

Mizoram launches home-grown MizoTaxi app to modernise public transport

Aizawl, July 02: The Mizoram Government on Wednesday rolled out MizoTaxi, a locally developed mobile-based taxi aggregation platform, marking a major step towards digitising the State's public transport network while ensuring commuters have access to government-approved fares.

Transport Minister Vanlalhlana formally launched the application at a programme held in the Conference Hall of the Directorate of Transport. Addressing the gathering, he said the initiative represents a landmark achievement in the State's efforts to modernise public transportation through technology.

The minister noted that although app-based taxi services such as Ola, Uber and Rapido have become common across the country, Mizoram now has its own home-grown platform created by local entrepreneurs to meet the specific needs of the people. He described the launch as a matter of pride



for the State. Emphasising the platform's commuter-friendly approach, Vanlalhlana said MizoTaxi will operate using fares fixed by the State Transport Authority (STA), unlike many commercial aggregators that rely on dynamic pricing driven by profit.

The app, he said, is expected to make taxi services more transparent, affordable

and reliable while demonstrating Mizoram's commitment to embracing modern technological solutions. The minister also highlighted the important role played by taxi drivers in the State. He said they are not only an essential part of Mizoram's transport system but also act as its ambassadors, as travellers arriving through Lengpui Airport or Sairang

Railway Station often encounter taxi drivers as their first point of contact with the State.

Stressing the growing importance of digital services, Vanlalhlana observed that technological advancements have reshaped governance and public service delivery, making it necessary for the transport sector to adopt digital platforms.

With commuters increasingly opting for online bookings and cashless payments, and drivers frequently spending long hours waiting for passengers, the new application is expected to bridge the gap by connecting both more efficiently. Transport Director and STA Secretary R. Lalrammawia said the application has been developed to provide a simple and convenient way for passengers to book taxis at fares officially approved by the government. He clarified that the platform will retain six per cent of every fare as a service charge, with a minimum deduction of Rs 5 and a maximum of Rs 10 per trip, solely to cover the application's operational and maintenance costs.

The launch of MizoTaxi comes despite resistance from sections of the taxi community during its initial proposal stage, with both four-wheeler and two-wheeler taxi associations having expressed concerns over the initiative.

Supreme Court rejects plea against HC order on Manipur polls

Imphal, July 02: The Supreme Court on Thursday declined to entertain a petition challenging the Manipur High Court's decision to extend the deadline for conducting panchayat elections in the state until October 16, 2026. A partial working-day bench comprising Justices N. Kotiswar Singh and N.V. Anjaria dismissed the appeal filed by Pheiroijam Heramani and others against the High Court's May 19, 2026 judgment.

The High Court had earlier ruled that logistical and administrative challenges justified the extension, citing difficulties in completing preparatory work within the original timeframe. It emphasized that ensuring free and fair elections required adequate time for updating electoral rolls, training officials, and arranging security measures in sensitive districts. By declining to interfere, the Supreme Court effectively endorsed the High Court's reasoning that procedural readiness must take precedence over rigid timelines. Legal observers noted that the decision reflects the judiciary's cautious approach in balancing constitutional mandates with ground realities in conflict-affected regions.



The ruling also underscores the importance of institutional autonomy in managing local elections, particularly in states facing complex administrative and security concerns. Analysts believe the verdict may serve as a precedent for similar cases where election schedules are contested due to extraordinary circumstances. Political analysts in Manipur observed that the Supreme Court's refusal to intervene may ease administrative pressure on the state government, which has been grappling with law-and-order challenges and resource constraints. They

noted that the verdict reinforces judicial recognition of ground realities in conflict-affected regions, while also highlighting the need for institutional reforms to ensure timely elections in the future. The decision is expected to shape discourse on balancing constitutional mandates with practical governance in states facing prolonged instability. Civil society groups in Manipur have reacted with mixed views to the Supreme Court's stance. While some welcomed the decision as a pragmatic step that allows authorities sufficient time to prepare for credible elections, others criticized the delay as undermining grassroots democracy and weakening local governance structures.

Nagaland seeks Centre's lavender push



Kohima, July 02: Nagaland Minister for Tourism & Higher Education, Temjen Imna Along called on Union Minister Dr Jitenendra Singh on Wednesday to discuss a roadmap for expanding lavender-related agri-entrepreneurship in the state.

Along was accompanied by Advisor for Science & Technology, Küzholüzo (Azo) Nienu.

During the meeting, the Nagaland delegation highlighted the growing success of lavender cultivation in the Himalayan belt under the Union government's "Aroma Mission" and stressed the potential for replicating similar models in Nagaland. They underscored that lavender-based enterprises could generate sustainable livelihoods, empower rural youth, and diversify the state's agricultural economy.

Meghalaya government challenges HC bail order in Raja Raghuvanshi case

Shillong, July 02: The Meghalaya government on Thursday approached the Supreme Court seeking an immediate stay on the bail granted to Sonam Raghuvanshi, the prime accused in the alleged murder of her husband, Raja Raghuvanshi, during their honeymoon in Meghalaya in 2025. A bench comprising Justices M.M. Sundresh and Sheel Nagu was informed by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Meghalaya government, that the High Court had erred in granting bail to the main accused. He requested an urgent hearing of the state's appeal challenging the order.

Mehta argued that the High Court had granted bail on the ground that the reasons for Sonam's arrest had not been properly communicated to her. He contended that the issue stemmed from a typographical error in the arrest documents, where an incorrect legal provision was cited, and maintained that this procedural lapse should not justify bail. He also expressed



concern that the accused could abscond if allowed to remain free. History.

The state's appeal comes just days after the Meghalaya High Court, on June 29, upheld the Shillong trial court's decision to grant bail to Sonam. The High Court ruled that the investigating agency had failed to effectively communicate the grounds of her arrest, thereby violating the procedural safeguards guaranteed to an arrested person. Justice W. Diengdoh, sitting as a single judge, had dismissed the state's challenge to the April 2026 order of the

Additional Deputy Commissioner (Judicial), Shillong. The court held that the flaw in the arrest procedure was a fundamental legal defect rather than a procedural irregularity.

The High Court also observed that the state had not provided repeated references to the arrest records in the Bharamitri Police Station, while Sonam was in custody for several days later in the state of Bihar. The Meghalaya Police have since filed a chargesheet exceeding 700 pages, alleging that Raja's murder was a pre-planned conspiracy orchestrated by Sonam with the help of her

businessman Raja Raghuvanshi, who had travelled to Meghalaya with his wife Sonam for their honeymoon in May 2025. The couple went to Nongriat after checking out of their homestay in Nongriat on June 23. Raja's body was recovered from a gorge near Weisawdong Falls in Nongriat while Sonam was in custody for several days later in the state of Bihar. The Meghalaya Police have since filed a chargesheet exceeding 700 pages, alleging that Raja's murder was a pre-planned conspiracy orchestrated by Sonam with the help of her

alleged lover, Raj Kushwaha, and other co-accused.

The Supreme Court is now expected to examine whether the High Court's interpretation of procedural safeguards outweighs the gravity of the allegations. The outcome will have significant implications for the balance between individual rights and prosecutorial diligence in serious criminal cases. Legal experts note that the Supreme Court's intervention will be closely watched, as it could set an important precedent on how procedural lapses in arrest documents are weighed against the seriousness of charges in criminal trials. The case has already sparked debate among jurists and civil society about balancing individual rights with the need for effective prosecution, especially in matters involving allegations of conspiracy and premeditated murder. Observers believe the ruling may influence future interpretations of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and its application in high-profile cases across the country.

Tripura CM Saha attends oral surgery convention

Agartala, July 02: Tripura Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha is in Bhopal to participate in the 28th AOMSI Mid-Term Convention and the 14th AOMSI Postgraduate Convention (MIDCOMS 2026), a three-day national gathering of oral and maxillofacial surgery experts being held from July 2 to 4.

A renowned oral and maxillofacial surgeon himself, Dr. Saha is attending the conference as the chief guest. The event has brought together leading surgeons, researchers, academicians and postgraduate students from across India as well as international participants to discuss recent advancements in the specialty. Upon his arrival on Thursday, Dr. Saha was welcomed by Madhya Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla at his residence. The convention will feature scientific sessions, workshops, and interactive discussions on cutting-edge surgical techniques, innovations in patient care, and emerging research in oral and maxillofacial surgery. Organizers highlighted that Dr. Saha's presence as both a political leader and a medical professional underscores the importance of bridging healthcare expertise with policymaking, inspiring young practitioners and reinforcing India's growing role in global medical collaboration.

Delegates emphasized that the convention not only provides a platform for sharing clinical expertise but also fosters collaboration between states and institutions in advancing oral healthcare.

ademicians and postgraduate students from across India as well as international participants to discuss recent advancements in the specialty. Upon his arrival on Thursday, Dr. Saha was welcomed by Madhya Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla at his residence. The convention will feature scientific sessions, workshops, and interactive discussions on cutting-edge surgical techniques, innovations in patient care, and emerging research in oral and maxillofacial surgery. Organizers highlighted that Dr. Saha's presence as both a political leader and a medical professional underscores the importance of bridging healthcare expertise with policymaking, inspiring young practitioners and reinforcing India's growing role in global medical collaboration.

Delegates emphasized that the convention not only provides a platform for sharing clinical expertise but also fosters collaboration between states and institutions in advancing oral healthcare.

At the Agartala railway station, DRI confiscates codeine cough syrup valued at Rs 6.54 crore

Agartala, July 02: In a major crackdown on the illegal trafficking of narcotic substances, officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized 55,626 bottles (100 ml each) of codeine-based E-SKuf and Fairdyl cough syrup, valued at approximately Rs 6.54 crore, from a railway parcel van at Agartala Railway Station. One person has been arrested in connection with the case.

An intelligence source told India Today NE that the contraband was recovered from VPH No. NR 094527, which had been booked from Katihar to Agartala as general goods under PW Bill No. 198284 dated June 25, 2026. The parcel van arrived at Agartala Railway Station on June 30 and was later



placed on Line No. 13 for unloading. "Acting on specific intelligence received from the Senior Intelligence Officer of the DRI, Agartala Regional Unit, a joint examination of the consignment was carried out on July 1 in the presence of officials from the DRI, Railway Protection Force (RPF), SIB, RPSE, Assam Rifles and railway authorities," said an official. During the unloading

process, officials found the parcel van carrying general goods along with 89 iron drums. Upon inspection, 80 drums were found to contain white-coloured powder concealing 55,626 bottles of codeine-based E-SKuf and Fairdyl cough syrup, while the remaining nine drums contained only the white powder. The search, counting and seizure operation continued through the night and concluded at around 7 a.m.

on July 2.

The DRI arrested Subrata Deb, 34, manager of B.K. Enterprise, Agartala, who had allegedly arrived at the railway station to receive the consignment. He is a resident of Bathakha village under Kalyanpur Police Station in Tripura's Khowai district.

Officials said the consignment had been booked from Katihar by a consignee identified in the parcel records in the name of Chandan Verman of Agartala.

The seized cough syrup is estimated to be worth Rs 6,54,43,989 in the illicit market. The DRI, Agartala Regional Unit, has registered a case, and further investigation is underway to trace the network involved in the trafficking of the contraband.

Amit Shah reviews panel's work on India's demographic changes

Agency: A high-level committee set up by the Centre to study demographic changes across the country met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Wednesday and briefed him on its plan to begin field visits to states and Union Territories in the coming weeks.

According to an official statement, the committee, chaired by retired Justice Prakash Prabhakar Navlekar, informed the home minister that it would soon start visiting different states and UTs to gather first-hand information on demographic changes at the ground level. The committee members said they have prepared a detailed questionnaire that will be sent to states and Union Territories in advance.

The exercise is aimed at collecting relevant information before the visits so that discussions with local authorities and stakeholders can be more focused, meaningful and interactive. Appreciating the committee's approach, Amit Shah directed Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan to extend all possible support to the panel in its day-to-day work as well



as during its visits across the country. He also advised the committee to submit its recommendations at the earliest.

The committee was constituted by the Centre following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of the "High-powered Demography Mission" during his Independence Day address on August 15, 2025. The mission aims to study demographic changes arising from illegal immigration and other abnormal reasons and recommend suitable measures to address the issue.

Besides Justice Navlekar, the committee

includes Census Commissioner Mrityunjay Kumar Narayan and three distinguished members — Durga Shankar Mishra, Balaji Srivastava and Shamika Ravi. According to the government, the committee has been tasked with carrying out a scientific assessment of demographic changes occurring in different parts of the country due to illegal immigration and other abnormal reasons. It will analyse the factors behind these changes and recommend policy, legislative and administrative measures to address the challenges identified through its study.

Sikkim cm reaffirms govt's commitment to strengthening state's dairy sector

Gangtok, Jun 02: Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Wednesday recalled the invaluable contribution of dairy farmers and milk producers towards the socio-economic development of the State, while reaffirming the government's commitment to strengthen the dairy sector. Attending the Gwala Day celebration, organised by the Sikkim Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Limited at the Town Hall in Namchi, Tamang congratulated the entire fraternity of the Sikkim Milk Union on the occasion. The Chief Minister expressed immense satisfaction over the remarkable growth of Gwala Diwas since its inception in 2021, stating that the celebration has evolved into a significant platform to honour the invaluable contributions of dairy farmers, milk producers, and the Gwala (herder) community, whose hard work continues

to strengthen Sikkim's rural economy and dairy sector. He appreciated the dedicated efforts of the Sikkim Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Limited, cooperative societies and dairy farmers in maintaining quality standards and ensuring consistent growth in milk production. Referring to the launch of new dairy products, he stated that value addition and product diversification would not only create new market opportunities but also enhance the identity and competitiveness of Sikkim's dairy products across the region. He also urged the younger generation to view dairy farming as a promising entrepreneurial venture and called upon all stakeholders to work collectively towards achieving self-reliance, food security and inclusive rural development.

Prof. Arun Mohan Sherry Appointed Director of IIM Shillong

Shillong, Jun 02: President Droupadi Murmu has appointed Prof. (Dr.) Arun Mohan Sherry, the founding Director of the Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) Lucknow, as the new Director of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Shillong. An accomplished academic and institution builder, Prof. Sherry brings more than 28 years of experience in higher education, research, academic leadership and institutional



administration. He is widely recognised for his contributions to technology-driven education and digital

transformation initiatives. Prof. Sherry completed his M.Sc. with a gold medal, earned his M.Tech. in

Computer Science from IIT Kharagpur, and later obtained a Ph.D. During his distinguished career, he has received several prestigious honours, including the Anand Swarup Bhatnagar Gold Medal, the Indian Icon Award (2010), and the Rabindranath Tagore Samman (2011). His appointment is expected to further strengthen IIM Shillong's focus on academic excellence, innovation and technology-led management education.

Over 1.19 lakh forms distributed first day of SIR exercise



Meghalaya recorded a strong start to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, with more than 1.19 lakh enumeration forms distributed on the first day of the exercise, covering 5.07 per cent of the state's electorate, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) BDR Tiwari said on July 1.

Gangtok, Jun 02: Over 1.19 lakh enumeration forms were distributed across Meghalaya on the first day of the SIR exercise, covering over five per cent of the state's electorate, Chief Electoral Officer BDR Tiwari said. A total of 1,19,129 enumeration forms were distributed by booth-level officers (BLOs) during the house-to-house campaign launched on June 30, accounting for 5.07 per cent of the state's 23,49,645 electors, Tiwari said. "The main objective of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) is to ensure that no eligible citizen is left out, while no ineligible person is included in the electoral rolls," he said. The house-to-house verification under the SIR of electoral rolls is currently underway across Meghalaya.

A total of 1,021 Booth Level Officers (BLOs) will visit households across all 1,021 polling stations in East Khasi Hills district until July 29 and distribute pre-filled self-enumeration forms to voters whose names are already included in the 2025 electoral roll, informed East Khasi Hills Deputy Commissioner Abhilash Baranwal. No documents are required at the initial stage, and electors only need to fill and return the self-enumeration forms. Additional documents will be sought only in cases requiring clarification, and voters will be given sufficient time to submit them. The door-to-door survey will be followed by publication of the draft electoral roll on August 5th. Voters can file claims and objections from August 5 to September 4.

Tripura CM meets Nitin Gadkari to expedite NH projects

Agartala, Jun 02: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Wednesday held a meeting with the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, in New Delhi to discuss the progress of National Highway projects and future road infrastructure development in the State. The meeting focused on expediting ongoing National Highway projects, strengthening maintenance of existing road infrastructure, and undertaking new projects to improve connectivity within Tripura and with neighbouring States. "Met with Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari Ji, in New Delhi. We had a fruitful discussion on expediting ongoing National Highway projects in Tripura and advancing new road infrastructure initiatives to further strengthen connectivity," Saha said. He expressed his grati-



tude to Gadkari for his continued support and commitment towards the development of Tripura's road network, which has increased from 198 km in 2014 to 923 km in 2026. He has raised and discussed several important decisions for implementation in a time-bound manner, including the alignment for the 4-laning of the Churaibari (North District)-Champaknagar (West District) stretch of NH-08 (130 km) has been

approved by the Ministry in consultation with the State Government. The proposed greenfield four-lane highway will run parallel to the railway line and include tunnels through the Atharamura and Longtharai hills ranges. Land acquisition for the project will commence shortly. The CM said that the State Government will hand over 90% of the required land and complete utility shifting for the remaining Ranirbazar-ISBT (Chandrapur) under

West District section of NH-08 by August 2026. Thereafter, NHIDCL will float the tender for construction. "The Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the 4-laning of the Agartala-Udaipur section of NH-08 is in its final stage, considering the substantial increase in traffic movement, tourism, and pilgrimage activities. The alignment is expected to be finalized by August 2026, following which land acquisition will begin

Fresh violence Nearly 30 gutted in Kamjong

Agartala, Jun 02: Around 30 houses were set ablaze in fresh violence near the India-Myanmar border in Manipur's Kamjong district on Wednesday, police and local sources said. According to police and local sources, about 15 abandoned houses belonging to Kuki families were torched at Phaimol village, located near Border Pillar No. 113, around 12:30pm. Phaimol is among several villages near the international border that were vacated following the escalation of the Naga-Kuki conflict in neighbouring Ukhrul district earlier this year. Residents Police said suo motu cases would be registered and a thorough investigation launched into the latest incidents of arson.

In separate statements, two Kuki organisations — the Committee on Tribal Unity and the Kuki CSO (Civil Society Organisation) Working Committee — condemned the alleged torching of about 20 houses in Phaimol Kuki village.

Nagaland plans to expand lavender cultivation, strengthen science and technology partnership

Imphal, Jun 01: Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan visited Keyi Panyor district in Arunachal Pradesh on Tuesday, July 1 to inspect and assess the extensive damage caused by recent flash floods and landslides triggered by a cloudburst. The visit was accompanied by Union Minister Kiren Rijiju and Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu as part of a coordinated review of the disaster-affected areas.

The delegation conducted both aerial and ground surveys to evaluate the scale of destruction. The team visited severely impacted locations, including the NEEPCO colony at Possa and relief camps established for affected residents.

The natural disaster, which struck on June 23 following a cloudburst, caused widespread damage to residential structures, agricultural land and public infrastructure. Connectivity along National Highway-13 was disrupted, while several residential quarters were destroyed. During the visit, Minister Chouhan interacted with displaced families and reviewed ongoing relief measures. He assured affected residents of full support from the Central Government for relief, rehabilitation and restoration efforts. Officials stated that a comprehensive assessment of losses is underway to facilitate structured recovery measures, with coordinated assistance to be provided jointly by the Centre and the Arunachal Pradesh Government.

KSU engages in discussions regarding implementation of ILP with Chief Minister

Shillong, Jun 02: Frustrated over delays in laws meant to check influx, the Khasi Students' Union (KSU) today told Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma that it would "use its own wisdom" to enforce them if the government fails to act, KSU president Raymond Kharjana said after a meeting of the union's central executive body with the Chief Minister, reports Newmai News Network.

The meeting focused on the union's 20-point charter of demands, which had been submitted earlier in both online and offline modes.

"The discussion was quite lengthy. We have made our stand clear regarding the implementation of the Inner Line Permit," Kharjana said, adding that the KSU raised the issue of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) first.

Stating that the Chief Minister informed the delegation that the proposal is pending with the Centre, he said,

"The Chief Minister said the matter is pending before the Central government and assured us that the state government will continue to press the Centre for its immediate implementation in Meghalaya," he said.

On the Meghalaya Residents Safety and Security Act (MRSSA), 2016, Kharjana said the union opposed attempts to dilute its provisions.

"We discussed the issue related to the MRSSA. In the past few days, there have been attempts to convert



the facilitation centre, or entry-exit point, into a food court. We have made our stand clear on this issue.

We will not allow any organisation or the government to convert the facilitation centre into a food court," he said.

He said the law has not been enforced despite being passed eight years ago.

"There has been a long delay in its implementation. The Chief Minister expressed certain difficulties, saying the matter conflicts with Central laws and is pending the Governor's assent," Kharjana said.

The union, however, reiterated its demand for implementation.

"We have made it clear that we want the government to fully implement the entry-exit points mandated under the MRSSA," he said.

"To implement the MRSSA, entry-exit points are needed to check

the unabated influx into the state. Without entry-exit points, implementing the MRSSA is meaningless," Kharjana added. Kharjana further stated that the Meghalaya Identification, Registration (Safety and Security) of Migrant Workers Act, 2020, also came up for discussion. "In the past few years, the union has submitted suggestions to incorporate necessary provisions to strengthen the Act. Unfortunately, we are yet to see its full implementation," Kharjana said.

He said the Chief Minister responded positively to one of the union's key suggestions.

"The Chief Minister assured us that the government will take steps to implement the Act. Our suggestion was simple, ensure police verification of migrant workers coming to work in the state. The government has accepted this, and I hope we will see its

effective implementation," he said.

Kharjana said the union sees a pattern of inaction across all three laws.

"Till date, we have not seen any law to prevent the unabated flow of influx into the state. If we talk about the ILP, the reply is that the matter is pending with the Centre. If we talk about the MRSSA, we get the same response. If we talk about the Migrant Workers Act, it is similar," he said. Issuing a warning, Kharjana said, "We want to send a clear message. If the government cannot implement these laws to safeguard

the rights and identity of the indigenous community, the union will be compelled to implement these laws on its own to protect the interests of the indigenous community." He said the Chief Minister gave assurances on some issues, while others require further discussion. "There are issues which the Chief Minister assured to resolve in the coming days and weeks, and there are issues that need further discussion," he said. On the question of setting a deadline, Kharjana said the time for ultimatums is over. "These are long-pending demands. It is not a question of giving an ultimatum anymore. It is simple. If you cannot implement these laws, the union will have no other option but to use its own wisdom on how to implement them. At that time, you cannot say the union is indulging in illegal activities," he said.

UNLF(P) militants shifted from unauthorised camp

Imphal, Jun 02: Several cadres of a proscribed militant outfit, who had been staying at an unauthorised camp in Manipur's Imphal West district, were relocated to a designated camp on Wednesday, officials said.

The 294 battalion of the United National Liberation Front (Pambei) based at Phayeng in Imphal West district has been shifted to a different location, officials said. The number of cadres relocated was not disclosed officially, though local people claimed that around 100 members of the UNLF lived in that camp. The Meitei outfit is the oldest Imphal valley-based armed group in the state which signed a peace agreement in 2023.

Personnel of state forces, including 10th Indian Reserve Battalion and 5th Manipur Rifles, have also been moved to Phayeng to provide security in the area, they said. The camp at Phayeng was established in 2023 after ethnic violence broke out in the state. In 2023 and 2024, Phayeng witnessed intense gunfights with militants from neighbouring Kuki Zo majority Kangpokpi district, leading to multiple deaths and injuries on both sides.

The relocation came a day after nearly 80 cadres of the same outfit were also moved from another unauthorised camp at Nongshum in Imphal East district.

However, it was also not declared where the militants were shifted. The outfit has

at least one designated camp at Kakching Khunou in Kakching district. Meanwhile, several people at Phayeng and nearby areas expressed anxiety over the relocation, stating that the UNLF (P) camp had provided them with a sense of security and confidence.

Locals had previously appealed to the authorities to allow the UNLF(P) camp in Phayeng to ensure adequate security measures in the area.

UNLF(P) signed a peace pact with the Centre in 2023, but their cadres continue to be arrested for unlawful activities, including alleged involvement in extortion and sale of arms.

Ethnic clashes between the Meitei and Kuki communities have left at least 260 people dead and thousands of residents homeless since May 2023.

Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley, while tribals, which include Nagas and Kukis, constitute 40 per cent and reside mainly in the hill districts.

President's rule was imposed in the state on February 13, 2025, after the BJP-led government headed by N Biren Singh resigned on February 9, following months of ethnic violence. It was revoked on February 4 this year, hours before the formation of a new state government with BJP leader Y Khemchand Singh as the chief minister.

Meghalaya reconstitutes panels for Assam border settlement

Imphal, Jun 02: The Meghalaya government has reconstituted three regional committees to examine the present status of the remaining six 'areas of differences' with Assam.

Chief Minister Conrad Sangma said the reconstitution of the regional committees was necessitated by the recent cabinet reshuffle in order to maintain established protocols.

He also informed that the inter-state border talks will resume once the regional committees are reconsti-

tuted by the Assam government. Sangma affirmed that the governments of both states are committed to resolving the remaining disputes through dialogue.

Chief Minister said. The second phase of the talks is expected to sort the six areas of difference which include areas of differences over Block I, Psir-Khanduli in West Jaintia Hills district. Block II, Borduar, Nongwah-Mawtamur and Deshdoomreah in Ri-Bhoi district and Langpih in West Khasi Hills district.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister in-charge Home Prestone

Tynsong will head the regional committee for Ri-Bhoi district to examine the disputed Block-II area. Power Minister Metbah Lyngdoh will lead the panel for Langpih, while Deputy Chief Minister in-charge Urban Affairs Sniawbhalang Dhar will head the committee for the West Jaintia Hills sector, covering Block-I and Psir-Khanduli, including the Lapan-gap-Mukroh area.

Central Review Assesses Churachandpur District’s Development Goals



Imphal, Jul 02: In order to expedite grassroots development and simplify the provision of public services, the Central Government has carried out a thorough assessment of the Aspirational District Program in the Churachandpur district of Manipur. At the Mini Secretariat in Churachandpur, Ganesh Nagaranjan, Deputy Secretary in the Union Ministry

of Tribal Affairs, oversaw the high-level evaluation. In particular, 39 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were used to assess the region’s socioeconomic progress. Infrastructure, education, health and nutrition, agriculture, water resources, financial inclusion, and skill development are the five fundamental theme areas covered by these basic measures. In

order to expedite project timeframes and ensure transparency, Nagaranjan urged line departments to strengthen interdepartmental coordination. In order to guarantee effective public fund deployment, he also gave administrative staff instructions to spot execution bottlenecks early. The construction of a special medical facility for women and children in Lamka South was examined by the visiting central official after the review. Importantly, Lamka South and Tuibong, two blocks in Churachandpur, have both previously received national recognition from NITI Aayog for their outstanding performance under the flagship development initiative.

Mizoram ranks third in the country’s HPV vaccination campaign



Aizawl, Jul 02: In the nationwide deployment of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination campaign, Mizoram has achieved third place; health officials are now aiming for the top spot. Health Minister Lalrinpuui commended the state’s success since the prime minister started the campaign on February 28 while speaking at the National Immunization Day Pulse Polio campaign launch in Aizawl.

She emphasized that Mizoram’s small population—roughly 1.6 million—allows for extremely effective healthcare delivery. The southern area of Lunglei, which vaccinated 1,326 teenage girls over the course of a 90-day campaign, exceeded its initial goal and achieved an astounding 107% coverage, demonstrating remarkable achievement. The minister emphasized the importance of staying watchful against polio in addition to commemorating the HPV milestone. Additional Secretary Lalnunmawii Ralte cautioned about possible cross-border transmission from neighboring countries where instances are still being found, even though India has maintained its polio-free status since 2014. The state has started a thorough Pulse Polio campaign throughout all 11 districts to protect the area. In order to guarantee complete coverage, the government has established 1,430 specialized vaccination booths with the goal of immunizing over 100,000 children under the age of five.

Delhi HC overturns a former major general’s conviction in an asset case



New Delhi, Jul 02: The Delhi High Court overturned the conviction of former Major General Anand Kumar Kapur in a disproportionate assets case, criticizing the trial court for hastily closing his defense evidence without allowing sufficient opportunity for him to present all witnesses. Justice Jasmeet Singh’s detailed 117-page ruling highlighted significant flaws in the prosecution’s sanctioning process by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), noting that the sanctioning authority had only been provided with selective investigative materials. The court pointed out that the trial court prioritized adhering to timelines over ensuring a fair trial, leading to prejudice against the defense.

Kapur, whose conviction in 2016 under the Prevention of Corruption Act resulted in one year of imprisonment and asset confiscation, contended that the investigation was flawed and the sanction rushed, claiming denial of a fair trial due to the closing of his evidence during a lawyers’ strike. The CBI maintained that due process was followed and adequate opportunities were provided to Kapur, arguing that the trial was compliant with Supreme Court directives.

Abuse of toddlers, five nannies hired, temporary closure of the facility: Inside the childcare case in Bengaluru

Bengaluru, Jul 02: After videos purportedly showing toddlers being mistreated by caregivers appeared online, Capgemini temporarily closed its daycare center at its Bengaluru site. Following the release of the films, Capgemini released a statement stating that “the health, safety, and well-being of its employees and their family members is Capgemini’s foremost priority.” In order to help the relevant authorities establish the facts, we are completely collaborating with them. We are temporarily closing the daycare center on the Bengaluru campus as a precaution. This comes after five women who work at the daycare center on the premises of an IT company were charged on Wednesday with allegedly abusing children entrusted to their care, according to police. The claimed occurrences occurred at the daycare center in the Brookefield neighbor-

hood of Bengaluru, where IT firm employees leave their small children while at work. Videos allegedly depicting the abuse appeared on WhatsApp and were reported to the Child Helpline, which led to police action, which made the matter public on Monday. Police claim that the videos depict toddlers sobbing as caregivers physically abuse and neglect them. In addition to questioning the accused, investigators are confirming the veracity of the video, including when the crimes occurred and whether other kids might have been abused in a similar manner. Additional investigation is in progress, but no arrests have been made thus far. According to the lawsuit, children between the ages of two and three were abused in various ways by the caregivers. The films allegedly depict the ladies intimidating babies



when they cried or caused trouble, according to the authorities. The complaint also claims that the kids were kept in restrooms, forced to sit in a western-style toilet, sprayed with water in their mouths using a toilet jet spray, placed inside a front-loading washing machine, and coerced into keeping quiet. Police have filed a case against the

five women under the applicable provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act based on the complaint. While detectives continue to review the tapes and collect evidence to ascertain the complete scope of the alleged abuse, a senior police officer stated that the accused are now being questioned.

Monsoon Arrives in Delhi Five Days Later

New Delhi, Jul 02: Five days after its typical start date of June 27, the Southwest Monsoon reached Delhi on Thursday, delivering heavy rain to many areas of the city. The monsoon has come in July for the first time since 2021, according to the India Meteorological Department, or IMD. On July 13, 2021, the monsoon arrived. Over the past five years, Delhi has experienced the southwest monsoon on June 29 in 2025, June 28 in 2024, June 25 in 2023, and June 30 in 2022. After days of hot and muggy weather, people were relieved by sporadic rains and gentle winds that were recorded from various parts of the city in the morning. According to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the city’s air quality was classified as “satisfactory,” with the Air Quality Index (AQI) at 100 at 9 am. The CPCB classifies an AQI between 0 and 50 as “good,” 51 to 100 as “satisfactory,” 101 to 200 as “moderate,” 201 to 300 as “poor,” 301 to 400 as “very poor,” and 401 to 500 as “severe.” Over several areas of Delhi, the weather office has predicted thunderstorms and rain during the day, with mostly gloomy skies. The monsoon is predicted to move deeper into a number of regions in North India in the upcoming days, according to IMD authorities. Due to the anticipated severe rains, a yellow alert has been issued for portions of western and central India.

The governor of Arunachal Pradesh, congratulates the new army chief

Itanagar, Jul 02: Lt Gen (Retd) K. T. Parnaik, the governor of Arunachal Pradesh, congratulated General Dhiraj Seth on taking over as the 31st Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) on Wednesday. He expressed confidence that the Indian Army will continue to protect the nation’s territorial integrity and improve its operational readiness under his leadership. On behalf of the State’s citizens, the Governor sent his best wishes and expressed confidence that, under General Seth’s leadership, the Indian Army will continue to uphold its great traditions of professionalism, bravery, and steadfast dedication to the country. According to Parnaik, new aspects of warfare and the changing security landscape necessitate creativity, flexibility, and strategic vision. He expressed optimism that the Army would keep improving its skills in order to successfully confront upcoming challenges with excellence and dedication. The Governor expressed his confidence that the Indian Army would further improve its operational preparedness, safeguard the nation’s territorial integrity, and secure every inch of its boundaries under General Seth’s leadership, stating that the country had great faith and pride in its armed services. Additionally, the governor expressed hope that prosperity, peace, and stability would persist throughout the nation, especially in strategically significant frontier areas like Arunachal Pradesh.

On this day in 1972, India signed the Simla Agreement

New Delhi, Jul 02: In an effort to undo the effects of the 1971 war, India and Pakistan signed the Simla Agreement, also known as the Shimla Agreement, on July 2, 1972. The agreement, which recognizes the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, is a comprehensive framework for friendly relations between India and Pakistan. However, there has been ongoing discussion about how to interpret the pact ever since then-prime minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistani president Zulfikar Ali Bhutto signed it. Pakistan believes that different UN resolutions should be used to resolve the Kashmir problem. India claims that any alternative strategy is unsuitable since the Shimla Agreement ex-



pressly calls for a bilateral settlement of all disagreements between the parties. But this isn’t the complete picture. Although treaties are defined by their wording, it is important to consider how the states

that signed them behave and uphold their ideals. Regarding Pakistan, the country’s media warfare and cross-border terrorism have caused more harm than specific Shimla Agreement clauses. The basis of

the entire agreement has been steadily undermined. The Shimla Agreement envisioned more than just bilateral conflict resolution. Furthermore, both sides committed to fulfilling specific duties in order to fos-

ter amicable relations. As a result, they promised not to engage in any activities on their territory that may jeopardize amicable relations. Additionally, they pledged to oppose propaganda and support information sharing that advances cordial ties. Following the 14-day conflict in 1971, the aforementioned commitments were required to rebuild trust between the nations. Unfortunately, Pakistan’s behavior has completely changed during the last few decades. Lashkar-e-Taiba, responsible for the 2008 Mumbai attacks, is a Pakistan-based terrorist organization recognized as such by the United Nations. Another group, Jaish-e-Mohammed, also operates from Pakistan. From 2018

to 2022, Pakistan was blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force for inadequacies in addressing terror financing. On April 22, 2025, The Resistance Front, a proxy of Lashkar-e-Taiba, killed 26 tourists in Jammu and Kashmir. The U.S. labeled the organization a terrorist group, and India’s National Investigation Agency traced the conspiracy to Pakistan. In retaliation, India launched Operation Sindoor in May 2025 against terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Pakistan responded with disinformation campaigns, claiming attacks against Indian military and infrastructure, despite these actions violating the Shimla Agreement aimed at fostering

bilateral relations. Pakistan’s attempts to internationalize the Kashmir issue reveal contradictions, particularly in its diplomatic reliance on the Shimla Agreement while simultaneously engaging the UN for support. This selective implementation indicates a lack of full commitment. India’s suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty post the Pahalgam terror attack reflects a principle that cooperation is contingent on treaty compliance. The ongoing terrorist activities linked to Pakistan have undermined the Shimla Agreement more than legal disputes, suggesting that its irrelevance stems from Pakistan’s breach of its foundational spirit rather than the interpretations of its terms.

Delhi Police Bust ISI-Linked Terror Module with 4 Arrests, 2 Pistols, and 5 Phones



New Delhi, Jul 02: Four guys from Delhi and Punjab were detained by Delhi Police’s Special Cell on Thursday for planning a terror strike in the nation’s capital at the request of ISI handler Shahzad Bhatti, who is located in Pakistan. According to officials, the suspects were entrusted with carrying out terror-related actions in Delhi and were allegedly working under the orders of handlers over the border. Shubdeep Singh (23), Gurjant Singh (22), Sajjan Singh (28), and Gaganpreet (24) are the four accused. One of them was captured from Delhi, and the other three are from Punjab. Police

found five cell phones, nine live rounds, and two foreign-made handguns in their possession during the operation. Police claim that specific intelligence regarding the group’s actions led to the arrests. Under the direction of ACP Vivek Kumar Tyagi, a Special Cell team headed by Inspectors Satish Rana and Ashok carried out synchronized searches at many places in Delhi and Punjab in response to the intelligence. Shubdeep Singh’s arrest in Amritsar, Punjab, marked the first breakthrough. Police said they found several cell phones, live ammunition, and a foreign-made handgun on him. Police detained his associates, Gurjant Singh and Sajjan Singh, from various locations in Punjab after questioning him and conducting an investigation. On April 24, Gaganpreet, the fourth suspect, was captured in Delhi. The accused

allegedly revealed under prolonged questioning that they had regularly communicated with Pakistani handlers via international phone numbers in order to avoid being watched by Indian authorities. The organization is accused of receiving shipments of weapons and drugs via drones across the international border. One suspect, Gaganpreet, allegedly conducted reconnaissance in Delhi for a planned attack. Shubdeep Singh, with a history of narcotics-related arrests, is implicated in receiving drone deliveries. Gurjant and Sajjan Singh, also involved, have previous charges under the NDPS Act. Gaganpreet reportedly communicated with Pakistani handlers online for instructions on documenting police and sensitive sites. Legal action has been initiated under the BNS and Arms Act.

Tinnu’s Rs.1 lakh Analyzing Ram Temple contribution theft figures in relation to Avinash Shukla’s Rs. 20 lakh



Ayodhya, Jul 02: As part of their investigation into the suspected misappropriation of donations at the Ram Temple, the Ayodhya Police have carried out more raids. Avinash Shukla was found to have ₹20 lakh after a thorough investigation of the accused Lavkush Mishra’s home. After authorities discovered that one of the main suspects, Mishra, had made a significant real

estate transaction, the police are now concentrating on the assets of the eight incarcerated suspects. An earlier article stated that the land parcel he purchased in the Sahadatganj region of Ayodhya was for ₹23 lakh. Samajwadi Party politician Tej Narayan “Pawan” Pandey said that donations ranging from ₹5 crore to ₹7.5 crore had been embezzled from temple of-

ferings, which led to the controversy’s revelation on June 7. The police have already collected ₹79.85 lakh in cash from seven of the eight suspects while they investigate the roles of the accused and the methods they utilized for the embezzlement. Anukalp Mishra, Lavkush Mishra, Ram Shankar Yadav “Tinnu,” Manish Yadav, Subhash Srivastava, Avinash Shukla, and Karunesh Pandey are among the accused who have been taken into custody. According to police, cash recoveries from various accused include: ₹20.40 lakh from Avinash Shukla, ₹18.07 lakh from Karunesh Pandey, ₹16.82 lakh from Anukalp Mishra, ₹14.25 lakh from Lavkush Mishra, ₹7.32 lakh from Rama Shankar Mishra, ₹2 lakh from Manish Yadav, and ₹1 lakh from Ram Shankar Yadav. No recovery was reported from the eighth accused, Subhash

Srivastava. Notably, ₹12 lakh was recovered from Shukla’s room, with an additional ₹8.4 lakh returned by his brother to the Trust last week. According to an officer who wished to remain anonymous, foreign currency worth between \$900 and \$1000 was also found on Avinash Shukla. Anukalp and Lavkush Mishra, two of those detained, are related to trust member Anil Mishra, who resigned last week. Manish Yadav is connected to Ram Shankar Yadav, a trust general secretary Champat Rai’s assistant. Last week, Rai also quit. Six of the eight detained suspects worked for a Varanasi security company that supplied labor for the Ayodhya temple’s cash counting procedure. According to the ministry of corporate affairs website, Sainik Security Services was incorporated in December 2017 with a paid-up capital of ₹1

lakh and an address registered in Varanasi. The State Bank of India (SBI) Naya Ghat Branch employed this security company to count cash. The branch suggested 19 names for the cash-counting crew, according to Gaurav Singh, director and owner of Sainik Security Services. The owner claims that the company hired 22 employees and dispatched them to the SBI office in Ayodhya for housekeeping duties, but the agency has denied any involvement in the suspected money laundering. According to Gaurav, the agency was no longer involved in allocating their responsibilities. “We were just hired to supply housekeeping personnel to the Ayodhya branch of SBI. The owner stated, “The bank should explain what these employees ultimately did and why.”

North East Chronicle

JULY 03 2026 VOL 02 NO. 129



The Waiting Room of Government

Every citizen has experienced it at some point—a file awaiting approval, an application under process, or a service delayed by procedural hurdles. While regulations are essential, excessive delays can undermine public confidence in institutions.

Time lost in administrative processes has real consequences. Students miss admissions, businesses postpone investments, and

families wait for services that directly affect their lives.

Digital governance has improved efficiency in many sectors, but technology alone cannot eliminate delays without accountability and streamlined procedures.

The quality of governance is measured not only by the policies it announces, but by the speed and reliability with which it delivers them.

Corner Store Challenge

Neighbourhood grocery stores have long been the backbone of India's retail economy, providing affordable goods, personalised service, and convenient access to daily essentials. However, the rapid expansion of e-commerce and quick-commerce platforms has transformed consumer behaviour and created unprecedented challenges for these traditional businesses.

The recent decision of the Khasi Hills Autonomous Council to block the entry of a major quick-commerce company in order to protect more than 4,000 local grocery shops has once again highlighted the growing debate over balancing technological progress with the protection of livelihoods.

While such measures may offer temporary relief, they cannot shield neighbourhood stores from the long-term transformation of the retail landscape. Consumers increasingly prefer the convenience of doorstep delivery, digital payments, and access to a wider variety of products, making digital adaptation an urgent necessity for traditional retailers.

er preferences, maintain extensive inventories, and optimise delivery operations. Small grocery stores continue to face limitations in technology, financial resources, and storage capacity, making it difficult to match the speed and product variety offered by digital platforms.

To remain competitive, neighbourhood stores must adopt innovative business strategies that go beyond digital onboarding. Better inventory planning, direct procurement from manufacturers, efficient stock replenishment, bundled product offers, and collaboration with nearby retailers can improve profitability while reducing operational costs.

Hyperlocal delivery has become another important factor influencing customer preferences, yet employing delivery personnel represents a significant investment for small businesses. The viability of such services depends on whether increased sales generated through digital platforms can offset these additional expenses.

Despite these challenges, neighbourhood grocery stores continue to possess unique strengths that digital competitors struggle to replicate. Their close relationships with customers, personalised service, understanding of local preferences, and ability to provide goods on interest-free credit remain valuable advantages, particularly for families that rely on flexible purchasing arrangements.

By combining these traditional strengths with digital tools and efficient delivery systems, local grocery stores can create a hybrid business model capable of competing in the changing retail environment. Rather than depending solely on protectionist measures, long-term sustainability will require innovation, adaptability, and strategic use of technology.

Government support, affordable digital infrastructure, and skill development programmes will further strengthen small retailers and help them remain competitive in an increasingly technology-driven marketplace.

The future of neighbourhood grocery stores lies not in resisting digital transformation but in embracing it while preserving the trust and community relationships that have defined them for generations.

Power and Patronage: Understanding Political Defections in West Bengal

The transformation of political loyalties after a change in government has long been one of the defining features of democratic politics in India. Whenever a dominant political force loses power, it is often followed by a rapid migration of workers, local leaders, and influential community figures to the victorious party. While such political realignments are not unique to any particular state, the phenomenon assumes a much deeper significance in West Bengal because politics has historically penetrated almost every aspect of social life. The victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 2026 West Bengal Assembly election not only marked a historic electoral shift but also triggered an unprecedented wave of political defections.

Individuals who had until recently been associated with the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC) suddenly appeared wrapped in saffron colours, proclaiming unwavering loyalty to the BJP. This remarkable change raises important questions about political commitment, ideological consistency, governance, and the future of democratic culture in the state.

The electoral journey in several constituencies demonstrated that the BJP's victory was built not merely on organisational strength but on the silent determination of ordinary voters who had endured years of intimidation and political domination. In many localities where the BJP possessed little organisational presence, volunteers carried out campaigns under extremely difficult circumstances. They moved through narrow lanes distributing pamphlets, speaking through portable loudspeakers, and relying on limited police protection while facing constant obstruction. Party banners were repeatedly removed, flags were torn down, and campaign activities were discouraged by dominant local political groups. Yet beneath this atmosphere of fear existed a silent but growing dissatisfaction among ordinary citizens. Many voters who never openly displayed political preferences quietly decided to express their resentment through the ballot box.

Election day revealed the extent of this silent political rebellion. In several wards where BJP candidates had expected to trail significantly, counting unexpectedly showed narrow but decisive leads. These results reflected not organisational superiority but a spontaneous uprising of citizens who had chosen to reject political intimidation. The electoral verdict demonstrated that even where political activism had been suppressed, democratic participation remained alive. Voters quietly exercised their constitutional rights without public declarations of allegiance. Their decisions represented an assertion of democratic freedom against years of political dominance.

However, the most fascinating developments emerged immediately after the election results were declared. Within days, neighbourhoods that had previously displayed little or no BJP presence became

decorated with saffron flags and banners. Victory processions attracted large crowds, many of whom had remained invisible throughout the election campaign. Party leaders visiting these localities were welcomed enthusiastically by people eager to take photographs, shake hands, and publicly celebrate the new government. Yet many long-time BJP workers recognised familiar faces among these enthusiastic supporters. These were individuals who had earlier served local Trinamool leaders, participated in political intimidation, or remained silent while opposition supporters faced harassment. Their sudden ideological transformation illustrated how quickly political identities could change once power shifted.

This phenomenon was not confined to isolated pockets of Kolkata. Across urban and semi-urban West Bengal, similar stories emerged as local political structures adjusted themselves to the new balance of power. The collapse of the Trinamool Congress's political dominance resembled, in many ways, the decline of the Left Front government after 2011. Just as numerous Communist Party workers had then migrated to the Trinamool Congress, many former Trinamool activists now found themselves seeking acceptance within the BJP. The continuity of this political pattern highlights an enduring characteristic of West Bengal's political culture—loyalty to power often takes precedence over loyalty to ideology.

Political opportunism itself is not a uniquely Bengali phenomenon. Across India, politicians and grassroots workers frequently change party affiliations following elections. Individuals often reinterpret their political histories, conveniently forgetting previous allegiances and claiming lifelong support for the victorious party. Such behaviour may appear humorous or even inevitable in competitive democratic politics. However, the consequences become far more serious when politics dominates everyday social and economic life, as has happened in West Bengal over several decades.

Since the expansion of Left politics during the 1960s and 1970s, political affiliation gradually became intertwined with routine civic life. Local clubs, neighbourhood associations, educational institutions, sports organisations, trade unions, and even cultural programmes increasingly depended upon political patronage for financial assistance and administrative support. Over time, political identity became a prerequisite for accessing public resources, employment opportunities, and local influence. Rather than functioning as independent community organisations, many institutions evolved into informal extensions of political parties.

The Trinamool Congress further expanded this culture during its fifteen years in power. Religious festivals, community celebrations, sporting tournaments, and social wel-

fare activities frequently acquired explicit political sponsorship. Local leaders exercised significant influence over civic affairs, often determining access to government benefits and administrative services. Political loyalty became deeply embedded within everyday social interactions. Consequently, many individuals joined or supported the ruling party not necessarily because of ideological conviction but because political affiliation offered security, opportunities, and social acceptance.

This environment explains why political defections accelerated immediately after the BJP formed the government. For many grassroots workers and local influencers, changing political allegiance represented a practical strategy for maintaining social standing rather than an ideological transformation. Political survival often outweighed personal conviction. Individuals who had spent years praising one leadership suddenly began celebrating another without acknowledging previous commitments. Such behaviour illustrates the fluidity of political identities in patronage-based systems.

For the BJP, however, these developments present both opportunities and serious challenges. On one hand, absorbing experienced local workers could strengthen organisational networks, improve administrative coordination, and expand electoral influence. Many defectors possess detailed knowledge of local governance, communi-

ty dynamics, and electoral management. Their inclusion could accelerate the party's consolidation in regions where its organisational base remains relatively weak.

On the other hand, welcoming large numbers of former ruling-party workers risks undermining the very principles upon which the BJP's electoral success was built. Many dedicated BJP workers spent years facing political violence, intimidation, and social isolation while opposing the Trinamool Congress. They endured physical attacks, legal harassment, and economic discrimination because of their political beliefs. Seeing former political adversaries suddenly rewarded with positions and influence naturally generates resentment among long-time supporters. Such developments may weaken organisational morale and create internal divisions between ideological workers and recent entrants.

Recognising these dangers, the BJP's state leadership responded cautiously following the election victory.

The party leadership temporarily suspended new membership drives and publicly emphasised that individuals responsible for political intimidation or corruption would not be welcomed automatically. This decision reflected an attempt to balance organisational expansion with ethical responsibility. Nevertheless, implementing such a policy has proven extremely difficult in practice.

Building Inclusive Cities Through Street Vending Reform

Cities are often celebrated as engines of economic growth, innovation, and opportunity. They promise employment, education, healthcare, and a better quality of life for millions who migrate from villages and small towns in search of a brighter future. Yet beneath the towering skylines, expanding highways, and carefully planned commercial districts lies another city that is rarely acknowledged in official urban narratives—the city of informal workers. Among them, street vendors constitute one of the largest and most visible sections. They sell fruits and vegetables, clothing, books, flowers, tea, snacks, household goods, and countless other everyday essentials. Despite their indispensable role in sustaining urban life, they are frequently viewed as obstacles to development rather than contributors to it. For many planners, resident welfare associations, and sections of the urban middle class, street vendors represent congestion, disorder, and encroachment. Their presence on pavements and roads is often perceived as incompatible with the vision of a modern, clean, and orderly city. However, this perception overlooks the economic, social, and constitutional realities that define Indian cities. The debate surrounding street vending is therefore not merely about traffic congestion or public space; it is fundamentally about citizenship, equality, livelihood, and the right of every individual to participate in urban life.

The image of the ideal city has long been shaped by modernist planning principles that prioritise regulation, uniformity, and visual order. Wide roads, uncluttered pavements, organised commercial complexes, and designated business districts are considered symbols of progress and development. Within this framework, activities that appear spontaneous or unregulated are often labelled as problems requiring administrative intervention. Street vendors naturally become targets of such thinking because their businesses operate in public spaces that are shared by pedestrians,

motorists, and local communities. As cities expand and governments invest in beautification projects, vendors frequently face eviction drives aimed at presenting an image of urban efficiency. Such actions are justified in the name of improving traffic movement, maintaining cleanliness, or enhancing the city's aesthetic appeal. Yet these justifications often ignore a more fundamental question: who has the right to occupy and use urban space? Is the city meant exclusively for those who own property, shop in malls, and travel in private vehicles, or does it also belong to workers who earn their livelihoods on its streets?

The answer to this question lies at the heart of democratic urban governance. Cities are not merely physical spaces consisting of roads, buildings, and parks. They are living communities shaped by people from diverse economic and social backgrounds. Every individual who contributes to the functioning of the city possesses a legitimate stake in its future. Street vendors are not outsiders or temporary occupants; they are integral participants in the urban economy. Their labour ensures that millions of residents have access to affordable goods and services without walking distance of their homes and workplaces. Office workers purchase breakfast from roadside stalls before beginning their day, students rely on inexpensive food and stationery sold near educational institutions, homemakers buy fresh vegetables from neighbourhood vendors, and daily wage labourers depend upon low-cost meals available on city streets. These transactions form an essential part of the daily rhythm of urban life. Ironically, many people who criticise street vendors as encroachers are themselves regular customers who benefit from their affordability and convenience.

The debate over street vending therefore extends beyond questions of legality or aesthetics. It concerns the broader idea of the “right to the city,” a concept that argues that all urban residents should have equal

opportunities to access, use, and shape the spaces in which they live. Urban citizenship cannot be restricted to those with economic privilege or political influence. Migrant workers, domestic helpers, sanitation workers, construction labourers, delivery personnel, and street vendors collectively sustain the functioning of cities every day. Excluding these groups from urban planning reinforces social inequality and denies them recognition as rightful citizens. Inclusive urbanisation requires acknowledging that public spaces serve multiple purposes. Streets are not only corridors for vehicles but also sites of commerce, interaction, and livelihood. Effective planning should therefore seek to balance mobility with economic opportunity rather than treating the two as mutually exclusive.

Street vendors occupy a central position within India's informal economy, which accounts for the overwhelming majority of employment in the country. A significant proportion of India's workforce earns a living outside the formal sector, without regular contracts, social security, health insurance, or retirement benefits. Many vendors migrated from rural areas because agriculture no longer provided sustainable incomes or because environmental challenges, indebtedness, and limited employment opportunities compelled them to seek work elsewhere. Others entered vending after losing jobs in factories, construction, or small industries affected by economic downturns. With limited education, scarce financial resources, and few employment alternatives, selling goods on the streets often becomes one of the only viable options for supporting their families. Rather than relying solely on government assistance, these individuals create self-employment opportunities through determination, modest investments, and long working hours. Their entrepreneurial efforts demonstrate resilience and adaptability in the face of economic hardship.

Beyond providing livelihoods for

millions of families, street vending contributes significantly to urban economies. Vendors create employment not only for themselves but also for transporters, wholesalers, farmers, artisans, food processors, and manufacturers who supply the products they sell. Fresh produce reaches consumers through extensive networks connecting rural producers with urban markets. Small-scale industries depend upon roadside vendors to distribute inexpensive household items, garments, toys, and accessories. Street food vendors generate demand for agricultural produce while providing affordable meals to workers and students. This continuous circulation of goods and money stimulates local economic activity and supports countless secondary occupations. Because vendors generally operate with low overhead costs, they can sell products at prices considerably lower than those charged by supermarkets or organised retail outlets. Their affordability makes essential goods accessible to lower-income households and contributes to reducing the cost of living in cities.

Such conditions perpetuate cycles of poverty and insecurity despite the vendors' consistent contribution to urban economies.

The absence of legal certainty also creates psychological stress. Vendors begin each working day uncertain whether they will be allowed to continue their business, whether their goods will be confiscated, or whether they will face eviction without notice. Such uncertainty discourages investment in better equipment, improved hygiene, or expanded product offerings because there is no guarantee of business continuity. Families dependent upon vending therefore remain trapped in vulnerable economic conditions despite working long hours under difficult circumstances. Children often experience interruptions in education when household incomes fluctuate due to repeated evictions or confiscation of merchandise. The consequences extend beyond individual vendors, affecting entire communities whose economic stability depends upon informal trade.

Recognising these realities, Indian constitutional principles and judicial decisions have repeatedly affirmed that the right to livelihood forms an essential component of human dignity. The courts have acknowledged that the freedom to carry on trade or business cannot be denied solely because it takes place in public spaces, provided reasonable regulations are followed. Judicial interventions have consistently emphasised that urban governance must balance the legitimate needs of traffic management and public order with the equally important constitutional rights of individuals to earn a living. These decisions recognise that poverty cannot be addressed by removing livelihoods without providing meaningful alternatives. Instead, public authorities are expected to regulate vending in ways that accommodate both economic activity and civic convenience, reinforcing the principle that cities belong to all their residents rather than to a privileged few alone.

Wimbledon Debenture: A front-row seat and a winning investment

Mumbai: Owning a pair of debentures for one of the world’s most prestigious tennis tournaments offers more than just a coveted seat at Centre Court. It gives one the chance to mingle with the global elite while enjoying champagne, strawberries and cream on an English summer’s day—and, over time, earn handsome returns from an asset class that has consistently rewarded investors.

The official issue price for a Wimbledon Centre Court debenture hit ₹116,000 per ticket for the 2026–2030 series – a 45 per cent jump from the ₹80,000 a piece for the 2020-2025 series.

ICICI Sec cuts targets by up to 33% ahead of Q1 results; 2 top picks

New Delhi: ICICI Securities on Thursday said it has turned ‘negative’ on the IT sector from ‘Neutral’, particularly on large-cap IT stocks such as Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS), Infosys Ltd, Wipro Ltd and HCL Technologies Ltd, given the protracted low-to-mid single-digit revenue growth expectation for the pack over FY24–28. The domestic brokerage suggested revised targets for stocks, which were up to 34 per cent lower than its previous targets. Among the biggest target cuts, TCS’ target has been slashed 33.57 per cent to Rs 1,860 from Rs 2,800. HCL Tech’s target now stands at Rs 910, down 34 per cent from Rs 1,370 earlier. Infosys’ target has been cut by 27 per cent to Rs 950 from Rs 1,300 earlier. Wipro’s target is down to Rs 156 from Rs 200 earlier, down 22 per cent. ICICI Securities said downside risks are now more pronounced as it leaned towards select mid-sized companies, namely Mphasis Ltd and Coforge Ltd, given their strong deal total contract value (TCV) growth, which provides near-term visibility of healthy organic revenue growth. The domestic brokerage expects Q1FY27 revenue growth for the top-6 IT Services firms to be at minus 0.9 per cent to 1.1 per cent QoQ in constant currency (CC) terms, lower than what it was building in at the quarter’s start. ICICI Securities sees Infosys reporting organic revenue growth of 0.9 per cent QoQ CC in Q1FY27. This may include 0.9 per cent contribution for two months from Optimum Healthcare acquisition consolidation, taking overall growth to 1.8 per cent QoQ CC.

“We envisage softer organic growth (vs. 0.7–1.4 per cent CQGR required to achieve guidance of 1.5–3.5 per cent for FY27) due to delays in decision making, impacting volumes in April 2026 (also seen in March 2026). BFSI

and energy utility and resources will likely lead revenue growth. Hi-tech and retail are expected to be soft due to higher exposure to discretionary spends,” ICICI Securities said.”We expect EBIT margin to contract by 25bps QoQ due to the absence of operating leverage on revenue growth, employee restructuring costs, and AI investments – partly offset by tailwinds from currency,” it said. The hi-tech vertical’s performance is expected to be volatile through FY27 due to lower IT spending by technology giants, in our view. We envisage EBIT margin expanding by 30bps QoQ to 14.1 per cent led by continued benefit from operating efficiencies from Project Fortius and currency movement benefit, partly offset by employee expenses restructuring and headwinds from large deal ramp-up,” ICICI Securities said. Deal TCV is seen in the range of \$900–1,000 million.LTM Q1 results preview

ICICI Securities said LTM’s revenue may grow 0.3 per cent QoQ CC,

Typically, these Debentures (1 debenture is 1 seat) are sold in pairs, which means that one would have to shell out an astronomical ₹232,000 officially. Each Debenture provides the holder a premium seat on Centre Court or No.1 Court for The Championships for five years, along with the use of exclusive restaurants and bars. Other benefits include being able to transfer or sell the tickets.

The current series of Centre Court Debentures covers The Championships from 2026-2030, both years inclusive. There are 2520 Debenture seats on the Centre Court and 1250 debenture seats on No.1 Court.

lower than the 1.5 per cent QoQ CC that it was building in at the start of the quarter. This is likely due to 1 per cent impact from a slowdown in decision making in the Middle East; and softness in travel and hospitality.”We note that its top BFSI client is on the path to recovery and the top technology clients are growing well. The consumer vertical’s growth is expected to be healthy led by a ramp-up of recent large deal wins. LTM also won a USD 100mn, 7-year deal from a Europe-based medical technology company,” ICICI Securities said.

The broking firm sees LTM to log TCV at \$1.5 billion, in-line with its past four quarter average run-rate. Mphasis Q1 results preview

ICICI Securities estimated Mphasis to report 1.8 per cent QoQ CC growth in Q1FY27 led by continued strong growth momentum in BFS and insurance. IT sees some softness in Mphasis’ logistics and transportation verticals due to a secondary impact from the West Asia war. It expects technology vertical’s revenues to be stable. It noted that two-month contribution from TAP acquisition of \$0.3 million is likely in Q1

Wipro Q1 results preview

ICICI Securities anticipated Wipro to report minus 0.4 per cent QoQ CC revenue growth in IT Services. It sees a healthy ramp-up of the Olam deal aiding growth in the retail vertical. The Q1 results would include 1.5-month contribution of 0.8 per cent from the consolidation of Mindsprint and Alpha Net Consulting; and healthy revenue growth in the Harman acquisition, helping accelerate the technology and communication vertical.”That said, these tailwinds could be offset by client-specific issues and delays in rampup of large deals. We expect an EBIT margin contraction of 210bps QoQ,” ICICI Securities said.TechM Q1 results previeICICI Securities said it expects TechM to log Q1FY27 revenue growth of 1.1 per cent QoQ CC (0.7 per cent QoQ in dollar terms) due to a rampup of strong large deal wins in FY26, partly offset by seasonal weakness in the Comviva business.

The growth is seen led by communication,BFSI and retail. Softness in automotive may continue, the brokerage warned.The brokerage said the underlying demand in auto and communication remains soft for Infosys”We expect deal TCV to be in-line with its past four-quarter average, with quite a few deals announced during the quarter. EBIT margin may shrink by 20 bps QoQ led by headwinds from D&A charge from closure of Optimum Heathcaraacquisition; absence of 20bps benefit from reversals of provisions seen in Q4FY26; and AI investments – these would be partially offset by currency tailwinds,” ICICI Securities said.HCL Tech Q1 results preview

ICICI Securities said HCL Tech’s revenue to decline minus 0.9 per

cent QoQ CC in Q1FY27 led by discretionary spending cuts by two US-based telecom clients, discontinuation of SAP programs by two other clients and seasonal weakness in Q1.”Our view is premised on the delays in conversion of TCV to revenue, stemming from incremental macro weakness and potentially higher AI deflation. Margins pressure could mount too amid higher AI capability, S&M investments, and front-loading of AI-productivity benefits,” it said

The brokerage said there is a disconnect between growth in TCV and revenue for IT Services, implying higher AI-led deflation in existing book of business.It said there is a weakening correlation between technology spend growth of US banks and IT Services’ BFSI revenue growth; and S&P 500 revenue growth and top-5 IT US revenue growth. This implied a shift of spends to in-house GCCs and AI infrastructure and frontier AI players, ICICI Securities said. It gave an example of Indian IT Services exports, which grew 12 per cent YoY in FY26 against 3.6 per cent growth of top5 IT services companies in dollar terms – implying shift of spends to GCCs and other technology players in the AI value chain. ICICI Securities said TCS has not yet announced finalisation of land purchase for the AI datacentre buildout in its hyper-vault business. Post land finalisation, the AI datacentre build-out would take 18 months.

“We have re-aligned target multiples of large-cap IT to sector’s long-term average-2SD P/E to capture aforementioned downside risks to revenue. However, we note that there could be further downside risk to valuation multiples in scenarios if net new enterprise

AI adoption use cases are slow to pick-up or do not meaningfully pick-up due to cost, security, accuracy and governance constraints while AI led cannibalization in IT Services delivery and competitive intensity continues to increase,” ICICI Securities said.This is what it said on the first quarter (June quarter) earnings preview of top IT majors.TCS Q1 results preview

ICICI Securities expects 0.3 per cent QoQ CC (flat QoQ in dollar terms) revenue growth for TCS in Q1FY27, led by delays or deferrals in ramp-up of TCV to revenue due to weak macro from ongoing Middle East war. Slowdown in ramp-up of TCV to revenue is broad-based across verticals, it said.”

We expect the BFSI vertical to lead revenue growth led by ramp-up of two mega deal wins in FY27. We expect healthy deal bookings between USD 9-11bn for the quarter. We expect EBIT margin to contract by 150bps QoQ, led by a three-month impact from the annual wage hike, investments in AI and sales & marketing, which are likely to be offset by currency tailwinds,” it said.

TCS, Infosys: 8 out of 9 Nifty IT stocks trade up to 26% below 200-DMA

New Delhi: 8 out of 9 stocks that comprise the Nifty IT index are currently trading up to 26 per cent below their respective 200-day moving averages (DMAs), suggests data. The Nifty IT index that is currently hovering around 26,700 levels, too, is 20 per cent below its 200-DMA. The only silver lining in the IT pack is Oracle Financial Services Software (OFSS), which has rallied over 49 per cent thus far in 2026, and trades 38

per cent higher compared to its 200-DMA, which stands at ₹8,096.From a technical standpoint, said Nandish Shah, deputy vice-president at HDFC Securities, investors should keep a tab on the 25,700 level, which is a crucial support for the index.”I expect Nifty IT to remain strong above this level. That said, a lot depends on TCS’ Q1-FY27 numbers scheduled to be announced on July 9. Any disappointment can see

the index slip to 23,850 to 24,000 levels, down around 10 per cent from where it is now. A positive surprise, on the other hand, can take it higher to 28,000 mark over the next few weeks,” he said.In general, analysts use the 200-DMA indicator to determine the long-term trend for a stock or index; stocks or indices trading above this are considered to be directionally positive, and vice versa.Among the Nifty sustained recovery in

the IT pack. Thursday’s recovery, he said, is a technical pullback as most stocks were oversold.”For the Nifty IT, the overall trend is still negative and it can slip to 24,300 levels, down nearly 9 per cent from the current levels. TCS’s Q1-FY27 results and guidance remains key. Positive surprise can take the index to 28,000 to 28,200 levels where some selling should emerge. Stay cautious,” he said.

Delhi’s EV transition by the numbers: A look at the capital’s vehicle fleet

Mumbai: The Delhi government on Monday announced that it will stop fresh registrations of internal combustion engine (ICE) two-wheelers (2Ws) and three-wheelers (3Ws) over the next two years after the state Cabinet approved the Delhi EV Policy 2.0, which comes into effect on Wednesday. Delhi needs a robust charging network to phase out ICE vehicles. Under the Delhi EV Policy 2.0, the government has set a target of installing 32,000 charging points across the capital over the next four years.However, as of now, Delhi only has 1,919 charging stations with 2,452 charging points, along with 232 battery-swapping stations, according to state government data. To meet its target, Delhi will have to expand its charging network by nearly 13 times.

How long will Delhi’s transition away from ICE vehicles take?

Even as fresh registrations of ICE three-wheelers will stop from January 1, 2027, and ICE two-wheelers from April 1, 2028, the transition will not happen overnight.

The scale of the transition is particularly significant in the two-wheeler segment. Delhi has 1,03,70,047 registered motorcycles and scooters, along with 1,30,112 mopeds, according to VAHAN data. Existing ICE vehicles will continue to operate until they reach the end of their legal life, meaning the shift to electric mobility will be gradual rather than immediate.

Under Delhi’s current end-of-life vehicle (ELV) policy, diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles older than 15 years are deregistered, ir-

respective of their fitness. As of March 19, 2026, the Delhi government had deregistered 66.2 lakh such vehicles, according to the Economic Survey 2025–26.

Delhi’s decision to phase out ICE 2Ws and 3Ws over the next two years marks the beginning of one of India’s most ambitious urban mobility transitions. But how big is the task? Let’s take a look at Delhi’s vehicle fleet.

Delhi’s commercial three-wheeler ecosystem is already undergoing an electric transition, even as conventional auto-rickshaws continue to dominate.

According to VAHAN data, Delhi has a total of 620,718 registered transport three-wheelers, including 265,084 passenger three-wheelers (largely auto-rickshaws), 123,769 goods three-wheelers, 206,183 passenger e-rickshaws, and 25,692 cargo e-rickshaws The data also suggests that electric three-wheelers have already established a significant presence in Delhi’s last-mile mobility ecosystem, with around 232,000 registered e-rickshaws operating in the cityWho dominates Delhi’s vehicle market?The transition to electric mobility will affect both legacy manufacturers with large ICE fleets and newer EV-focused companies that have steadily gained ground in the capital.

Among two-wheelers, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India, TVS Motor, and Hero MotoCorp account for the largest number of registered vehicles in Delhi, according to VAHAN data. In the electric two-wheeler segment, Ola Electric, Ather Energy and Hero Electric have

emerged as the leading players

Unlike two-wheelers, VAHAN does not provide vehicle-class-wise manufacturer data for three-wheelers.

While VAHAN data does not provide vehicle-class-wise manufacturer data for three-wheelers, among electric three-wheeler manufacturers, YC Electric, Sahni Anand E Vehicles, Omega Seiki and Dilli Electric Auto have built sizeable fleets in the capital registrations. Meanwhile, Electric vehicles (EVs) account for just over 508,000 registrations, slightly over 3 per cent of the total fleet, according to VAHAN data. While ICE vehicles dominate Delhi’s overall vehicle fleet, new registrations indicate that the transition to electric mobility has already begun Delhi has registered 283,481 new two-wheelers and 12,365 new three-wheelers so far in 2026, taking total registrations across these two segments to 295,846, data from VAHAN showed. Two-wheelers account for nearly 96 per cent of all new registrations in the two categories.Across all vehicle segments, the capital has recorded 424,630 new registrations this year. Of these, 49,619 were electric vehicles, accounting for 11.7 per cent of total registrations, while 362,803 were ICE vehicles, including petrol, diesel, CNG and LPG variants, official data showed. Another 12,208 registrations were hybrid vehicles. Even as EVs have started gaining traction, the numbers suggest that ICE vehicles continue to dominate new registrations.

Tata Technologies shares snap five-session fall, climb nearly 9%

New Delhi: Shares of Tata Technologies Ltd snapped a five-session losing streak and surged in Thursday’s trade after the company announced an expansion of its strategic partnership with US-based Tenneco LLC. A sharp rebound in IT stocks also supported the rally. In an exchange filing, the company said, “Tata Technologies and Tenneco, one of the world’s leading designers, manufacturers, and distributors of advanced mobility products for original equipment (OE) and aftermarket customers, marked a significant milestone in their global partnership, reinforcing their shared commitment to scaling future-ready capabilities from India,” the compa-

ny stated in a release.”The collaboration also reflects a long-term strategic commitment, with Tenneco expected to make an investment of over \$100 million in this engagement over the next five years,” Tata Tech added. Jon Bagrosky, Chief Administrative Officer for Tenneco, said, “This next phase builds on the strong foundation we’ve established with Tata Technologies and reflects the continued importance of India as a strategic growth region for Tenneco. By expanding this partnership, we are strengthening the capabilities, scale and agility needed to support our customers, respond to evolving market needs and deliver long-term value across our



global business.” Warren Harris, CEO & Managing Director, Tata Technologies, said, “Tenneco has been a valued strategic partner, and this expanded engagement reflects the strength of our shared commitment. As Ten-

neco accelerates its mobility transformation journey, we are proud to bring together deep domain expertise, digital capabilities, and business transformation experience to support Tenneco’s global growth agenda.”

Swara Baby, TMC Transformers, Ratnadeep Retail file DRHPs SEBI to launch IPOs

New Delhi: India’s primary market pipeline remained active as Swara Baby, TMC Transformers (India) and Ratnadeep Retail filed draft red herring prospectuses with the Securities and Exchange Board of India for their initial public offerings. Swara Baby and Ratnadeep Retail have proposed a mix of fresh issue and offer for sale, while TMC Transformers plans a fully fresh issue. The three companies have set out different fund-raising plans and uses for the proceeds. Swara Baby plans to fund a new facility, repay debt and support acquisitions. TMC Transformers intends to expand capacity through a greenfield plant in Gujarat. Ratnadeep Retail plans to open new stores and reduce borrowings. All three have also kept room for pre-IPO placements.

Swara Baby plans Rs 1,000 crore IPO Ratnadeep Retail runs organised food, grocery and value-fashion stores across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka. As of March 31, 2026, it had 190 stores across multiple formats, including Ratnadeep neighbourhood supermarkets, Ratnadeep Select premium food stores and National Mart hypermarkets, which also house the Style Mart affordable fashion format. The retailer offers more than 30,000 SKUs across fresh produce, FMCG products, staples, general merchandise and apparel.For FY26, it reported revenue from

operations of Rs 2,223 crore, with a 15 per cent CAGR from FY24, while profit after tax stood at Rs 36.7 crore. According to the DRHP, its listed peers include Avenue Supermarts, Vishal Mega Mart, Spencer’s Retail and Trent. Motilal Oswal Investment Advisors, Axis Capital and DAM Capital Advisors are the book-running lead managers.With these filings, Swara Baby, TMC Transformers and Ratnadeep Retail have added to the current IPO pipeline, each setting out different issue structures, expansion plans and operating profiles as they move to the next stage of the regulatory and public issue process.

Swara Baby, described in the DRHP as India’s largest contract manufacturer of disposable hygiene products by value in FY25, has proposed an IPO with a fresh issue of up to Rs 500 crore and an offer for sale of up to Rs 500 crore. The offer for sale includes shares worth up to Rs 300 crore by Brainbees Solutions and up to Rs 200 crore by Anadya Bon Merchari LLP. The company may also consider a pre-IPO placement of up to Rs 100 crore. The company said the fresh issue proceeds will be used to set up a new manufacturing facility in Madhya Pradesh, repay borrowings, infuse capital into subsidiaries for debt repayment, pursue inorganic acquisitions and meet general corporate requirements. Founded in 2018, Swara

Baby makes baby diapers, adult diapers, sanitary napkins and panty liners for Indian and multinational brands, and also sells products under its own brands, Cuddles and Shield. Its customers include Brainbees Solutions, Piramal Pharma and Himalaya Wellness. It acquired K.A. Enterprises Hygiene in December 2025. According to the DRHP, it held a 37 per cent share in India’s baby diaper contract manufacturing segment and 36 per cent in adult diaper contract manufacturing by value in FY25. It operates four facilities in Madhya Pradesh with 20 production lines and annual capacity of about 2.66 billion baby diapers, 253 million adult diapers and period panties, and 756 million sanitary napkins and panty liners. Revenue from operations rose to Rs 1,163.9 crore in FY26 from Rs 942.97 crore in FY25, while profit after tax increased to Rs 95.58 crore fromHriday Narayan R. Shukla is the promoter. Anand Rathii Advisors and Intensive Fiscal Services are managing the issue.The company said it plans to use Rs 260 crore from the fresh issue to open new stores under its Ratnadeep and National Mart formats, Rs 40 crore towards repayment of borrowings, and the balance for general corporate purposes. It may also undertake a pre-IPO placement of up to Rs 80 crore before filing the red herring prospectus.

US judge blocks Trump bid to limit mail-in voting in latest setback for president

America: A federal judge blocked a proposed restriction on mail-in voting across the US, challenging a crack-down on elections ordered by Donald Trump. Judge Emmet Sullivan of the US district court for the District of Columbia ruled that a US Postal Service (USPS) plan to deny ballots to voters in states that do not turn over their voter rolls to the federal government should not proceed. The decision by Sullivan bars the postal service from enforcing an executive order issued by Trump in March that called for sweeping changes to the administration of elections nationwide.

In accordance with the order, the postal service issued a proposed rule on 2 June that would require states to give the US Department of Homeland Security and other agencies access to lists of voters and to adopt new balloting procedures before the mail agency would make deliveries. If states did not comply, USPS would refuse to deliver the ballots.

Sullivan, who was appointed to the bench by the Democratic former president Bill Clinton, sided with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) civil rights group, which argued that the new rule would run afoul of a 2021 legal settlement which forced USPS officials to take “extraordinary measures” to ensure timely delivery of ballot mail.

In that case, the NAACP sued the postal service in 2020 after delayed mail service threatened election access for voters during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sullivan’s decision follows a ruling by US district judge Indira Talwani last week, in which the NAACP had also challenged the executive order. Talwani blocked the administration’s plan for mail-in voting across 23 states and the District of Columbia, which sued the administration to stop the proposed rule. The decision by Sullivan bars the postal service from enforcing an executive order is-



sued by Trump in March that called for sweeping changes to the administration of elections nationwide.

In accordance with the order, the postal service issued a proposed rule on 2 June that would require states to give the US Department of Homeland Security and other agencies access to lists of voters and to adopt new balloting procedures before the mail agency would make deliveries. If states did not comply, USPS would refuse to deliver the ballots.

Sullivan, who was ap-

pointed to the bench by the Democratic former president Bill Clinton, sided with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) civil rights

group, which argued that the new rule would run afoul of a 2021 legal settlement which forced USPS officials to take “extraordinary measures” to ensure timely delivery of ballot mail.

In that case, the NAACP sued the postal service in 2020 after delayed mail service threatened election access for voters during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sullivan’s decision follows a ruling by US district judge Indira Talwani last week, in which the NAACP had also challenged the executive order.

Talwani blocked the administration’s plan for mail-in voting across 23 states and the District of Columbia, which sued the administration to stop the proposed rule. The latest order appears to extend this injunction nationwide, as it is meant to enforce an agreement that bound the postal service as an agency until 2028.

Anthony Ashton, the senior associate general counsel at the NAACP, said: “This

ruling is a critical step in protecting the rights of voters who rely on the timely delivery of mail-in ballots to participate in our democracy. The proposed USPS changes would have created unnecessary and unlawful barriers, in direct violation of the USPS’s mandate to prioritize election mail.

“Those barriers could have disproportionately harmed Black voters, who are more likely to rely on mail voting due to longstanding inequities in access. Put simply, the use of mail-in voting helps reduce voter intimidation at the polls and election day dirty tricks,” Ashton added.

“The court today correctly recognized that USPS’s plan to create roadblocks to mail-in voting was inconsistent with its commitment to timely deliver election mail,” said Allison Zieve, the director of Public Citizen Litigation Group. “USPS’s plan was unwise, unlawful, and a threat to the millions of voters who rely on mailed ballots to participate in our democracy.

Sudan’s RSF committed crimes against humanity in El Fasher, Amnesty says

Africa: The Sudanese paramilitary Rapid Support Forces committed crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing during its campaign to capture El Fasher, Amnesty International has alleged.

Many of the crimes, including murder, torture, rape, enslavement and sexual slavery, were carried out as part of a widespread and systematic attack against civilians and amounted to crimes against humanity, the human rights organisation said in a report released on Wednesday.

In the report, Amnesty also accused the RSF of deliberately targeting children during attacks in the city in North Darfur state.

In October, the paramilitary force captured El Fasher, the last stronghold of the Sudan armed forces in the Darfur region, after an 18-month siege. The brutal takeover was marked by widespread massacres, with tens of thousands of people killed. In February, an independent fact-finding mission for the UN said the RSF’s seizure of El Fasher showed “hallmarks of genocide” against non-Arab communities.

For the report, Amnesty interviewed 247 people, including 208 survivors of the fighting in the city and surrounding areas. It also analysed documentary and video material, and carried out



analysis of satellite imagery from North Darfur.

Amnesty concluded that the RSF had committed war crimes in El Fasher and surrounding areas between mid-2024 and late 2025. It found the paramilitary force had often targeted non-Arab civilians and repeatedly used derogatory and dehumanising language in attacks. The

RSF committed the crime against humanity of persecution on the basis of ethnicity, Amnesty concluded. The human rights organisation said RSF’s destruction of towns and villages between December 2024 and March 2025 including Abu Zerega, which is populated by non-Arab ethnic groups, was consistent with ethnic cleansing.

The report said the abuses carried out by the paramilitary force had orphaned countless children and displaced hundreds of thousands of others, exposing them to death and injury during attacks or while fleeing.

Agnès Callamard, the secretary general of Amnesty International, said: “The war

in Sudan is a war on civilians. The world was warned of the horrors that civilians in El Fasher confronted as the RSF laid siege to the city. It is a stain on the conscience of humanity.”

The report named three RSF commanders whom it said were responsible for serious violations of international law: Maj Gen Gedo Hamdan Ahmed Mohamed, also known as “Abu Shok”, Lt Col Abbas Khater Bakhit and commander Al-Fateh Abdullah Idris, also known as “Abu Lulu”.

The Sudanese civil war began in April 2023 when a power struggle between the Sudan armed forces led by Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the RSF headed by Gen Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, commonly known as Hemedti, erupted into violence in the capital, Khartoum.

The fighting has killed hundreds of thousands of people and displaced more.

Amnesty called for an immediate ceasefire and for the urgent deployment of an international force to protect civilians.

Callamard said: “The international community must move beyond statements of concern and take concrete steps to protect civilians, breaking the cycle of impunity.”

India’s viral youth movement has moved from memes to the streets

New Delhi: What started as an online joke has now spilled onto the streets of India’s capital.

Since Saturday, Abhijeet Dipke, the founder of the satirical Cockroach Janta Party, has been camped out in the heart of New Delhi, leading a crowd of protesters who are refusing to leave until the country’s education minister resigns over a national exam system mired in scandal.

“We are here for the long haul, no matter how many days it takes,” Dipke told CNN from the protest site on this week, as dozens gathered around him in support.

“We are going to be here until Dharmendra Pradhan resigns.”

Dipke, a 30-year-old Boston University graduate, arrived in India earlier this month to lead a movement of frustrated Gen Zers. After years of exam leaks, persistently high youth unemployment, and opportunities slipping further out of reach, their simmering frustration is sparking the youth-driven Cockroach Janta Party – a riff on Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party – launched just last month, deriving its insect mascot from comments made by India’s chief justice that were interpreted as calling the country’s unemployed youth “cockroaches.”

Last week, Dipke traveled to several Indian cities, join-

ing thousands of angry demonstrators to demand the education minister’s removal. The protests culminated on Saturday with a rally at New Delhi’s Jantar Mantar monument – a site Dipke has not left since. Hundreds of people have gathered throughout the week to carry posters, shout slogans, and sing. The Cockroach Janta Party has also encouraged demonstrators to bring different symbolic props to the site each day.

Earlier in the week, participants arrived with “thalis” – traditional steel platters – and spoons, banging them in a cheeky nod to Modi’s Covid-era call to rattle utensils. On Tuesday, protesters were asked to bring diapers and write demands for Pradhan’s resignation on them – a satirical swipe at the government’s inability to stop exam leaks, Dipke said.

“There is not even a government exam in India which does not leak,” Dipke said. “So that was another symbol, that may be use a diaper to prevent leakages.” India’s make-or-break exam system is a high-stakes gauntlet for a limited number of university placements.

Millions sit for them every year, competing for openings where a fraction of a percentage point can decide a student’s future.

The system has long been mired in controversy, including exam paper leaks and technical failures, placing a

crushing burden on students, and financial strain on families investing everything in their children for a promise that can often appear fragile.

Last month, more than two million students who sat for India’s largest medical entrance exam were told their results would be scrapped, after allegations emerged that the paper had been leaked.

In the weeks since, Indian media has reported several student suicides allegedly linked to the immense pressure of the exams, which Dipke and his supporters commemorated this week by lighting candles.

CNN has contacted India’s Education Ministry about the issues raised by Dipke. Dipke called the remarks “ridiculous,” insisting his group is seeking justice for students, especially those who have died by suicide.

As for the ongoing New Delhi protest, a steady stream of volunteers keeps the camp running, arriving daily with food, drinking water and other essentials.

Speaking to Indian news channel NDTV this week, Pradhan referred to the Cockroach Janta Party as the “B-team of terror groups.”

In a bid to maintain a peaceful atmosphere, demonstrators have been seen offering roses to police officers on duty. Many have carried the Indian flag and brought copies of the constitution to the demonstration.

India’s youth are fuming. A Boston University graduate wants to fix that

New Delhi: After years of exam scandals, persistently high unemployment, and opportunities slipping further out of reach, simmering frustration is boiling into open anger online and on the streets – and a demand for accountability that many say they can no longer ignore.

For one Indian graduate of Boston University, watching from afar is not enough. “My friends and family are scared that I could get arrested at the airport,” said Dipke in a post on Instagram earlier this week. “But how long can I fear jail? This country belongs not just to one party, but to all of us. This is a question of our future. Our future

is getting ruined.” There was a large security presence Saturday morning at the airport, where Dipke was met by police and granted permission for his protest. The spark that has lit this particular Gen Z flame is India’s high-stakes university entrance exams: make-or-break tests that millions take in a bid for a limited number of seats. Veronica Madan, 24, has twice taken India’s notoriously competitive medical school entrance exam, a test that shapes the futures of hundreds of thousands of aspiring doctors each year. She says the pressure does not begin on exam day, but months – even years – in advance.

“It comes from the feeling that we need to succeed at any cost, the fear of disappointing myself, the fear of disappointing my family,” she said.

Madan spent two years preparing, but her scores ultimately fell short of securing a place at one of the country’s top medical colleges. The world’s most populous nation, India is home to 1.4 billion people. It also has one of the youngest populations in the world; there are more than 360 million people between the ages of 15 and 29 in the country, according to a recent report by Azim Premji University in Bengaluru. Enter the Cockroach Janta Party.



Thanks to a blend of meme mastery and biting satire, it has amassed more than 22 million followers in a single week, capturing youth anger.

AI-generated images of its virtual cockroach mascot quickly saturated social media, while also making their way onto news channels and into newspapers across the

country. Now the party hopes to take its online frustration to the streets.

The Cockroach Janta Party owes its existence to remarks made by Chief Justice Surya Kant, widely taken as calling the country’s unemployed youth “cockroaches.” He later clarified he was talking about people who entered

certain professions using fake degrees, but the anger was felt by many. One of the party’s followers, Amrita Singh, said it’s the youth who actively participate in the “growth and development” of the country. “I’m very proud and happy that this type of political party has been formed in India,” she said. “They are raising the issues of the nation which should be corrected.”

The judge’s cockroach comment also just happened to coincide with swirling anger over university exams.

Just days before Kant’s remarks, more than 2 million students who sat for India’s largest medical entrance

exam were told their results would be scrapped, after allegations emerged that the paper had been leaked. Exam-related leaks and controversies had been an issue long before the current government came to power, with students growing increasingly frustrated at them.

“These leaks are deeply disappointing,” said the master’s student Madan. “We don’t want less competition, we want fair competition.”

“That was a very disheartening situation for me,” she said, explaining that she is now pursuing a master’s degree in forensic science. “But that rejection became my redirection.”

The system has long been mired in controversy, including exam paper leaks and technical failures, placing immense pressure on students, and a financial burden on families investing everything in their children for a promise that can often appear fragile.

Abhijeet Dipke, the 30-year-old founder of the satirical Cockroach Janta Party that has gone viral across India, arrived in New Delhi Saturday morning, determined to turn his generation’s wrath into action. He says he plans to lead a protest to the Jantar Mantar monument this weekend demanding the resignation of education minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

The ideal gemstone jewelry for each event



The ideal gemstone can do more than just finish an ensemble; it can also establish the overall mood. Striking the ideal balance between style and appropriateness can be achieved by selecting a gemstone according to the occasion. In an interview, Rhea Poddar Loyalka, creative director at Deshya by Ma Passion, discussed how to choose gemstones that enhance your overall appearance and fit the occasion, whether you're dressing for a formal event, a festive soirée, a day at the office, or a casual brunch. Diamond

is a classic choice for everyday style. It shines without noise, and by all means, it's a person's best friend. Rhea highlights that diamond studs, a pendant, or a bracelet can, without trying too hard, complete a look. You can style it for work and festive occasions effortlessly. Pearl Pearls have a softer, calmer charm. "Pearls add the kind of grace that feels professional during the day, and bougie by night," said Rhea. From a single-strand necklace to drop earrings, their beauty graces almost all people alike. You can choose it to

create a retro look for day functions or even for casual events. Sapphire Sapphire is another all-purpose wear gemstone. Its deep blue hue adds richness without overpowering, as if bringing with it its own special place to shine. "Sapphire rings, earrings or pendants can give any 9-5 attire a confident edge, while also magnificently complementing evening dresses," suggests Rhea. Emerald Emeralds bring a fresh touch. They're ideal for those who want a pop of colour that feels easy on the eyes. They brighten a

neutral outfit, and really complement the grandeur of a heavier one. You can pair an emerald necklace or earrings with a simple cotton saree for timeless elegance. Ruby Ruby is for those who are subtle, not loud; whose presence is felt, not announced. A ruby ring or a pendant can beautify almost any outfit, laidback or impactful. You can choose a ruby ring to stand out in your look. Amethyst Amethyst is another wonderful gem for those who like something unique. Its violet to deep purple colour feels distinctly elegant. Amethyst pieces can be styled with professional clothes or with heavier outfits for a put together appearance. Rhea highlights that today's modern woman is bold, confident and unapologetically herself and deserves to adorn herself in gems that have as much personality as she brings to the rooms she walks in. "These six gemstones prove that jewellery shouldn't be distinguished for occasions, be it formal or breezy. Rarity, glamour and ease can go hand-in-hand. Intentionally chosen gems make smart additions to any collection and go effortlessly from dawn to dusk," added Rhea.

Five essential looks and simple ways to wear them for any situation

Co-ord outfits are becoming a wardrobe staple rather than just a fad. They may be dressed up with heels and bold jewelry or kept casual with sneakers and a tote bag. They are adored for their adaptability and ease of dressing. To ensure that they can be worn to parties as well as work, it is crucial to select the appropriate fabrics and silhouettes. Here are some styling pointers and an investment guidance for co-ord sets.

1. Long kurta style If you are someone who is tired of wearing suits and wants something easy to style, you can invest in long kurta-style co-ord sets. They often feature long kurta that ensure comfort paired with wide leg or cylindrical bottoms. If you want them to be versatile, go with botanical prints and patterns. Styling tips: You can style them by complementing the look with pop colour earrings, a matching statement watch, and stilettos.
2. Shirt style For working professionals, shirt style co-ord sets are perfect. They can be transcended into casual wear as well, just with a few style changes. However, make sure to pick the ones that have sleek shirt collars and parallel bottoms. You can go with prints or patterns as per your choice. Styling tips: If you are styling the ensemble for the workplace, try to pick the subtle hoops or rings to keep the professionalism. You can complement the outfit with pencil heels. However, if you are going on a date, you might consider adding a belt or



a scarf to accentuate the waist for a more chic look.

3. Crop top and skirt Mixing and matching the outfits takes most of the time, but having a co-ord set that features a crop top with a skirt can sort your life to a greater extent. You can invest in pieces that feature a crop top paired with a matching long skirt for all those casual shopping sprees or a coffee date with your friends. Styling tips: If your co-ord set has bold prints, then you can go with subtle dangler earrings and stilettos. However, if you want to make the outfit look more chic, then add a classic wide black belt with a signature element. This will define your waist, and you will look more put-together.
4. Jacket style Most co-ord sets feature two pieces, but there are sets available that come

with three pieces, including a jacket. If you want to take your fashion game to the next level, you can consider investing in co-ord sets with a jacket as well. Styling tips: You can keep the jacket on when you are in the professional sphere and take it off for a new look. You can add a belt as well and pair the look with simple flat footwear.

5. Punjabi style If usual co-ord sets are not your scene and you are also someone inspired by Kareena Kapoor's Jab We Met look, then you can invest in Punjabi co-ord sets. These mostly feature patiala pants and a bit of blingy kurti, which makes you look chic and fashionable. Styling tips: You can style it with juti, a potli sling bag, and jhumka for a Punjabi look. However, statement sunglasses and bangles can also be a good option.

Women's sneakers that are very worthwhile to wear every day

It's similar like courting to find the ideal pair of sneakers. They may appear stunning on the internet, but after spending a full day in them, the true test starts. Your feet aren't the right one if by midday they are pleading for forgiveness. Thankfully, today's sneakers are no longer just gym companions. They've become wardrobe staples that work with jeans, dresses, co-ord sets, airport looks and even ethnic wear. Whether you prefer timeless minimalism, bold statement styles or ultra-cushioned pairs that feel like walking on clouds, there's a sneaker for every personality.

If you're planning your next footwear upgrade, these are some of the best sneakers for women that combine comfort, style and everyday versatility.

Bright sneakers for women

1. Neeman's Wool Joggers Shoes for Women: Made using premium merino wool, these sneakers redefine everyday comfort. The natural fibres keep your feet cool when it's warm and cosy when temperatures drop, making them surprisingly versatile across seasons. They're also naturally odour-resistant, so you can comfortably wear them without socks if you prefer.



The minimalist silhouette gives them a premium, quiet luxury aesthetic that works beautifully with everything from linen co-ords to straight-fit jeans. Despite looking polished, they remain incredibly lightweight, making them ideal for travel, long office days or endless city walks.

Style tip: Pair them with neutral linen trousers, oversized shirts and gold jewellery for effortless elegance.

2. Prolific Women's Printed High-Top Sneakers: Minimalists, look away. These high-top sneakers are designed for people who love turning heads. Bold prints, a structured silhouette and street-wear-inspired styling instantly make them the focal point of any

outfit. The high-top construction provides additional ankle support while giving outfits a cool, fashion-forward edge. They're ideal for anyone wanting to experiment with Y2K-inspired styling or contemporary street fashion.

Style tip: Let them stand out by pairing them with cropped denim, oversized jackets and monochrome basics.

3. Campus Women's FILT Sneakers: Sometimes the best sneakers are the simplest ones. Campus has designed this pair with everyday practicality in mind, combining breathable materials with lightweight cushioning that keeps your feet comfortable through long days.

The sleek silhouette makes them versatile enough for almost any casual outfit, while the sporty details prevent them from looking too plain. Whether you're heading to college, work or weekend brunch, these sneakers fit seamlessly into your wardrobe.

Style tip: Style with boyfriend jeans, basic tees and crossbody bags.

4. ASIAN Women's Mercury-08 Casual Sneakers: If you're



scalp becomes itchy and sweaty during summer



One of the most prevalent summertime issues is a sweaty, itchy scalp. Although sweating is the body's natural method of controlling body temperature, excessive perspiration on the scalp can cause discomfort, greasy hair, an unpleasant smell, itching, and even symptoms similar to dandruff. Fortunately, managing a sweaty scalp doesn't have to be complicated. With the right hair care routine, proper hygiene practices, lifestyle adjustments, and suitable scalp-friendly products, you can reduce discomfort and maintain a healthier scalp. According to Dr Debraj Shome, Co-Founder and Director, The Esthetic Clinics, tells HT Shop Now, "An itchy, sweaty scalp in summer is not really just a summer issue, but a sign that the scalp's microbial and sebaceous balance has been disrupted". He further mentions that strong heat accelerates sebum production, while humidity prevents sweat from evaporating from the skin surface, resulting in bacterial and fungal buildup. "Left unaddressed, this progresses from itching and greasiness to dandruff flare-ups, folliculitis, and perifollicular inflammation that can directly impair hair growth", he says. Dr Shome also claims that the instinct to overwash is counterproductive. "Stripping the scalp repeatedly with harsh shampoos removes the lipid barrier it depends on to regulate itself, often triggering a rebound cycle of increased oiliness and irritation", he mentions. According to him, the correct approach to treating itchy scalp is using a mild, sulphate-free shampoo, after workouts, after prolonged heat exposure, and whenever sweat has sat on the scalp for any meaningful length of time. He also says that heavy styling products should be avoided entirely during peak summer months, as they compound the congestion that an already-stressed scalp cannot clear efficiently. He also mentions that persistent itching, visible redness, excessive flaking, or scalp bumps that do not resolve within a week warrant clinical evaluation. "Sometimes it's not as simple as a ketoconazole shampoo; it could be a severe case of seborrheic dermatitis or another condition that requires medical intervention", he concludes.

Tips to clean a sweaty scalp

Wash your scalp after workouts or heavy sweating rather than letting sweat sit for hours. Use a clarifying shampoo once weekly if you use styling products. Dry your scalp thoroughly before tying your hair or wearing a helmet. Avoid applying oils directly to an already oily, sweaty scalp. Here are 5 clarifying shampoos for you

ENTERTAINMENT

Sohail Khan shares Salman Khan's stern 'warning' on alliance: industry clout won't save him in the show

Mumbai : Sohail Khan recently confirmed that he is about to enter Prime Video's new show, Alliance, as a contestant. This has significantly increased public interest in the project. Now, Sohail has reflected on his decision to make his reality TV debut and said that he wants to show the world that he is more than just Salman Khan's brother.

Sohail Khan said, as quoted by Hindustan Times, "In the show, there's no family name to lean on. No industry clout. It's just me, my mind, and how I play the game." He adds, "If people walk away seeing a side of me they didn't expect, good. That's exactly why I'm here." He revealed that he never thought he could be on a reality show as a contes-



tant, having watched Salman Khan host Bigg Boss. "I've seen what it takes, the energy, the drama, the emotional toll. And I always thought, 'That's his space, not mine'," he said.

Sohail added, "Salman's show is about personalities, conflicts and emotions. But this one is fundamentally different. It's a game of the mind. Strategy. Outwitting

people without them knowing they've been outwitted. That challenge appealed to me in a way nothing else has." He also revealed Salman Khan's reaction to his participation and said, "He was intrigued. And then he said, 'You sure you know what you're getting into?' Which, knowing him, is both a warning and a blessing. I'll take it." Sohail was also

asked what it would look like if the Khan family entered a reality show. "The leader is obviously Salman.... He walks into any room, and it reorganises itself around him," he said, adding, "The peacemaker would probably be Arbaaz (Khan, actor-director). He listens, mediates and keeps everyone grounded." He added, "And the master strategist? I'd say me, but honestly, it might be my mother (Salma Khan). She's been managing this family for decades. Three sons, three different personalities, three different egos. If that's not master-level strategy, I don't know what is." Fans are excited to see how Sohail showcases his personality on the show. New episodes of Alliance drop daily on Amazon Prime Video at 12 noon.

Shreya Kalra calls Harshad Chopda arrogant

Mumbai : In the recent episode of Lock Upp 2, Shreya Kalra made a few shocking comments about actor Harshad Chopda. She was talking to Madhuri Grover when she called Harshad 'arrogant' and claimed that the actor has not been getting work because of the same reason.

"Harshad ko koi kaam nahi de raha hain baahar. Arrogant hain woh baahar (Harshad is not getting any work outside, he is so arrogant). That's why he is not married. Because no woman would marry a guy like him," Shreya said. During the premiere episode, Harshad Chopda opened up about his painful past and revealed how his ex-girlfriend cheated on him with his best friend. "My fans complained that no one knows anything about me, but I was not always like this. When I came into the industry, I was socially active. I lost my friend and my girlfriend at the same time in 2010. My girlfriend cheated on me with my best friend, and from then on, I have grown a little wary," he said.

Later, in another episode, Harshad opened up about not marrying and revealed that he has been finding it hard to trust people. "I date but then I get f****d. Bolna kuch hota hain actions kuch aur hote hain (You say something but your actions are different). Log na bohot jyada mean hain (People are very mean). I have felt deafness, emotional deafness. I am saying, saying, saying and the person is not listening and understanding. Aisa lag raha hain ki main baat kar raha hoon baat sunai kyu nahi de raha hain (I am speaking but it is not being heard) The problem is not that I am available, it is that I am too available. Maybe galti meri hi hain (Maybe it is my mistake)," he said, as quoted by Hindustan Times.

Mahesh Bhatt bows out, says modern films lack creativity



Mumbai : Mahesh Bhatt has confirmed that he won't direct another film. The veteran filmmaker is happy to produce films and theatre plays, but not a feature film, as he feels that content today has become pre-decided. Thus, he said, the role of an artiste gets diminished. Over a career spanning more than four decades, Mahesh Bhatt

established himself as one of Bollywood's most prolific directors, known for creating deeply personal stories.

In a recent chat with Hindustan Times, Mahesh Bhatt was asked if he would return to direction again. He said, "No, because it is so gratifying to talk about movies so passionately." When asked about the reason behind his

retirement as a director, he said, "Where there is life, there is vitality."

He explained, "There is caution where things are dictated to you. And then, when you are to make content according to certain designs which have been pre-decided, then what is the role of an artiste?" However, he also expressed that he doesn't feel that Hindi cinema has fallen into a hopeless lull. "One of the finest things I've seen recently is Main Vaapas Aaunga by Imtiaz Ali. I wrote about it. I feel that this is a moment of rebellion. When you put your heart into it and listen to the heartbeat of the times, you see a longing, a thirst in people for something sensitive and painful that connects to their lives.

Rupali Ganguly shares Satish Shah video, says 'miss him so much'



Mumbai : Television superstar Rupali Ganguly turned nostalgic as she shared a fan-made compilation of her memorable on-screen moments with Satish Shah from the iconic sitcom 'Sarabhai vs Sarabhai'. The video, created by a fan, revisits some of the most-loved scenes featuring Rupali as Monisha and Satish Shah as Indravadan Sarabhai. Sharing the video on her social media account, Rupali wrote, "Miss him so so much....."

For the uninitiated, in 'Sarabhai vs Sarabhai', Satish Shah played the adorable, witty and mischievous Indravadan Sarabhai who is the patriarch of the Sarabhai family. Despite belonging to an upper-class household, Indravadan was

often seen having a soft corner for his daughter like daughter-in-law Monisha played by Rupali Ganguly and often sided with her against his modern and sophisticated wife Maya Sarabhai, portrayed by Ratna Pathak Shah. The show created by Aatish Kapadia and produced by Hats Off Productions, 'Sarabhai vs Sarabhai' originally aired from 2004 to 2006 and later returned with a digital second season in 2017.

The ensemble cast included Satish Shah, Ratna Pathak Shah, Rupali Ganguly, Sumet Raghavan as Sahil Sarabhai, Rajesh Kumar as Rosesh Sarabhai, and Deven Bhojani as Dushyant Painter.

Talking about Satish Shah, the actor, apart from Sarabhai vs Sarabhai, was known for unforgettable roles in films such as 'Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro', 'Main Hoon Na', 'Kal Ho Naa Ho', 'Om Shanti Om', and 'Fanaa', besides television classics like 'Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi'. For the uninitiated, Satish Shah passed away on October 25, 2025, at the age of 74. During the funeral, the entire cast and crew of Sarabhai vs Sarabhai from Rupali Ganguly, Sumit Raghavan, Rajesh Kumar, Devendra Bhojani, JD Majethia, Aatish Kapadia paid their final respects to the actor by singing the iconic title track of the show. Rupali was seen breaking down into tears as she bid him a farewell.

Alia Bhatt, Sharvari urge fans: 'no spoilers, no piracy' ahead of Alpha

Mumbai : There's massive excitement among fans for the release of Alia Bhatt and Sharvari's upcoming film Alpha, which is set to hit the theatres tomorrow, on July 3. Meanwhile, the actresses have made a special appeal to fans a day before the release of their film, urging audiences to watch the film only in theatres and avoid piracy. They also requested fans to refrain from sharing spoilers from the film on social media as it can take away from the excitement of watching the film for the first time in theatres.

In a video message shared by Yash Raj Films (YRF), the actors addressed viewers with a light-hearted yet firm request, urging them to avoid piracy. Alia Bhatt and Sharvari expressed their excitement about the film's release on 3rd July, while requesting fans to support the big-screen experience. "Our film Alpha is releasing in theatres on 3rd July. We hope you are excited to watch it, but we have a small request. Please watch Alpha only in theatres.



Do not watch or share pirated links, and please avoid giving out any spoilers of the film. Thank you, and see you in theatres," they said. YRF shared the video message on social media along with a caption that read, "Your mission is to keep the secrets safe! Say no to spoilers and piracy. Watch #Alpha only in theatres." Check out the video below!

Directed by Shiv Rawail, Alpha has

been cleared by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) with a UA 16+ certificate. The film is scheduled to release in theatres worldwide on July 3 and marks Alia Bhatt's first full-fledged action role. The CBFC listing has also confirmed the film's runtime. Alpha will run for 140 minutes, which is 2 hours and 20 minutes long. The film stars Alia Bhatt and Sharvari in the lead, with Bobby Deol and Anil Kapoor playing pivotal roles. It is the seventh film in the YRF Spy Universe and the fourth standalone title after Ek Tha Tiger, Tiger Zinda Hai, War, Pathaan, Tiger 3 and War 2. Alpha also introduces Alia as the franchise's first female spy.

Bosco Martis breaks silence on health after returning home

Mumbai : Choreographer Bosco Martis has shared his first health update after being discharged from Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital. The ace choreographer was admitted last week after experiencing chest congestion and discomfort. Following his discharge, Bosco visited the Mount Mary Basilica in Bandra before heading home and shared a heartfelt note of gratitude on social media.

Sharing a photo from the church, he wrote, "Just couldn't head home before visiting Mother and offer a prayer of gratitude. Happy to share that I'm discharged, doing well, and recovering. Thank you to my family,

friends, my fans and everyone who kept me in their prayers and reached out with so much love. God bless." Bosco's industry colleagues and close ones took to the comment section to shower love on him. Actor Gajraj Rao wrote, "God bless you dear @boscomartis." Isha Koppikar added, "Taps speedy recovery."

Bosco was reportedly hospitalised after he complained of chest congestion and uneasiness. As a precaution, doctors advised him to undergo further evaluation. During his nearly week-long stay at the hospital, he underwent multiple tests and scans. One half of the celebrated choreographer duo Bosco-Caesar alongside



Caesar Gonsalves, Bosco has choreographed some of Hindi cinema's biggest dance numbers over the last two decades. The duo won the National Film Award for Best Choreography for Senorita from Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara. They also delivered chartbusters in-

cluding Ghungroo, Jhoomo Jo Pathaan, Tauba Tauba, Mauja Hi Mauja and Aahun Aahun, among many others.

Bosco has also established himself as a solo choreographer and continues to work on several high-profile film projects.

Ramayana teaser slammed: content creator labels it 'nerfed version'



Mumbai : While everyone is eagerly waiting for the release of much-awaited Ramayana, the makers recently held a creators' day on the film's sets. Among others, Dhruv Parikshit, who makes videos on films, also visited the set following which he took to his Instagram handle and shared pictures from his trip. While Dhruv shared his experience after witnessing Nitesh Tiwari's directorial in making, he also revealed that the makers are 'cooking something wonderful'.

When a social media user asked Dhruv in the comments box about the

VFX of the movie, the content creator replied, "Yes, it was incomplete. But the vision they have, I genuinely can't put it into words. The scenes I witnessed there were on the level of Avatar. I'm not exaggerating, they're truly cooking something wonderful. The character designs and the world of Ramayana feel incredibly immersive." He further claimed that the makers had intentionally unveiled the 'nerfed' version of Ramayana teaser to start a discussion on social media. "I also got a chance to talk to one of their VFX artists. He told me that the creators deliberately uploaded a nerfed version

of the Rama glimpse. They had better versions of those scenes, yet they intentionally chose to release the incomplete one. Why? Because discussions and criticism across the internet translate into free marketing," he added.

Ramayana's Rama teaser was released on April 2, on the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti. It unveiled Ranbir Kapoor's looks as lord Ram and marked an important moment as the timeless epic is presented to a global audience. However, it has also received mixed reviews from the audience. A section of viewers expressed disappointment with the VFXs and called the teaser disappointing. Following this, producer Namit Malhotra issued a statement and shared that they are listening to the audience's feedback. "We're listening closely, working diligently, and pouring every effort possible into honouring it with the reverence it holds. This is our Ramayana. It belongs to us all, and that shared emotion and massive responsibility to make every Indian proud, is what drives me forward every single day. What you've seen so far is just the beginning... we are all striving to bring our epic to life this Diwali on the biggest screens to celebrate our culture and our history," he said.

Asked about CJP protest, Diljit Dosanjh says he's 'not a politician'



a politician and would rather remain focused on his work as an entertainer.

When asked about the CJP protest at Jantar Mantar, Diljit appeared surprised, admitting that he was unaware of it as he had been occupied with his Aura Tour. He then urged people to keep him away from protests and political discussions because he con-

siders himself an artist and not a politician. "Bro, keep me away from protests and such things. I am an artist. I am not a politician," he said. He further added that it is impossible for everything in the world to be perfect or entirely right. "Everything can never be right. Everything in this world can never be right," he said. He also quoted a line from the Guru Granth Sahib, "Nanak dukhiya sab sansar, so sukhiya jis naam adhaar." Diljit further said that while his name is often dragged into such matters, he wishes well for both sides involved.

Mumbai : Kangana Ranaut will grace the upcoming episode of Lock Upp 2 as a special guest. Recently, the makers of the reality show dropped a promo in which she was seen confronting Ram Kapoor and lashing out at him for his attitude. Kangana asked Ram if he thinks he is too big for the show and said, "Ramji, you shouldn't have taken the game so seriously. And if you think that you are too big for this jail, then why did you come here? To show your stupidity?"

Kangana Ranaut Slams Ram Kapoor on lock upp 2: "you think you're above this jail"



However, Ram defended himself by saying, "When the time comes, I will own my truth as well as, or better than, anybody here." This seemingly irritated

Kangana who then gave a warning to Ram and stated, "Don't defend yourself if you want to improve." Kangana Ranaut was the host of Lock Upp 1. However, sea-

son two is being hosted by Riteish Deshmukh and Farah Khan. Recently the Bollywood actress-turned-politician talked about returning on the show and said, "This show has always been about owning your truth, no matter how uncomfortable it is. Joining Farah and Riteish as the jury or the Janta Ki Awaaz this weekend for Lock Upp: Sach ya Sazaa's very first termination, all I can say is every choice has a price!"

Previously, producer Ekta Kapoor also revealed

why Kangana Ranaut isn't hosting Lock Upp 2 and said, "The entire format of the show, the whole vision changed and the demographic, the kind of jailer-judge format we had. Nothing of the original show has been kept. Neither the jailer nor the host, so keeping anything of the old would not bring the fresh presentation of the branding. So I am sure Kangana would have understood." Lock Upp premiered in June this year. It streams on Netflix.

“Que Sera Sera” Manish Tewari After Being Left Out Of The Congress Team Punjab

New Delhi, July 02:The Congress Party has announced its core team for Punjab ahead of next year’s Assembly elections. While the party’s state president and Leader of Opposition have remained in place, a number of fresh appointments to election-related committees have been announced. However, an old hand is missing: Chandigarh MP Manish Tewari. Left out of the playing XI, the disappointed senior leader resorted to social media and stated, “Being skilled is itself a big flaw... I wish I had a way to cure people’s insecurities!” Tewari continued, “The Congress has given me a lot over the last 45 years, and I, too, have dedicated my life to the party’s service. Who can



prevent destiny? Whatever must happen, will happen. Congress sources, however, said Tewari was not included in the Punjab team as he is the Chandigarh MP, which is outside Punjab. Tewari has earlier been an MP from Ludhiana and Anandpur Sahib. Manish Tewari was among the 23 senior Congress leaders, called the “G-23”, who wrote a landmark letter to then party president Sonia Gandhi in August 2020 seeking sweeping or-

ganisational changes. Tewari’s post on Thursday came a day after the Congress announced a new organisational structure for Punjab, appointing chairpersons for key election-related committees and three working presidents, while assigning no organisational responsibility to Tewari. According to sources, several leaders, including Charanjit Singh Channi, are also upset with the decision to retain Amarinder Singh Raja War-

ring as Punjab Congress president. Under the new structure, Charanjit Singh Channi will head the Campaign Committee, while Vijay Inder Singla will chair the Election Management and Coordination Committee. Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa has been appointed chairperson of the Core Committee and Amar Singh will head the Manifesto Committee. The party also re-elected Amarinder Singh Raja Warring as head of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee and Pratap Singh Bajwa as leader of the Congress Legislature Party. In addition, Sukhwinder Singh Danny, Raj Kumar Verka, and Sangat Singh Gilzian have been named working presidents of the Punjab Congress.

Why Can’t the USA Appeal Folarin Balogun’s Controversial Red Card



California: Folarin Balogun, the United States’ leading scorer at the FIFA World Cup 2026 with three goals, was sent off for a challenge on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Tarik Muharemovic in Wednesday’s Round of 32 match. The referee did not instantly go for his back pocket, but changed his mind after taking a close look at the pitchside monitor when the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) reported the incident. Although the USA scored another goal after being reduced to ten men and advanced to the Round of 16, Balogun’s absence against Belgium in the following match would make the task more difficult for the co-hosts. The United States manager, Mauricio

Pochettino, and his players did not hesitate to call the referee’s decision “harsh”, but the team is left with no option other than to accept a one-match sanction, as FIFA rules for the 2026 World Cup do not allow the option of an appeal. A FIFA official ruled out the possibility of a red card decision being challenged in the ongoing World Cup. Speaking to The Athletic, the official pointed to the tournament regulations and Article 66.4, which states: According to FIFA rules, “If a player or team official is sent off as a result of a direct or indirect red card (second caution), they will automatically be suspended from their team’s subsequent match. In addition, further sanctions may be

imposed.” If the ban cannot be served during the tournament - meaning the team no longer has a game to play - the suspension is carried over to the team’s next official fixture. Balogun is set to miss the Round of 16 match against Belgium but could miss further games should the US progress in the tournament, depending on whether FIFA’s disciplinary committee decides to extend his suspension from one match to potentially two or three. “It was never intentional,” U.S. coach Mauricio Pochettino said when asked about the sending-off after the match. “It’s never a red card. Never. If the intention is to damage the opponent, OK, I understand. But that never was. It was a normal ac-

tion in football where you are fighting for the ball and your foot lands.” The US striker’s teammate Weston McKennie called the lack of an appeal process “bogus” and disagreed that Balogun’s tackle was a straight red-card offence. “Obviously the ref made the decision that he made, but I think it’s questionable,” McKennie said. “I think there have been many other plays like that throughout the tournament involving other players where a card wasn’t given at all. It’s disappointing.” US’s star winger Christian Pulisic maintained the same stance, saying his teammate didn’t deserve to be sent off. “We had to dig deep for that one, obviously,” U.S. star Christian Pulisic told FOX Sports. “I felt like we put on such a good performance and didn’t deserve the red card. I mean, I didn’t see it, but it’s unfortunate. But for us to dig in deep like that and just to get another goal and to defend the way we did, it took a real team effort, but we’re proud of that.” “It didn’t go as planned with the red card. But this only demonstrates how terrific a team we are. We remarked during the hydration break that this is what it takes to be a very great team, and we were able to accomplish that and get the results.”

Harry Kane Scores Potential ‘Goal Of The World Cup’, Beating Several Players to Win

Atlanta: Bayern Munich striker Harry Kane translated his club form into international football for England, scoring a ‘Goal of the Tournament’ candidate in the FIFA World Cup 2026 Round of 32 match against DR Congo on Wednesday. England, behind Congo until the 75th minute, witnessed Kane do a spectacular rescue act to get his team out of a difficult scenario. England faced early elimination from the tournament when Kane stepped up and scored both goals in the Three Lions’ 2-1 victory. Kane’s second goal of the game astounded everyone, as he dribbled past numerous Congo players before slamming the ball into the top right corner of the goal.



Following a partially cleared England attempt, replacement Anthony Gordon took control and sent a risky ball to Kane on the outside of the penalty box. Kane responded quickly when he received the ball with his back to goal, despite the fact that there was tremendous congestion inside the area. He swirled and twisted away from his direct

marker, moving the ball to his right foot. After gaining just enough space against three approaching defenders, Kane unleashed a nasty, rising rocket from an awkward angle. The unstoppable strike flew past DR Congo goalkeeper Lionel Mpsasi, who could hardly react as the ball rifled into the top-right corner of the net, securing

England’s 2-1 comeback triumph. The goal didn’t just seal England’s passage into the Round of 16 to face co-hosts Mexico, this spectacular 86th-minute strike marked Kane’s 13th career World Cup goal. With this hit, he officially surpassed Brazilian football icon Pele (12 goals) on the tournament’s all-time top-scorers list. After the game, England coach Thomas Tuchel spoke of Kane in the same breath as the game’s ultimate icons, Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi. “They are all sharks,” he said. “If they smell blood, they come and score.” “It’s crazy. So, so good. He’s our captain, he’s our leader, and decides football matches with unbelievable finishes.”

Piyush Goyal recalls the “nightmare” his team faced during the US-India trade talks



New Delhi, July 02: Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal described the India-US trade agreement as a “very fair and equitable” accord, lowering the final ‘1%’ obstacle that must be overcome to finalize the treaty. Goyal further stated that the only ‘nightmarish’ issue his team encountered during discussions was the time difference between New Delhi and Washington, and that he has a positive working relationship with his US colleagues. Negotiations for a full bilateral trade agreement (BTA) began in February 2025, with both parties recently agreeing the framework for an interim agreement while working to complete the remaining 1% of the accord. “It’s a very fair, very equitable [deal]. It’s a deal that gives us preferential access

to the United States market, and free trade agreements are all about preferential access... For us, the primary factor in the free trade deal is to get a preference over all our competitors, our neighbours, the Southeast Asian countries, and that’s the lens through which every country in the world has looked at it,” he said while speaking at the next chapter in the India-Japan partnership. Goyal noted that even the developed economies like the EU, UK, Switzerland, Japan, and South Korea have looked at it through the lens of relative benefits and advantages and competitiveness, “and that is that 1 per cent link,” he said. “After the IEEPA (International Economic Emergency Powers Act) tariffs were struck down

by the Supreme Court, the United States has to find the correct mechanism, a legally tenable mechanism by which they can give us the comparative advantage over our competitors,” he said. He noted that all the different elements -- whether it’s the concessions in different goods or breaking down non-tariff barriers -- have been largely finalised. “Till they give us this competitive advantage, it’s very difficult to enter into force any agreement, and that’s a position that the US also appreciates and understands... That’s the area on which they have to work, where the US has to work, and how they will give us a competitive advantage compared to our peers,” he added. When asked about any ‘nightmare’ he faced during ne-

gotiations, the minister said it was “a joyous and very learning experience.” “The only nightmare part of it is that the time difference is such that at times we have to stay awake at night, but you know I sleep very late. So for me, that was also not very difficult. My staff and my team may have had some difficulty as negotiations often went on till late in the evening,” he said. “I don’t think there was any stress at any point in time. Throughout this period, both negotiating teams have had a very good working relationship. I have had fabulous relations with both my counterparts there,” he added. The planned India-US trade pact looks to be closer to conclusion than at any time since discussions began, with senior officials from both sides indicating that just a few points remain unresolved. Sergio Gor, US Ambassador to India, provided a clear update, stating that discussions are nearing completion. Most of this transaction is accomplished. Gor stated that the remaining things from both parties are in the last 1-2% of the transaction. We’re really close,” he continued, calling the arrangement “a win-win scenario” that would provide stability to both sides’ industries.

In Mumbai, a man is missing after falling down a manhole in the rain; rescue operations are underway

Mumbai, July 02: A guy has gone missing after falling down a manhole in Mumbai after heavy rain on Thursday, prompting a large search and rescue operation. The event occurred on the Khairani Road, which connects the western neighborhoods of Andheri-Saki Naka and Jogeshwari to the central regions of Kurla and Ghatkopar, when he was allegedly conversing on his phone. His umbrella and slippers were discovered at the scene, and a search effort comprising the Mumbai Fire Brigade, police, and the 108 emergency ambulance service is underway to locate him. A private contractor was performing continuous maintenance work, therefore the manhole lid was left open.

The event occurred two days after an 11-year-old kid was murdered and four others injured when a tree uprooted and toppled on a moving school bus transporting pupils in Mumbai’s Chembur neighborhood. Mumbai’s civic body, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), suspended an official, stating that a preliminary inquiry found prima facie negligence on his part. Heavy rain continued in Mumbai on Thursday, leading to waterlogging in many prime locations, including Dadar,



Parel, Hindmata, Charkop, Worli, Goregaon and Andheri. Several areas logged more than 200 mm of rainfall over the last 24 hours, as per the city’s civic body, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). As per the BMC, the eastern suburbs received the highest average rainfall of 189 mm in the 24 hours ending at 8 am on Thursday, followed by 172 mm in the island city and 165 mm in the western suburbs. Santacruz SWM Workshop and the S Ward Office in Bhandup received the most rainfall (238.8 mm each), followed by



Paspoli Municipal School in Powai (234.6 mm), Tagore Nagar Municipal School in Vikhroli (233.2 mm), Mithagar Municipal School in Mulund (226 mm), Andheri Fire Station (225.4 mm), F South Ward Office in Parel (222 mm), and G South Ward Office in Prabhadevi (220.4 mm). Local rail services, considered Mumbai’s lifeblood, were also impacted by water accumulation on tracks, with passengers reporting trains running 10 to 15 minutes behind schedule in the morning. The railways, on the other hand, stated that services were

running “smoothly and normally”. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall in Mumbai and its suburbs, with the possibility of extremely heavy showers towards Thursday night and early Friday morning. Occasional gusty winds reaching 50-60 kmph are also likely. The BMC said a low tide of 1.82 metres is expected at 7.49 pm on Thursday, and a high tide of 3.71 metres is due at 1.31 am on Friday. The southwest monsoon reached Mumbai on June 23, 13 days after its normal onset date.

Ravi Shastri fumes about Vaibhav Sooryavanshi’s snub: “He would’ve taken England’s pants off”

New Delhi: Ravi Shastri, a former India coach and prominent pundit, expressed his uncensored thoughts after India’s decision not to give Vaibhav Sooryavanshi his international debut left him seething. The 15-year-old was in phenomenal form during the IPL 2026, amassing 776 runs for the Rajasthan Royals and was the tournament’s leading run-scorer. Prior to it, he played an important part in India’s victory at the U-19 World Cup. Sooryavanshi received his first international call-up for the T20I series against Ireland and England after his outstanding performances. However, he remained on the bench for both matches against Ireland, which India lost 0-2, as well as the opening T20I against England in Durham. After the match against England was abandoned due to rain, Shastri questioned the team management’s decision to keep the youngster out despite his outstanding IPL campaign. “Arrey, woh khelna chahiye tha yaar (He should have played against



Ireland). It was such a slow and spongy track. He would have smacked them on the terrace, it was such a small ground. He would have taken their pants off. He should have definitely played there. Now, whether he plays in England, I’m not sure. I am not sure whether they will blame him, but give him a game as soon as possible,” said Shastri on Sony Sports. “He has smashed everyone in the IPL. Which fast bowler did he spare? And you’re making him warm the bench” he added. Shastri further ar-

gued that Sooryavanshi is the kind of player who can bat with complete freedom, as he carries no baggage of expectations or responsibility. “He is the X-factor, does not have any baggage. He is just 15, has the exuberance of youth. He has no fear, and if he gets going in the first 2-3 overs, he will give you the kind of start that the middle order can capitalise on. You will have to make space for him,” he said. The second T20I between India and England will be played on July 4 in Manchester.

Bollywood Icon Shah Rukh Khan Unveils Los Angeles Cricket Stadium, Thanking Jay Shah For Support

New Delhi: In a crucial push for the global expansion of cricket, the Knight Riders Group has officially opened the doors to its brand-new international stadium in the United States. The new Knight Riders Cricket Ground in Los Angeles marked its historic unveiling by playing host to its inaugural Major League Cricket (MLC) fixture between the Los Angeles Knight Riders and Washington Freedom on Wednesday. The purpose-built venue at Fairplex Pomona represents a massive infrastructure milestone, making the Knight Riders the first global franchise brand to establish its own international-standard cricket stadium abroad.

Taking to social media to celebrate the landmark occasion, Bollywood mega-star and Knight Riders co-owner Shah Rukh Khan expressed his immense gratitude to the sport's key administrators for helping turn a long-cherished dream into reality. Khan explicitly acknowledged the institutional support that facilitated the ambitious transatlantic project, offering a



special note of appreciation to BCCI Secretary Jay Shah and the International Cricket Council (ICC). "What started as a dream turns into reality today," Shah Rukh Khan said in his Instagram post. "A place built not just for sports but also entertainment and for families and memories that last forever. "Special thanks to Jaybhai who has been too kind through this journey

@JayShah220988, & @ICC and Sanjog Gupta for being so supportive. This is for LA, for cricket fans across the globe, and for the Knight Riders family. Believe in Purple and Gold (sic)." Built strictly to elite international dimensions, the stadium features an expansive main square with eight natural turf wickets, six massive 120-foot floodlight towers



for night broadcasts, and an arena engineered by moving over 32,000 metric tonnes of earth. Speaking on the launch, Venky Mysore, CEO of Knight Riders Sports, underlined that the facility serves as a definitive statement of intent for the game's future in the United States. The venue is scheduled to host a blockbuster week of MLC matches from July 1 to July

5, anchoring Southern California as a premier cricketing hub ahead of the sport's inclusion in the LA28 Olympic Games. While results on the field will fluctuate, with the home side enduring a tough six-wicket defeat against a disciplined Washington Freedom unit in the opening encounter, the structural foundation laid by the franchise promises long-term dividends.

Sumit Nagal Opens Up About Isolated Two-Year Struggle

New Delhi: THERE was a point in Sumit Nagal's life in the recent past when he stopped talking to friends and family. The injuries had taken a toll, earnings had stopped and the ranking was in freefall. "There were days... weeks when I wasn't talking to anybody," he said during a select interaction. "I had cut myself off from friends and family. It wasn't easy, I kept things to myself." He said 'I was in a cave than being out there'. It was the point when India's No. 1 singles tennis player was threatening to fall outside the world's top 300 in 2025. Honestly, he accepts, it wasn't a great time in his life, both on and off the court. "I didn't keep myself motivated," he said. "I had a lot of bad thoughts." Life can be challenging for tennis players because of the very nature of the sport. Long journeys, nights spent alone away from home post matches, especially if you don't have a team of people looking after you. It's why his win at the Romania Challenger last week was a booster shot to his confidence. He was so delighted



with the title he didn't sleep a wink for hours after. "It means a lot," the 28-year-old said from his training base. "A lot of tough times over the last few years with the way I was playing and the way my body was reacting. It's a good way to boost confidence. Now there's new hope and space where I can hope to start pushing again." The trigger for the win in Romania came in Poznan, his previous event, where he took a good long look at himself in the mirror. "I asked a few questions to myself," he said. "Just put some pressure on myself to change some habits. I'm not saying that's what helped me win here but it's a great realisation to see

where my mind was (at the moment)." The World No. 219 doesn't have any goals between now and the end of the 2026 season. "I just want to play tennis, play week in, week out and the rhythm will come back." While dietary changes are part of athletes' transformation, Ancy opened up on hormonal issues and how it affected her body and eventually her confidence ahead of events. If heat rises, becomes even more difficult," she said. But then as the final neared, the jumper had told herself, 'If it comes, let it come.' "But my nutritionist Isha Khedekar came to the rescue with advice on eating fruits that would cool down the body heat.

Shreyas Iyer Completes 5,000 International Runs As Abhishek Sharma Hits 100 Sixes

Chester-le-Street: Indian middle-order batter and T20I skipper Shreyas Iyer completed 5,000 international runs on Wednesday. Iyer achieved this milestone during his side's first T20I against England at Chester-le-Street on Tuesday, scoring a fine 47-ball 68, with six fours and a six at a strike rate of over 144. In 147 matches for India, Iyer has made 5,031 runs at an average of 39.61, with a strike rate of 96.06, with six centuries and 37 fifties, including a best score of 128*. In 14 Tests for India, Iyer has 811 runs in 24 innings at an average of 36.86, with a century and five fifties, with a best score of 105. In 79 ODIs, which is his best format, Iyer has made 3,035 runs in 73 innings at an average of 45.98, with five centuries and 23 fifties, batting at a strike rate of 98.60, with a best score of 128*. In 54 T20Is, he has made 1,184 runs in 50 innings at an average of 30.38, with a strike rate of over 135, with nine fifties and a best score of 74*. It



was also a landmark match for hard-hitting Abhishek Sharma, who completed 100 sixes in T20Is, breaking past West Indies' Evin Lewis (789 balls) to reach the milestone in just 785 balls, the fastest by a Test-playing nation player. Abhishek, who scored an aggressive 59 in 24 balls, with six fours and four sixes at a strike rate of over 245, has 102

T20I sixes. Coming to the match, knocks from Iyer and Abhishek and a power-packed cameo from Shivam Dube (42* in 21 balls, with two fours and three sixes), powered India to 189/7 in 20 overs. But the match ended in a no result as England did not get a chance to bat due to rain. On July 4, Saturday, Manchester will host the second T20I.

Opting to bat first, India rolled with their established opening combination, leaving domestic sensation Vaidhava Sooryavanshi to wait a bit longer for his highly anticipated international debut. The decision initially seemed to backfire as India's top order collapsed under early pressure. Sanju Samson fell cheaply for just 1 run.

Ten-Man USA Reach Last Sixteen, Ending Bosnia's World Cup

New Delhi: The United States kept their World Cup dream alive with a spirited 2-0 victory over Bosnia and Herzegovina on Wednesday, booking a place in the round of 16 despite playing the closing stages with 10 men. Folarin Balogun gave the co-hosts the lead before being sent off, but Malik Tillman put the result beyond doubt with a superb late free-kick as the Americans showed grit to see the game out. The victory sends the Americans into the Round of 16, where Belgium await in Seattle on July 6, and keeps alive hopes of matching or even bettering their memorable run to the quarter-finals in 2002. USA vs Bosnia & Herzegovina, FIFA World Cup: HIGHLIGHTS The United States earned their first World Cup knockout victory since 2002, but it was far from straightforward after Balogun, who broke the deadlock just before half-time, was shown a straight red card in the 64th minute. Matt Freese made three saves to record his second clean sheet of the tournament as the home crowd roared the co-hosts over the line.

Bosnia and Herzegovina were playing in the World Cup knockout stage for the first time and started brightly. Freese was forced into back-to-back saves from Ermedin Demirovic and Kerim Alajbegovic after an early cor-



ner as the visitors threatened to take the lead. The Americans gradually settled into the contest and began to dominate possession. Christian Pulisic thought he had broken the deadlock in the 78th minute, but the effort was ruled out for offside. Before that, the hosts had finally made their pressure count in first-half stoppage time. A defensive mix-up saw the ball ricochet off Tarik Muharemovic into Balogun's path, and the striker reacted quickest, stopping, turning onto his left foot and calmly sliding the ball through the goalkeeper's legs for his third goal of the tournament.

Balogun almost doubled the advantage moments later when he crashed

Sergino Dest's pass against the crossbar. The game turned in the 64th minute when Balogun was sent off following a challenge on Muharemovic. Referee Raphael Claus initially allowed play to continue but was called to the pitchside monitor, where he upgraded the decision to a straight red card after seeing Balogun's studs catch the defender high on the ankle. With more than 25 minutes remaining, Bosnia and Herzegovina sensed an opportunity and committed more players forward. The United States were forced deeper into their own half but defended with discipline, restricting the visitors to few clear openings despite their numerical disadvantage.

Viral Training Video of Virat Kohli With Sanjay Bangar Fuels ODI Return Buzz

New Delhi: Virat Kohli's long-awaited return to international cricket may still be subject to fitness clearance, but the former India captain has already got fans talking after a video of him training with ex-India batting coach Sanjay Bangar went viral on social media. With the England ODI series just around the corner, the footage has reignited excitement around Kohli's return to the blue jersey. The viral clip shows Kohli arriving at the training ground with his kit bag slung over his shoulder before being greeted by Bangar. The pair are later seen in a discussion at the centre of the ground, with the former India batting coach appearing to guide Kohli through an extended training session. Kohli was named in India's 15-man squad for the three-match ODI series against England, although his participation remains



subject to fitness clearance. The series, beginning on July 14, is expected to mark the return of both Kohli and Rohit Sharma, who now feature exclusively in ODI cricket after retiring from Tests and T20Is. Reports suggest Kohli recently underwent an intensive training block in Alibaug and Mumbai alongside Bangar, focusing specifically on fine-tuning technical aspects of his batting ahead of the series. Since stepping away from Test and T20I cricket, Kohli's international

calendar has become far lighter, making every ODI appearance a major event for Indian cricket supporters. The England series will be his first international assignment since India's successful Champions Trophy campaign and will also offer an early indication of India's preparations for the 2027 ODI World Cup. The training footage has therefore been viewed as an encouraging sign, with fans widely sharing clips of Kohli's session and expressing excitement about

seeing the batting great back in action. Much of the attention centred on his prolonged conversations with Bangar, who worked closely with Kohli during one of the most successful phases of his international career. The former India batting coach was part of the national team's support staff between 2014 and 2019, a period during which Kohli established himself as one of the world's premier batters across formats. Kohli's childhood coach Rajkumar Sharma admitted that the anticipation surrounding the 37-year-old's comeback extends far beyond his close circle. "Definitely people are very excited and everybody is excited for Virat. The whole country wants to see him when he is back and, like others, I am also waiting for him to be on the field again," Sharma said during the Delhi Premier League 2026 auction.

Zlatko Dalić views Portugal versus Croatia as ultimate midfield battle

Toronto: Ahead of the FIFA World Cup round of 32 clash between Portugal and Croatia, Croatia coach Zlatko Dalić sees the match as a "battle of midfielders", pointing out his opponents' tactical greatness in the midfield area. The Portugal-Croatia clash at Toronto will be a clash between two modern-day football icons, Cristiano Ronaldo and Luka Modric, both in their early 40s, having worn the colours of Spanish giants Real Madrid for several years. However, with age not by their side anymore, this match could be the international swansong for either of these two icons. For Dalić, the match marks something more than just a Ronaldo-Modric battle; rather, it is a battle of sides with two great midfield players. "I believe this is going to be a battle of midfielders. Portugal has excellent players in the midfield. They are tactically very good. In this match, each error will be punished," Dalić said on Wednesday during the press conference as quoted by Reuters. Portugal has a star-studded midfield unit of Bruno Fernandes, Matheus Nunes, Bernardo Silva, Joao Neves, Vitinha, etc. Croatia has been a resilient side so far, over-



coming a 4-2 loss to England in their campaign opener with wins over Panama (1-0) and Ghana (2-1) to make it to the round of 32. On the other hand, Brazil has somewhat not delivered as per the hype yet, playing out a goalless draw against Colombia, the strongest opponent in their group, and played out a 1-1 draw against DR Congo as well, despite taking a lead. They did, however, score a dominant 5-0 win over Uzbekistan. However, Dalić refuses to take their opponents lightly, saying that

"it is a team that wants to possess the ball at all times. This team has a few weaknesses, and can at all times cause risk and danger." "That's why you do all the work behind the scenes. The things that you guys don't see when we are in training, when we are at home doing recovery, doing ice baths, doing treatment all the little details that make you be consistently at the highest level for as long as possible," Kane told reporters after the match, as per DAZN Football.