoid tying your hair up immediately or covering it with another cap, as this can lock in moisture.

4. Refresh Your Scalp If You Sweat A Lot: During hot and humid weather, excessive sweating is common. If your scalp feels sticky after a ride, rinse it with clean water once you get home.

You don't need to shampoo every day unless necessary. A gentle rinse can often help remove sweat and freshen your scalp, while a mild shampoo can be used when required.

5. Avoid Tight Hairstyles Under Your Helmet: Before wearing a hel-

met, skip tight ponytails or buns. Tight hairstyles put extra pressure on your hair roots and may increase hair breakage over time.

Instead, opt for a loose ponytail or braid for greater comfort and less tension.

6. Detangle Hair Gently: Helmet hair is real! After removing your helmet, use a wide-tooth comb to gently remove knots. Avoid aggressive brushing, as tangled hair is more likely to break.

7. Maintain A Clean Scalp: A healthy scalp is the foundation of healthy hair. Sweat, excess oil and dirt can worsen common scalp issues if left uncleaned.

Wash your hair according to your hair type—neither too frequently nor too infrequently—to maintain a balanced scalp environment.

8. Nourish Your Hair From Within: Healthy hair starts with good nutrition. Include foods rich in protein, iron, vitamins and healthy fats in your diet, drink enough water, get adequate sleep and manage stress. These lifestyle habits play a much bigger role in preventing hair fall than helmet use alone. If you're experiencing excessive hair loss, persistent itching, redness or signs of a scalp infection, don't rely solely on home remedies. Consult a dermatologist or hair specialist to identify the underlying cause and get the right treatment.

ENTERTAINMENT

Ahaan Panday & Ali Abbas Zafar’s next
locks March 26, 2027 release



Mumbai : After Saiyaara, all eyes are on Ahaan Panday's next film. Backed by Yash Raj Films, the actioner is being directed by Ali Abbas Zafar. The yet-untitled film

also stars Sharvari, Aaishvarya Thackeray and Bobby Deol, among others. Now, we are getting to know that the makers have locked a release date for the

same. Aditya Chopra's Yash Raj Films has fixed March 26, 2027 (Good Friday) as the theatrical release date for the romantic action drama. Produced by Aditya Chopra and directed by Ali Abbas Zafar, this film marks the fifth producer-director collaboration between them after Mere Brother Ki Dulhan, Gunday, Sultan and Tiger Zinda Hai. Meanwhile, details about the film have been kept under wraps, but Ahaan Panday has gone through an intense transformation for the film. Earlier this year, he had spoken to Filmfare about being

a part of the film. He told us, "I'd always seen Ali sir around YRF. He had this almost mythical aura about him. But I'd never really interacted with him. There are very few directors who can make their heroes look and feel a certain way. He's definitely one of them. I just never imagined that my second film would be with him. It felt like a lot to take in. So when he came to me with a script, the The team has shot extensively in the UK for the film. There were also reports that Ahaan will be showing his dance moves in the film!

Roshan Mathew’s crime thriller Uyir set for
august 4 OTT release on JioHotstar



Kochi : Roshan Mathew’s latest outing, Uyir, is all set to reach a wider audience through its digital premiere. The makers have announced that the police procedural will begin streaming on JioHotstar from August 4, a little over a month after its theatrical release on June 26. Directed by veteran filmmaker M Padmakumar, Uyir opened to mixed reviews upon its release but drew attention for its grounded storytelling and its roots in real-life police investigations. With its OTT debut now confirmed, viewers who missed the film in cinemas will soon be able to catch the investigative thriller from the comfort of their homes. Uyir follows the story of Ajeeb Rahman,

a probationary sub-inspector played by Roshan Mathew, who is posted to the Dharmadam Police Station in Kannur. What begins as a routine assignment soon turns into a far more challenging investigation after the decomposed body of a woman is discovered inside an abandoned well. As Ajeeb digs deeper into the case, he uncovers a web of interconnected incidents that gradually reveal hidden truths. Inspired by real-life incidents from the career of a police officer, the film blends procedural investigation with emotional drama, presenting a crime story that unfolds through methodical police work rather than conventional action. Roshan, who has steadily built a

reputation for choosing unconventional roles across Malayalam and Hindi cinema, anchors the film as a young officer navigating the pressures of his first major investigation. The supporting cast features Baiju Santhosh, Vinod Sagar, Shruthy Menon, Saiyami Kher, Vineeth Thattil, Divya M Nair, Santhosh Thiruvikraman, Shaju Sreedhar, Shrikant Murali, Athulya Chandra and Mahesh Shetty, each contributing to the layered narrative surrounding the central mystery. One of Uyir’s biggest talking points is the team behind its story. The film is based on the experiences of police officer Anshad, while the screenplay has been co-written by another serving officer, Shaji Marad, along with singer and lyricist Nikhil K Menon. Shaji is no stranger to crime dramas, having previously contributed to acclaimed films such as Ela Veezha Poonchira and Paathirathri. His familiarity with investigative storytelling lends authenticity to Uyir’s procedural approach. Behind the camera, the film brings together an experienced technical crew. Cinematography is handled by Ajay David Kachappilly, whose visuals capture the moody atmosphere of the investigation, while Renjan Abraham takes care of editing. The music has been composed by Manikandan Ayyappa, complementing the film’s tense and understated tone. Uyir has been produced by Santhosh Thiruvikraman under the banner of Vow Cinemas.

‘The India Story’ day 1 box office: slow opening at ₹16 lakh

Mumbai : The India Story, headlined by Kajal Aggarwal and Shreyas Talpade, hit theatres on July 24, 2026. However, it saw a low turnout on its opening day at the box office. The India Story hardly saw any audience. According to Sacnilk, The India Story opened to a modest start at the box office, earning an estimated India net collection of Rs 16 lakh on its first day. The film’s India gross stood at around Rs 18 lakh, which also matched its worldwide gross collection, as it did not register any overseas earnings on Day 1. The India Story was made on a budget of around Rs 20 crore to Rs 30 crore. The India Story: Slow Poison in Progress is a Hindi-language drama directed by Chetan DK and produced by Sagar B. Shinde. Starring Kajal Aggarwal and Shreyas Talpade in the lead roles, the film also features Mu-



rali Sharma, Manish Wadhwa, Trisha Sarda, Atul Tiwari, Kamlesh Sawant and Sham Mashalkar in pivotal roles. Principal photography began in Pune, Maharashtra, in January 2025 and wrapped up in October the same year, with several sequences also shot in

Kolhapur. Released in theatres on July 24, 2026, the film hit the big screen in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu languages. The film explores the theme of the use of pesticides in farming and how it affects health.

Jyotika Praises Gen Z protesters: “I stand
for accountability and democratic India”



Mumbai : Actress Jyotika has also come out in support of Cockroach Janta Party’s protest. On Saturday morning, she took to her Instagram handle and shared a strongly-worded post, demanding Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan’s resignation. Jyotika mentioned that she stands with the protesting students and hailed them for making others ‘fearless’. “Step down Dharmendra Pradhan. Resign. I stand with the students and future of our nation! I stand with

accountability! I stand for a democratic India! I stand for a reformed education! Sonam Wangchuk. Abhijeet Dipke and Saurav Das, as mothers we want to raise our children to be like you (sic),” she wrote. “Proud of your Gen Z’s for being unfiltered. You have proved that together ‘WE’ are India. Thank you for breaking the pressure. Thank you for making us fearless. CJP (sic),” Jyotika added. Soon after the post was shared, netizens reacted to it and thanked Jyotika for

backing their protest. “No filter, just straight up! Thank you, Jyothika ma’am!,” one of the users wrote. “@jyotika i don’t think any other “celebrity” dared to do this. Growing up watching your films, I loved you as an actor, however, today, I admire your humanness. I hope this doesn’t cause you any backlash and I hope to God you and your beloved family stay safe,” added another. Jyotika is not the first actress to back CJP. Several

others, including Shabana Azmi, Sonu Sood, Prakash Raj, Salman Khan and Riteish Deshmukh have also come out, expressing their support for the CJP. Previously, in a long note on his social media, Diljit Dosanjh also condemned the violence witnessed during the protests and called on authorities to engage with the students’ demands. He said students should not be mistreated and appealed for a peaceful and constructive resolution.

SRK's London
trip sparks
protest debate



London : The CJP’s protests at Jantar Mantar are still not losing their grip, and while almost the entire Bollywood has spoken on the matter, Shah Rukh Khan’s silence is quite evident. While the actor hasn’t addressed the issue yet, amid all this, he was spotted holidaying in London with his family. Several pictures and videos of him with his wife, Gauri Khan, and children Suhana Khan, Aryan Khan, and AbRam Khan have now surfaced on social media. In a video, Shah Rukh Khan was seen wearing a casual, comfy outfit. The actor wore baggy trousers, a plain T-shirt, and a hoodie. The actor’s appearance came while the country is witnessing one of the biggest protests in recent times, with many celebrities, including Bollywood superstar Salman Khan, voicing their support for the students demanding a better education system. A social media user shared a screenshot of a message attributed to Shah Rukh Khan, which grabbed the spotlight. However, the screenshot is not real, as SRK has not yet reacted to the ongoing protest.

Ramayana postpones global trailer drop, debuts exclusive footage at comic-con

Mumbai : Ramayana is one of the most anticipated films of the year, and moviegoers have been waiting for a long time to see its trailer. Scheduled for July 24, the trailer faced a delay in India due to the ongoing CJP protest at Jantar Mantar in Delhi and several other parts of the country. While India still awaits the release of the Ramayana trailer, it has been reported that exclusive footage was shown to nearly 4,800 attendees at San Diego Comic-Con. As per a Mid-day source,

“The makers chose to withhold the online launch, saying it would arrive at a later date. The protests across India had prompted the makers to do a rethink.” Despite the disruption to the online release plans, the presentation proceeded as scheduled, with the team showcasing exclusive footage from the epic to an audience of nearly 4,800, earning an enthusiastic response. “This marked only the second time an Indian film has received such a prominent showcase at

San Diego Comic-Con after Kalki 2898 AD,” added the source. At the event, the makers clarified that reports of the movie arriving earlier than its planned release are false and that Ramayana: Part 1 will be a Diwali 2026 release. While Ranbir Kapoor is playing Lord Ram in Ramayana, Yash will be seen essaying Ravana. Meanwhile, Sai Pallavi will also be seen as Goddess Sita in the movie. Sunny Deol and Ravi Dubey will play the roles of Hanuman and

Lakshman, respectively. On the other hand, Kajal Aggarwal and Rakul Preet Singh will be seen as Mandodari and Surpanakha. Arun Govil, Kunal Kapoor, Adinath Kothare, Sheeba Chaddha, and Indira Krishnan are also part of the project. Ramayana: Part 1 is slated for a theatrical release this Diwali, while the second chapter will release on Diwali 2027. Earlier this year, in April, the team unveiled an introductory teaser, Rama, to coincide with Hanuman Jayanti. Running

for 2 minutes and 38 seconds, the teaser offered the first glimpse of Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Rama. It, too, was granted a ‘U’ certificate by the CBFC. Planned as a two-part cinematic saga, Ramayana is set for a worldwide



IMAX release. The first instalment is scheduled to hit theatres during Diwali

2026, followed by the second chapter on Diwali 2027.

Trisha’s mother emotional over Vijay’s Jana Nayagan



Chennai : Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and actor Vijay’s film Jana Nayagan was released in theatres on Thursday, July 23, 2026. The film opened to rave reviews from all quarters. Trisha Krishnan and her mother, Uma Krishnan, watched the movie during the first day, first show. Uma said she was emotional about Vi-

jay’s farewell to cinema. She stated, “We had a good time. We really enjoyed the movie. I feel bad that this is his last film. We are going to miss him.” On the other hand, Trisha was mum. Trisha and Vijay have been regarded as the most popular onscreen pair in Tamil cinema. The duo have worked together in films including Ghilli, Thirupaachi,

and Leo. Trisha also made a special appearance in Vijay’s 2024 release, The Greatest of All Time. Jana Nayagan is directed by H Vinodh and features music by Anirudh Ravichander. Along with Vijay, the film stars Pooja Hegde, Mamitha Baiju, Priyamani, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Prakash Raj, and several others in key roles.

Actor Shabana Azmi diagnosed with swine
flu; advised bed rest by doctors

Mumbai : Veteran actress and activist Shabana Azmi has contracted swine flu and has been advised complete bed rest by doctors. The actress, who was apparently all set to participate in protests, has been advised complete bed rest by the doctors. According to her team, the 74-year-old actress has contracted swine flu and is running a high fever of 102 degrees. A statement from her team read, “Shabana ji was meant to go to the protest today but she has contracted swine flu with 102 fever and has been advised rest by the doctor.” Over the past few days, Shabana had been actively participating in the protests in Jantar Mantar at Delhi. She was standing shoulder-to-shoulder with



protestors and using her social media platforms to share updates and developments from the ground. The actress had posted many photographs and videos from the protest venue, and also lent her voice to the movement. In one post, Shabana wrote, “Alan e Haq mein khatra e daar o rasan to hai lekin sawaal ye hai ke daar o rasan ke baad ? Kaifi Azmi. De-

claring the truth invites the threat of the scaffold and the rope. Yet the real question is: what lies beyond the scaffold and the rope?” “The couplet reflects on the cost of speaking the truth. It acknowledges that standing for truth may lead to persecution or even death (“the gallows and the noose”), but then asks a deeper question: What happens after that?

Depending on interpretation, it can suggest that truth outlives oppression, that martyrdom is not the end, or that those who wield punishment cannot ultimately silence the truth.” In the second post, she wrote, “Climbing up with the help of young colleagues to the protest site at #Jantar Mantar to demand reforms within our educational system and an overhaul of the entire system. Allocate 6 percent of GDP to education, public health and women’s empowerment to measure the success of our country.” During one of the protest gatherings, Shabana also fell ill and was seen being escorted to an emergency medical centre after her health deteriorated. Despite feeling unwell, she continued to show her support for the cause.

Sonam Wangchuk Explains Why He Passed Away Without Dharmendra Pradhan’s Resignation



New Delhi, July 25: Sonam Wangchuk, an activist, stated that he chose to end his 26-day hunger strike without Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan’s resignation because his top priority was to stop any legal action against demonstrators who participated in Monday’s “Sansad Chalo” march organized by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) over alleged irregularities related to exams.Wangchuk, 59, broke his fast just after midnight on Thursday after the Center promised in writing that it would not file charges against demonstrators, that it would hold a thorough discussion on examination reforms and paper leaks in Parliament, and that it was thinking about paying compensation to the families of students who committed suicide as a result of the NEET paper leak. Since June 28, he has been fasting indefinitely in support of the members of the satirical political party, the CJP, who have gathered at Delhi’s Jantar Mantar to demand accountability for alleged irregularities in competitive exams, educational reforms, and Dharmendra Pradhan’s resignation. However, Wangchuk came under fire for calling off the walk-out without Pradhan’s resignation.He stated that the resignation was “certainly a factor” in a YouTube

video that was uploaded late on Friday night, but he did not demand it during talks with the Center since his top goal was to stop any legal action against demonstrators. He said, “I don’t consider it essential for me to personally bring about this resignation,” in a 24-minute video that was shot from his hospital bed. He described the Center’s refusal to quit as a “trivial matter” and said they are “suffering immense damage” as a result.People are furious and filled with anger, and their reputation is being damaged across the country,” Wangchuk stated. He said he had also spoken to the union ministers for Pradhan’s resignation during negotiations.“They wanted more time, saying they couldn’t commit just yet,” he said.He expressed confidence that Pradhan would resign eventually.“I knew that they (Centre) wouldn’t be able to hold out for long this way and would submit the resignation sooner or later. I knew the resignation issue would resolve itself quickly since they were the ones suffering the consequences, so I didn’t press too hard on that,” he said.”My focus was that students should not suffer. My main concern was legal action and FIRs. I did not think it was necessary for me personally to secure the minister’s resignation,” he said, adding

that the ongoing movement would continue pressing that demand. Sonam Wangchuk also dismissed allegations that he had reached a “deal” with the Centre, and emphasised that his primary goal was to ensure that students involved in the protests would not face violence or legal consequences.“Last night around midnight, I was told the ministers had agreed to give the assurance in writing. I was in a hurry because the situation in Delhi was such; there was apprehension that a major crackdown could happen. I was watching reports and was reminded of September 24, 2025, when police and CRPF personnel mercilessly fired at the youth of Ladakh. I was afraid something similar could happen here. I felt that if I ended my fast and appealed for peace, perhaps the situation could be diffused,” he said.Responding to criticism over ending his fast in the presence of Union ministers JP Nadda and Jitendra Singh, he said that those questioning his decision were unaware of the circumstances he faced after being moved from the protest site.“If I had to make a deal, would I have remained hungry for 26 days? Could I not have struck a deal sitting in an air-conditioned room instead of fasting in Delhi’s heat?” he said. He said Nadda and Singh met him at Medanta Hospital in Gurugram and agreed to positively consider compensation for families of students who died by suicide following the NEET paper leak and a discussion in Parliament on accountability in the examination system.He said he insisted that he would not end his fast without a written assurance that no legal action would be taken against peaceful protesters.“They initially agreed to compensation and discussion in Parliament but were not ready to assure that no cases would be filed against protesting students. They offered only a verbal assurance. I insisted on a written assurance and did not relent until they agreed,” Wangchuk said.He said that he had hoped to end his fast in the presence of MPs, members of the Cockroach Janta Party, and representatives from Ladakh but claimed many of them were not allowed to meet him before the ministers arrived late at night.”The biggest sorrow in my heart is that my colleagues, the students and the MPs who had come to support me could not be present when I ended my fast,” he added.

High Court Stay Examines the Welfare Model of the AAP Government

Chandigarh, July 25: The Punjab and Haryana high court on Thursday halted the transfer of funds from a construction workers’ welfare corpus to other programs, including the state’s flagship Mukh Mantri Mawan Dheeyan Satkar Yojana, which promises a cash dole to nearly one crore women. This was a significant shock to the Bhagwant Mann-led Aam Aadmi Party government.For the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) administration, the interim order has grown to be a major political and governance concern.The limitation on the purported diversion of social Board funds targets the financing system of one of the government’s most prominent social projects, even if the court has not stopped the Chief Minister Mawan-Dhiyan Satkar Scheme itself. The plan is still in place, but the government’s capacity to finance it via the suggested method is currently under court investigation.Political experts claim that the ruling has ramifications outside of the courts for the AAP administration, whose political identity has been based on welfare-driven governance. The party’s governing narrative in Punjab has been centered on welfare programs aimed at women, farmers, students, and economically disadvantaged groups. Fiscal planning and

administrative procedures are always called into question by any legal ambiguity regarding the funding of such programs. The interim order also provides the Opposition with an opportunity to shift the political debate from the benefits of the scheme to the manner in which it is being financed. Rather than opposing welfare measures themselves, critics are likely to focus on issues of financial propriety, statutory compliance and budgetary transparency. This changes the political discourse from “whether” welfare should be provided to “how” it should be funded. From a governance perspective, the case highlights the importance of ensuring that dedicated welfare funds created under specific legislation are used strictly for their intended beneficiaries unless permitted by law. If the government is ultimately required to finance the scheme through budgetary allocations instead of welfare board resources, it could place additional pressure on Punjab’s already constrained finances and require a reassessment of expenditure priorities. The High Court’s intervention may also influence the pace of implementation of the scheme. Even without suspending the programme, uncertainty over funding sources could delay execu-

tion until the legal position is clarified or alternative financial arrangements are made.Politically, the case has the potential to test one of the AAP government’s strongest electoral strengths-its welfare-centric governance model. The party has consistently projected social welfare initiatives as evidence of responsive governance. Any perception that flagship programmes lack a legally sustainable financial framework could become a recurring point of political attack, particularly if the litigation continues for an extended period. However, if the government can find an other, legally sound source of funds or successfully defend its funding choice before the High Court, its political dilemma is still manageable. Since the order is just a temporary remedy, the case’s conclusion will ultimately decide whether the dispute stays a short-term setback or grows into a more extensive discussion about public responsibility and fiscal control.For the time being, the High Court’s involvement has caused the focus to move from the promise of welfare delivery to the financial and legal framework that underpins it, making the dispute as much about judicial interpretation as it is about governance credibility.

Why Did Jhandu Kumar Not Win Gold in the 2026 Commonwealth Games



Scotland: A “slight miscalculation and miscommunication” prevented Indian para powerlifter Jhandu Kumar from winning the gold medal at the 2026 Commonwealth Games, according to Rajinder Singh Rahele, Kumar’s coach. After lifting 190 kg on his second try, Jhandu Kumar won the bronze in the men’s heavy-weight division. According to Rahele, the team was pretty certain of winning because they had previously calculated the lifts needed for the gold medal. “I feel great, which is a great thing. We had done the math, so we already knew. Rahelu told ANI,

“We had targeted gold, but for some reason, it was missed.” However, a “slight error in communication” caused them to miss the gold. “The competition for gold was very tough, as we saw. But it wasn’t that; it was just miscommunication. I was a bit far, and there was some difficulty in calculation. As you saw, the medal was missed by just two points,” he said.He also explained how a two-point difference in para powerlifting can end up making the competition extremely close.“Two points means 2-3 kilograms. But considering how the body performs in such close calls,

there was a slight error in calculation. But it’s okay, we have a medal, and we’ve opened India’s account, which is a very good thing,” he added.Jhandu secured the podium finish with a best successful lift of 190kg, earning 130.9 points. He began strongly by lifting 181kg in his first attempt for 124.7 points before improving his mark to 190kg in the second lift, which briefly moved him to the top of the standings. In his final attempt, Jhandu went for 196kg, which would have broken the Commonwealth Games meet record set at Birmingham 2022. However, he could not complete the lift and eventually finished with the bronze medal. India’s lightweight para powerlifters have previously lost out on medals. With a personal-best 200 kg lift and 143.8 points, Ashok placed fourth in the men’s final, while Paramjeet Kumar placed seventh with 176 kg and 135.6 points.Suman Devi finished seventh in the women’s lightweight division with a top lift of 100 kg and 88.4 points, while Jaspreet Kaur finished sixth with a lift of 100 kg and 96.4 points.In contrast, Kasthuri Rajamani’s three efforts to record a legitimate lift in the women’s heavyweight final were all unsuccessful. India won its first medal in parapowerlifting at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games thanks to Jhandu’s bronze.

“Even Leftover Food Tastes Like Wedding Meal” Former Indian Star Discusses Captain Shreyas Iyer’s First Victory

New Delhi: Following a run of six losses since taking over as captain earlier this year from Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer won his maiden match as T20I skipper on Thursday. The reigning T20 global champions were thrashed 4-0 by England in a five-match series after losing 2-0 to Ireland in a significant shock. But in the first Twenty20 International of a three-match series in Harare, India defeated Zimbabwe by seven wickets, ending Shreyas’s wait. The victory came as a big relief for the under-fire India captain Shreyas, and former cricketer Sadagopan Ramesh warranted the celebrations, considering the recent results.“Many are saying India shouldn’t be so excited for just a win over Zimbabwe. Yet, when you are starving for a victory for so long in T20Is, even leftover food will taste like a wedding



meal. Shreyas Iyer will be relieved, considering India’s fall under his captaincy. He would have reached a point where a win over anyone would have been enough for him,” Ramesh said in a video uploaded on Instagram. Ramesh also praised VVS Laxman for delivering results as India’s interim head coach, especially when the team is losing elsewhere.“VVS Laxman also deserves high praise. India perform

well every time he’s the head coach. Under him, India seem to always whitewash the opponents, even at a time the other teams are constantly whitewashing India otherwise. It got to the point where India just needed a win of any kind and hence their elation after beating even Zimbabwe,” he added.Meanwhile, India’s teenage batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi created history by becoming the youngest player to score

a fifty in men’s international cricket after smashing a 18-ball half-century against Zimbabwe in the first T20I. In the age of 15 years and 118 days, Sooryavanshi achieved his first international fifty, breaking the previous record set by former India great Sachin Tendulkar, who hit his first international fifty against Pakistan in a Test match in Faisalabad in 1989 at the age of 16 years and 213 days.

During the weekend, Delhi’s liquor stores will close by 8 PM due to a CJP protest

New Delhi, July 25: Due to the student demonstrations, liquor stores in Delhi have been told to close by 8 p.m. until the end of the weekend, according to sources on Friday.Many were unpleasantly shocked to have to turn back without drink due to an unexpected early shutdown on Thursday.Otherwise, the city’s liquor stores close at 10 p.m.Until the weekend, the stores will close by 8 p.m. A top Delhi government official stated, “The decision was made based on police inputs that highlighted the current situation due to the ongoing protest at Jantar Mantar.” Over the past three days, Central Delhi has been shaken by protests over the NEET scandal. Under the name of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), students have assembled at Jantar Mantar to demand that Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resign

Would India Consider Using Vaibhav Sooryavanshi As A Bowler Coach Shares Upcoming Plans

Zimbabwe: In the first Twenty20 International, India defeated Zimbabwe by seven wickets thanks to a brilliant half-century from Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, who lived up to the anticipation. The 15-year-old prodigy found his form again in Harare, hitting 50 off just 19 deliveries, following three consecutive dismal performances against England. He became the youngest player to ever register an international half-century with his knock, which included four boundaries and four sixes. With 40 balls remaining, Shreyas Iyer and company completed the mark and seized a 1-0 lead in the three-match series, making India’s chase of 126 simple. With India preparing for the second T20I, stand-in bowling coach Sunil Joshi lauded Sooryavanshi for his match-winning innings and impressive batting display.“I think the first thing is, let’s focus on his batting. He’s been sensational and I’m glad that he has done well. This is a hunting ground for him. He performed well in the U19 World Cup finals here. He had a good performance yesterday as well,” Joshi told reporters in the pre-match press conference, ahead of the second T20I on Saturday.He also revealed that some work will be put in on Sooryavanshi’s bowling skills at the BCCI Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Bengaluru. “Vaibhav has been very comfortable with his batting. Whenever we get time in his bowling, I’ll work with him in the CoE. Whenever we will see him bowling well, we’ll definitely and quickly focus on that.” Addressing comparisons surrounding



emerging seam-bowling all-rounder Suryansh Shedge, Joshi urged patience and persistence with young talents adapting to the demands of international T20 cricket.“Look, we shouldn’t compare. Suryansh is making his place in the Indian team. Hardik (Pandya) has made his place. Shivam (Dube) has also made his place. So, he’s a rising talent. We have to persist with him. He’s working on good things, and good areas. That’s what we want in the T20 format.” Although they haven’t been utilized much at the international level, Joshi has highlighted the spin-bowling ability of top-order hitters like Tilak Varma and Abhishek Sharma. “I think all three are good bowlers and all-rounders, although Abhishek Sharma has improved a lot. “Harsh Dubey has also done well, and the instructors continuously want him to do better every time. Tilak Varma is also among us. He’s actually another optional bowler. We talk to him about concentrating on the fundamentals, giving more dot balls, and not conceding too many runs. Just keep things basic and that’s all.”

CJP Hours Before Third Round of Talks “No Point In Talking If No Resignation”

New Delhi, July 25: The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) has strengthened its position just hours before the third round of negotiations with the Center.Ashutosh Ranka, a spokesman for the CJP, stated on Saturday morning that if the government is not prepared to fire Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, there is no need in continuing the conversation. The resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan cannot be negotiated. There’s no use in continuing the conversation if the government declines,” Ranka wrote on X. The second round of negotiations between CJP officials and Union Ministers JP Nadda and Jitendra Singh took place on Friday afternoon at the Constitution Club.The ministers promised the CJP delega-

tion that they would follow up on their demands, thus the third session of negotiations is scheduled for Saturday afternoon. The CJP has put forth three demands - resignation of Pradhan, a guarantee of no legal action against protesters, and Rs 1 crore compensation for families of students who died by suicide after the NEET paper leak.At Friday’s talks, the Centre agreed in principle to two major demands of the protesters - no legal action against protesting students and compensation. But the resignation of the Education Minister remains a sticking point.“The meeting went on for almost two hours. They had three main demands and five reform suggestions for exams. We have told them that we will meet them again tomorrow

afternoon (Saturday) and tell them about the discussions we had within the government,” Nadda said after Friday’s talks. Government sources claim that Pradhan’s resignation is not imminent, despite the demonstrators’ assertion that it is “non-negotiable.” According to the sources, the administration “stands with the minister” and believes that “resignation is the easiest decision to take”. “People have given us the mandate, and we will deliver,” a government official stated. In the meanwhile, the Center has taken a number of actions over the past two days to address the threat posed by paper leaks. Fast-track courts will be established to hear instances involving document leaks, according to Prime Minister

Narendra Modi.In order to impose harsher penalties and fines, the government is also preparing to alter the statute prohibiting paper leaks. The Centre has replaced the education secretary and has also sacked 47 officials of the testing body, NTA, and has promised a total overhaul soon.Reacting to the Centre’s decision to sack 47 NTA officials, CJP national spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka said the move alone was not enough.“We’ll have to look into a lot of details, but we’re talking about the same thing again. The ultimate accountability is with the education minister, because he is directly responsible for all the paper leaks and the students who committed suicide after the NEET paper leak. He will have to resign,” Ranka said.

Sha'Carri Richardson And Noah Lyles Surge To 100-Meter Victories At US Championships

New York: Sha'Carri Richardson and Noah Lyles surged to 100-meter wins at the US track and field championships on Friday night. The 26-year-old Richardson got off to a slow start but quickly made up time, finishing in 10.77 seconds to breeze past training partner Kayla White and win by 0.13 seconds at Icahn Stadium. "It feels phenomenal to be back in a better place — healthy, mentally, physically, emotionally," Richardson, who battled injuries last year, said in an interview with Peacock after the race. "It shows that hard work pays off." Lyles, the reigning Olympic champion, was trailing early but quickly caught up to the field — and then blew right by them. He matched his personal-best time by finishing in 9.79 seconds. The



32-year-old Ronnie Baker took second and Kenny Bednarek finished third. "I did what I do," Lyles said in a postrace interview. "There's no better rush than

(winning). It's my natural high. That's my vice. Winning, running fast, that feeling of flying, that feeling of being better than everybody in the world — you can't

get that around here, only around me." Lyles celebrated after the race by signing a trading card with his image on it. He planned to give it to a "special fan,"

he said. This was his third national title in the 100. It's been quite a stretch for Lyles, who got married in April. He also recently attended a FIFA World Cup game, where he posed for photos with Jamaican great Usain Bolt. Lyles is gearing up for world championships next season and then the 2028 LA Olympics. "Shoot, I was just playing around this year," Lyles said. "I'm scared for y'all next year. I am real scared. Because you all ain't going to have this nice Noah who goes around and just thinks that it's all lollygagging and good. Next year I've got plans. I got places to run fast." Richardson stuck around for the men's race, sitting on the grass with her spikes off as her partner, Christian Coleman, competed. Coleman was fourth.

SA20 2027: Defending Champions Sunrisers Take On Sourav Ganguly's Pretoria Capitals

Chennai: SA20 announced the full list of fixtures recently, with the defending champions Sunrisers Eastern Cape and Pretoria Capitals battling it out in a repeat of the Season 4 Final when the fifth season of SA20 gets underway on Sunday, 17 January 2027 at St George's Park in Gqeberha. It promises to be a bumper month of non-stop cricket and entertainment, with all six stadiums around the country set to host the world's best T20 stars in action.

There will be four blockbuster Saturday double-headers scheduled throughout the month, starting on 23 January when Durban's Super Giants host Pretoria Capitals at Kingsmead before Joburg Super Kings take on Sunrisers Eastern Cape at the Wanderers later that evening. More double-header mag-



ic follows on 30 January, 6 February and 13 February, giving spectators every reason to make a 'Saturday of it' at cricket venu "Announcing the SA20 fixtures is always a big moment for us, it's the first major milestone ahead of the new season and it means the wheels are in motion for us as we build towards an incredible month of cricket," SA20 League Commissioner, Graeme Smith said. The Newlands will host the Final for the second year running and third since the

League's inception on Sunday, 21 February, with Boland Park in Paarl hosting a Playoff match (Qualifier 1) on 16 February for the first time. Johannesburg and the Wanderers are set for an exhilarating week of Playoff action, with the Eliminator taking place on Wednesday, 17 February and the do-or-die Qualifier 2 on Friday, 19 February. es around the country. A demand to immediately cap him saw him play a series against Bangladesh that October. But, alas, injuries India colours.

Cape Verde's World Cup Sensation Vozinha Is Set To Join Top Chilean Football Club Colo Colo

Santiago: One of the breakout stars at the World Cup has a new home in Chile — Cape Verde goalkeeper Vozinha has signed a contract with Colo Colo, the South American country's biggest soccer team. The 40-year-old Vozinha became one of the most talked-about players at the World Cup with a string of remarkable saves against top teams such as eventual champion Spain and defending champion Argentina. "Welcome. We're waiting for you," the club wrote Friday on its social media pages in a post that quickly sparked excitement not only among Colo Colo supporters but across Chile, where the national team failed this year to qualify for a third consecutive World Cup. Anibal Mosa, president of Blanco y Negro, the company that manages the Chilean club, had confirmed shortly before that the goalkeeper, who had no contract with any team during the World Cup, will arrive in Chile soon. "Vozinha is going to be a Colo Colo player. In the next few days, he will travel to Chile, undergo the necessary medical examinations, and then be presented here at the Estadio Monumental," Mosa told media, referring to Colo Colo's home stadium in Santiago, Chile's capital.

Local media said the contract was for 18 months. Josimar Dias, better known as Vozinha, led Cape Verde, a small island country off the western coast of Africa, to a strong run in the tournament until losing to Lionel Messi's Argentina 3-2 in extra time in the round of 32. Vozinha's appearance and exposure at the World Cup has seen his social media accounts increase from just under 50,000



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for Cape Verde to reach the knockout round. It took a goal from Messi, then a corner kick from the legend midway through the second half of extra time that set up what became the game-winning tally, to save mighty Argentina. The match lasted more than 2½ hours in real time after the David-vs.-Goliath showdown started. Goliath was pushed to the brink, with Vozinha standing tall against the team that entered the tournament ranked No. 1 in the world — and the player regarded by many as the best ever — time and again. "He's a quality, quality goalkeeper. According to Fifa president Gianni Infantino, this World Cup is bigger and better than ever. Indeed, his expansionism will allow him to channel ever-more revenue to the 211 member associations and consolidate his power.

2027 World Test Championship Final At The Oval Scheduled From June 9

London: The Oval will host the 2027 World Test Championship final from June 9 to 13, the International Cricket Council announced on Thursday. England had last year secured the hosting rights for the next three World Test Championship Finals - in 2027, 2029 and 2031 - with home board ECB responsible for selecting the venue for each edition. All the three WTC finals thus far have also been held in the United Kingdom. This will be the second time that The Oval will host the WTC final, having previously staged the showpiece in 2023, when Australia defeated India to lift the mace. With less than a year to go, the current WTC cycle is entering its business end, with nine teams still in the race to secure a place in the final. Australia (87.50 points percentage), having won seven of their eight Tests, sit comfortably at the top of the standings, followed by defending champions South Africa (75%). New Zealand (72.22%) remain within striking distance of the Proteas, while Bangladesh (58.33%) have moved firmly into contention after completing a 2-0 sweep of Pakistan in May. Two-time finalists India are fifth with a points percentage of 48.15% after winning four of their nine Tests, narrowly ahead of Sri Lanka (41.67%). England (24.36%), West Indies (15%) and Pakistan (8.33%) have significant ground to make up if they are to force their way into the final at the Oval. The race to the summit clash will soon start to gather pace over July



and August, with several crucial series set to shape the standings. West Indies kick things off by hosting Pakistan in a two-Test series from July 25, with both sides desperate for valuable points. Australia, meanwhile, will look to tighten their grip on the top spot when they welcome Bangladesh for a two-match series starting on August 13.

Attention then shifts to Asia as Sri Lanka and India lock horns in a two-Test series from August 15, while Pakistan travel to England for a three-Test series spanning August and September. The first three editions of WTC have each produced a different winner. New Zealand lifted the inaugural title in 2021, Australia claimed the mace in 2023 and South Africa ended their long wait for a major ICC trophy with a memorable tri-

umph in 2025. The 53-year-old Dravid, who guided India to the 2024 T20 World Cup title and the 2023 World Test Championship final, is seen as an attractive candidate because of his "meticulous" approach and deep understanding of the game. However, the newspaper did point out that Dravid has "no desire" to coach full-time. "Dravid has no desire to coach full-time, but the England Test job would allow him extended periods at home and the chance to help keep alive his favourite format of the game. England, at the very least, should gauge his interest," according to the report. Among the leading candidates is Zimbabwe great Andy Flower, England's most successful coach in the modern era, having led the side to three Ashes series victories and the No.1 Test ranking.

Mirabai Chanu Leads Indian Weightlifters Chasing Commonwealth Games Gold Rush

Glasgow: Olympic silver medalist Mirabai Chanu will spearhead India's weightlifting campaign at the Commonwealth Games as the team seeks to overcome a doping-hit build-up and extend its dominant record at the quadrennial event. India's medal prospects suffered a setback before the competition when its weightlifting contingent was cut from 16 to 11 after multiple doping violations. The latest casualty was Dilbag Singh (96kg), who was withdrawn earlier this week, further depleting the squad. Despite the disruptions, India remains a dominant force in Commonwealth weightlifting, benefiting from the absence of traditional giants China and North Korea. Indian lifters finished as the best-performing nation in the sport at the 1990, 2002, 2018 and 2022 Commonwealth Games and are the second-most successful country overall with 133 medals, including 46 golds, behind Australia. The team topped the weightlifting medal table at the 2022 Birmingham Games with



10 medals, including three golds and three silvers, and another strong showing is expected in Glasgow. While all 11 Indian lifters are considered capable of reaching the podium, only a handful are realistic gold medal contenders. Chief among them is Chanu, who is expected to retain her Commonwealth crown without any difficulty. The former world champion and Olympic silver medalist owns a personal best total of 205kg (89kg snatch and 116kg clean and jerk), comfortably ahead of the rest of the field in the wom-

en's 48kg category. With the Asian Games less than two months away, however, Chanu said she would avoid unnecessary risks in Glasgow. "Our main aim is the Asian Games, so my performance here will depend on keeping that in mind. I won't be pushing hard here and taking any risks," Chanu told PTI. A successful lift in both the snatch and clean and jerk should be enough for the Manipur lifter to claim a third Commonwealth Games gold and fourth overall Commonwealth medal.

Leading By Example Earns Teammates' Trust, Says West Indies Skipper Roston Chase

New Delhi: West Indies captain Roston Chase believes leadership carries greater weight when it is backed by performances on the field, saying teammates have more belief in a captain who leads from the front as his side prepares for the opening Test against Pakistan. Chase heads into the two-match series on the back of a career-reviving 194 against Sri Lanka in June, ending a wait of more than six years for a Test century. The knock helped West Indies register an innings victory and seal the series, while also ending their winless run in the ongoing World Test Championship cycle. Reflecting on his return to form after a lean run with the bat, Chase said the innings had lifted both his confidence and his standing within the team. "It's a good feeling to find some form after struggling for the past year in the batting department. That knock gave me a lot of confidence, gave me a lot of relief, to know that I can actually come and perform for the team. And as a leader as well - I think when you're a leader that goes out there and leads by example, I think everyone has a different level of respect for you, and they believe in you even more, and they want to play for you even more," he said, as per Cricinfo. "So



it's a good feeling for me. And, as I said, I'm in a good space right now, and the team is in a good space right now. So I'm very glad for that performance," he added. The all-rounder, however, remains uncertain about his bowling availability after injuring his right index finger during the ODI series against New Zealand. Although expected to captain the side against Pakistan, Chase admitted the injury has not fully healed. "Well, we're going to see when I get to the ground tomorrow.

Right now, it's not 100% obviously, but I bowled a few balls yester-

day, and I still have a bit of pain. But as I see it, I still have a bit of time before the first ball is bowled. So hopefully it can have an improvement by then," said Chase. West Indies are eighth in the World Test Championship standings, one place above Pakistan, and Chase said the team has set a realistic target of climbing into the middle of the table. "Yeah, for this championship, we initially set out that we wanted to finish around fifth or sixth in the table. We didn't want to jump too far ahead of ourselves. We wanted to set a realistic goal, and we came up

with that goal," said Chase. "So it's very important for us to come and win this series against Pakistan. And I think once we do that, I think we'll find our way close to sixth or fifth on the table," he added. He further added, "I think it's very important, as I said, for us to come and win this series, to head in the [right] direction in terms of climbing that table. And not only the Test Championship table, but the actual Test ranking table. We want to move up the rankings from down at the bottom of the table. And it's been a while since West Indies cricket have been mid-table, like sixth, fifth. So we really want to get back up there and really want to make the nation proud." The hosts have also included returning batter Kirk McKenzie and uncapped left-arm spinner Joshua Bishop in the squad after impressive domestic performances. Chase urged both players to stick to the approach that earned them their call-ups. "McKenzie had a taste of international cricket before, so he's coming back. But this is going to be Bishop's first time. So we're just looking to give these guys some confidence and rally around them, because, obviously, coming into a new arena and coming back, you can have a bit of nerves," said Chase.