

Three-Day Primary Teachers Capacity Building Programme Begins in Tawang

Tawang, Aug 18: A three-day Capacity Building Programme tailored specifically for primary school teachers commenced in Tawang on Tuesday, August 18, 2026, bringing together educators from across the district to strengthen foundational learning methodologies and improve overall classroom instruction. Organized by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Itanagar, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, the initiative aims to enhance the professional competencies



of primary educators in alignment with updated pedagogical standards.

The inaugural event was graced by Tawang Deputy Commissioner Namgyal An-

gmo, IAS, as the Chief Guest. Other prominent attendees included Deputy Director of School Education (DDSE) Tawang Hridar Phuntsok, Assistant Director of SCERT

Mudang Omo, and resource experts from the Reach to Teach Foundation, the official knowledge partner of the Department of Education. Highlighting the context behind the initiative, SCERT Assistant Director Mudang Omo explained that the state-wide rollout was conceived following explicit feedback from educators emphasizing the need for specialized, targeted capacity building for the primary tier. Because primary teachers play a crucial, structural role in shaping a child's early cognitive development

and learning journey, equipping them with modernized teaching strategies and interactive tools remains a top priority for the state's education roadmap. In her address, Deputy Commissioner Namgyal Angmo commended SCERT and its knowledge partners for conducting the workshop in Tawang. She urged participating teachers to actively absorb the training modules, share ground-level classroom challenges, and adopt innovative, student-centric methodologies that translate directly into measurable learning outcomes.

Nagaland declares NSDMA services as an Essential Service

Kohima, Aug 18: The Nagaland state government has officially declared services rendered by the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA) as an "Essential Service" under the Nagaland Essential Services (Maintenance) Act, 1978. According to an official notification issued by the Home Department, the declaration was made by the Governor of Nagaland under Section 2(a)(v) of the Act following prior approval from the State Cabinet. With this notification,



NSDMA operations, relief coordination, and emergency response services are formally integrated into the statutory definition of essential services. The classification ensures unin-

terrupted operational readiness for disaster response and emergency management across Nagaland, taking effect immediately upon publication in the Official Gazette.

Angami Public Organisation launches migrant verification app, seeks tighter Inner Line Permit

Kohima, Aug 18: The Angami Public Organisation (APO), the apex tribal body of the Angami Naga community, launched a digital application to register, verify, and monitor migrant workers across Angami-inhabited areas. Simultaneously, the organization submitted a formal representation to the Nagaland government demanding stricter implementation of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) regime, including a fully digitized permit architecture and heightened surveillance at state entry

points. Inaugurated by APO President Thejao Vihienuo in Kohima, the "APO Digital Verification App" was introduced to address growing public concern over the influx of unregistered migrants and systemic loopholes in current border enforcement mechanisms. The Angami Students' Union (ASU) has been officially entrusted with conducting the ground-level verification drive. Using the mobile application, authorized field agents will record comprehensive details of outside la-

borers and tradespeople, including photo identification, personal background, employer credentials, work site location, duration of stay, and active ILP status. Once verified, the platform generates a digital pass featuring a specific validity period, creating a traceable movement log across urban wards and rural villages within APO jurisdiction. Addressing the government alongside the app release, the APO addressed a formal letter to the Chief Secretary of Nagaland outlining neces-



sary structural reforms. Key recommendations include setting up a dedicated ILP Cell within the state Home Department, transitioning all manual permit procedures into a transparent online portal, and deploying well-equipped enforcement personnel at crucial transit hubs, including the Dimapur Railway Station, Dimapur Airport, and inter-state highway checkpoints.

The tribal body emphasized that community-led technological tracking is essential to protect the de-

mographic identity, security, and statutory rights of indigenous Nagas while facilitating legitimate economic activity. Beyond the administrative safeguards, civil society bodies are taking direct tech-driven measures to monitor regional demographics and enforce regulatory compliance. The Angami Public Organisation (APO) launched a dedicated mobile verification application designed to register and monitor migrant workers across villages and urban centers in its jurisdiction.

Kerala Govt to bear cost of returning Arunachal student's mortal remains

Kothamangalam, Aug 18: The Kerala state government has announced that it will bear the complete cost of transporting the mortal remains of Michi Marpu, a 20-year-old engineering student from Arunachal Pradesh who died by suicide at Mar Athanasius College of Engineering (MACE) in Kothamangalam.



The third-year Civil Engineering student was found dead at his off-campus residence on August 15. Following intervention from Higher Education Minister Roji M. John, state authorities coordinated with the Arunachal Pradesh government and airline operators to fly the student's body from Kochi to Donyi Polo Airport in Hollongi, from where it will be taken to his family home in Ziro, Lower Subansiri district.

The tragic incident has sparked massive student protests and brought the autonomous institution's academic policies under severe scrutiny. Student organizations, including the SFI and KSU, alleged that Marpu

took the extreme step due to severe distress caused by MACE's strict "year-back" system. The college's internal rules mandated that students achieve a minimum of 22 credits in Semester 4 to proceed to the fifth semester. Classmates revealed that Marpu was barred from attending classes due to falling short of the threshold, even though APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University (KTU) had explicitly suspended the year-back rule for affiliated colleges. Higher Education Minister Roji M. John confirmed that a department-level inquiry has been ordered to investigate institutional negligence. He noted

that while MACE exercised its autonomous status to retain the rigid credit threshold, autonomous institutions must align their policies with student welfare. Following intense demonstrations, the MACE management accepted all student demands, agreeing to withdraw the 22-credit year-back system, align its criteria with KTU guidelines, readmit all affected students, reduce supplementary exam fees, and establish a dedicated grievance and counseling cell for out-of-state students. Police have registered a case of unnatural death under Section 194 of the BNSS as investigations continue.

Kohima, Aug 18: Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio expressed deep sorrow and grief over the passing of Dr. Vikethonyü Kesiezie, founder and Managing Director of Oking Hospital and Research Clinic, Kohima, who died on Monday, August 17, 2026, at the age of 65. In a condolence message issued on Tuesday, Chief Minister Rio paid rich tributes to the prominent surgeon, describing him as a dedicated healthcare professional, visionary pioneer, and compassionate humanitarian who left an indelible footprint on Nagaland's medical landscape. He noted that under Dr. Kesiezie's leadership, Oking Hospital transformed into a cornerstone of private healthcare in the state, playing an invaluable role in strengthening specialized medical infrastructure and making advanced clinical care accessible to the public at a time when such facilities were extremely scarce. Rio also praised Dr. Kesiezie's humanitarian endeavors, high-



lighting his active involvement in the Smile Train Shija Cleft Project-Mission Nagaland, through which hundreds of children and adults with cleft lip and cleft palate received free surgeries, medicines, and comprehensive

rehabilitative support. Beyond his medical contributions, the Chief Minister fondly recalled Dr. Kesiezie as a warm, down-to-earth, and gracious personal friend, sharing personal memories of their times spent together planting trees and vis-

iting orchards.

A pioneer in private practice after completing his MBBS and MS in Surgery, Dr. Kesiezie transitioned from government service to establish Oking Hospital in Kohima. His mission extended deep

into rural areas, routinely organizing mobile medical camps alongside church groups to treat under-served remote communities. He was laid to rest on Tuesday following a funeral service held at the Golden Jubilee Hall of the Cathedral in Kohima. Concluding his message, Chief Minister Rio extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members, colleagues, and well-wishers, praying for peace for the departed soul.

According to hospital sources, Dr. Kesiezie had been battling a prolonged kidney-related ailment and was receiving intensive care in the ICU of Oking Hospital for several months prior to his demise. Led by Rev. Dr. Ruokuoville Sachü, Pastor of Khedi Baptist Church, his funeral service brought together prominent members of the medical fraternity, civil society leaders, and government dignitaries who gathered to honor his life and lasting contributions.

Renowned Naga peace activist and statesman Niketu Iralu passes away

Kohima, Aug 18: Renowned Naga peace activist, humanitarian, and veteran statesman Niketu Iralu passed away on Tuesday, August 18, 2026, at the age of 91, leaving behind an extraordinary legacy of conflict resolution, moral courage, and peacebuilding spanning over six decades across Northeast India.



Born in 1935 in Nagaland's Phek district, Iralu completed his higher education at Madras Christian College before embarking on a lifelong crusade for social reform and non-violent dialogue starting in 1955. Over the decades, he emerged as one of the most respected figures in the region's peace efforts. As a key pillar of the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR) and former Director of Asia Pla-

teau (Initiatives of Change) in Panchgani, Maharashtra, Iralu dedicated his life to bridging divides among political factions, ethnic communities,

and state authorities, steadfastly advocating for truth, healing, and human dignity. His peace mission extended well beyond Nagaland into

the broader Northeast. He played a instrumental role in fostering communal harmony in Assam's Bodoland region and strengthening cultural

bridges between the peoples of Assam and Nagaland. In recognition of his selfless service, he was honored with the Upendra Nath Brahma Soldier of Humanity Award in 2011 and the Bhupen Hazarika Integration Award in 2023. Internationally, he was conferred the prestigious Lifetime Achiever Award 2025 by Initiatives of Change (IoC) International in Pretoria for his tireless work in trustbuilding across diverse ethnic groups. Political leaders, tribal apex bodies, and civil society groups across Nagaland and the Northeast expressed profound grief, remembering him as an irreplaceable moral compass whose commitment to non-violence will inspire generations.

Over 200 West Kameng households earn ₹39 lakh from Khagi

Itanagar, Aug 18: A traditional wild Himalayan spice, locally known as Khagi, has emerged as a successful model of community-led enterprise and forest conservation in Arunachal Pradesh's West Kameng district. Over 200 indigenous households in the region collectively harvested and marketed more than 10 metric tonnes of the produce, generating a turnover of ₹39 lakh while helping protect over 100 square kilometers of community-managed forests.

Khagi, a species of Zanthoxylum closely related to Sichuan pepper or Timur, is a wild-growing, citrusy Himalayan spice traditionally used by local tribal communities in food preparation and indigenous healing practices. Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein commended the effort, stating



that the project successfully transformed a traditional, subsistence-level forest gathering activity into an organized commercial model. Centered around Community Conserved Areas (CCAs)—such as the Mandala Phudung Khel-long CCA—local families organized collective harvesting, sun-drying, aggregation, and price negotiations to establish uniform rates and eliminate

exploitation by middlemen. Supported by technical assistance from WWF-India and the State Forest Department, the initiative connected the communities directly with major institutional buyers, including Dabur India, Nahar Organics, and NERAMAC. Individual farming households earned supplementary incomes ranging between ₹5,000 and ₹10,000 per season.

Foundation stone for Rs 140-cr road project

Shillong, Aug 18: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Monday laid the foundation stone for the upgradation of the Weilo-i-Mawkyrwat-Rangthong road in South West Khasi Hills, a Rs. 140-crore project funded entirely from the State's own resources.

Addressing a large gathering, Sangma underscored the transformative role of road infrastructure in unlocking growth across remote districts. "Every rupee we put into connectivity is not spent on tar and stone. It is invested in people, in how easily a mother can reach a hospital, how regularly a child can reach school, and how confidently a farmer can access markets," he said.

Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong, Tourism Minister Timothy D. Shira and several MLAs were present at the event. Sangma reiterated the government's vision of balanced regional development, stressing that no district should be left behind.

He highlighted that historically underserved regions such as South West Khasi Hills, South Garo Hills and East Jaintia Hills are now central to the government's development agenda. Since 2018, projects worth over Rs. 850 crore have been implemented in South West Khasi Hills, with cumulative commitments nearing Rs. 990 crore. These include road infrastructure, drinking water schemes, educational institutions, healthcare facilities and tourism-related developments.

The CM informed that more than 3,200 kilometres of roads have been constructed across Meghalaya in the last eight years, averaging nearly one kilometre per day.

He described the upgraded road as a "growth corridor" that will connect villages and economic hubs, reduce travel time, and enhance access to essential services.

"This road will open up avenues of tourism, agriculture, trade, and education. Connectivity is the foundation upon which all development is built," Sangma said, adding that the project is expected to boost tourism potential in South West Khasi Hills and strengthen market linkages for farmers and entrepreneurs.

Reiterating the government's philosophy of decentralised development, Sangma emphasised that Meghalaya's progress must extend beyond Shillong. "Our commitment is clear – development must reach every nook and corner of Meghalaya. South West Khasi Hills will not be an afterthought; it will be one of the engines of growth in our journey towards a stronger and more inclusive state," he affirmed.



Pala is set to lead the restructured Congress party in Meghalaya

Shillong, Aug 18: After being reduced to a complete zero in the 60-member Meghalaya Assembly, following decades of political dominance in the state, the Congress party is now making a concerted effort to revive its organization in what was once a stronghold.

As part of the party's Sangathan Srijan Abhiyan, All India Congress Committee (AICC) president Mallikarjun Kharge has sanctioned a comprehensive organizational restructuring of the Meghalaya Pradesh Congress Committee, which includes the appointment of new office-bearers and the establishment of key committees effective immediately.

Vincent H. Pala, a three-time MP, will continue to lead the party in the state. Deborah C. Marak and Khranglin Lyngkhoi Tbn have been designated as working presidents, while Saleng A. Sangma, the sole Lok Sabha MP from Tura, has been appointed as Senior Vice-President. Boniface Bamon, Boldness L. Nongrum, and Omarlin Kyndiah will take on the roles of Vice Presidents. Senior female leader Wansuk Syiem, along with Sanjay Das and Brigady N. Marak,

has been appointed as general secretaries. Additionally, four significant committees have been established. A. Chellakumar, a former Tamil Nadu Congress leader, will chair the Political Affairs Committee, which includes Vincent H. Pala, Deborah C. Marak, Saleng A. Sangma, and others. Vincent H. Pala, who is the current MPCC President and a candidate for the Shillong Lok Sabha, will lead the Pradesh Election Committee. The Disciplinary Action Committee will be chaired by Khranglin Lyngkhoi Tbn, with Wansuk Syiem serving as Convener, while Saleng

A. Sangma will head the Manifesto Committee, with Sanjay Das as Convener.

The district units have also been restructured, with Lawanpynshn-gain War appointed as President of the Eastern West Khasi Hills District Congress Committee, C.B. Syiem for Ri-Bhoi, and Princeco M. Marak for South West Garo Hills.

This overhaul aims to enhance coordination among senior leaders and prepare the organization for the upcoming Shillong Lok Sabha bypoll and other political challenges that lie ahead.

Lotha Group Demands State Action on Imminent Border Evictions

Shillong, Aug 18: The Lotha Lower Range Public Organisation is pushing the Nagaland government to stop an impending eviction of 59 families at No. 2 Nagheribil. Officials in Assam set an August 18 deadline for the clearance. This land sits in Merapani on the border. Tensions are rising.

The LLRPO claims the site falls under the jurisdiction of Longayim and Mekirang villages in Nagaland. Naga landowners allegedly sold this property to the current residents, and they hold the paperwork to prove it. The group warns that any unilateral move by the Assam Forest Department and Golaghat District Administration to clear the



area threatens Nagaland's territorial rights.

They want the state to trigger legal and administrative safeguards immediately. No eviction should happen without joint coordination

between Assam and Nagaland. The organization fears that if Assam acts alone, it will solidify their claim to contested soil. They demanded that the Nagaland government stop being a bystander. "The Government

of Nagaland cannot remain a silent spectator where an action by another State has the potential to affect the territorial and land rights of its people," the group stated. The LLRPO urged the Border Magistrate of Bhandari Sub-Division to prioritize the case. Officials must verify traditional boundaries and official records before allowing any displacement. The organization insists that even if a lawful process eventually leads to eviction, the land must not automatically pass to Assam. Protecting the rights of indigenous owners remains the primary goal. They warned that inaction now will create long-term consequences for the border dispute.

TMPK announces complete withdrawal of economic blockade meeting with CM

Itanagar, Aug 18: The Assam-based Takam Mising Porin Kebang (TMPK), the student body of the Mising community, has called off its road and economic blockade against Arunachal Pradesh on Monday following a meeting with Chief Minister Pema Khandu. The meeting, held here on Sunday, was attended by representatives of the Galo Youth Organisation, Adi Students' Union (AdiSU), Adi Ba:ne Kebang Youth Wing and All Lower Siang District Students' Union (ALSDSU).

The TMPK had imposed an economic blockade against Arunachal Pradesh after violence broke out on August 10, when a group of people from Badati and nearby villages in Assam entered Hime village and clashed with locals.

People on both sides sustained injuries, with some villagers from Assam suffering gunshot wounds. The TMPK later temporarily suspended the blockade on August 13 following discussions with officials of the Assam and Arunachal Pradesh governments and community-based organisations from Arunachal Pradesh.

"In view of the fresh and specific assurances received from the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, TMPK has now decided to call off the agitation completely. We expect that all assurances will be implemented strictly, effectively and within a definite time frame," the TMPK stated.



It also said that it would continue to closely monitor developments and take an appropriate course of action if the commitments were not honoured. However, the TMPK clarified that its struggle was against injustice, violence and impunity, and not against the people of Arunachal Pradesh.

"We remain committed to peace, justice, fraternity and a permanent, mutually acceptable resolution of the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border issue," it added.

On Sunday, a joint delegation of the Adi Ba:ne Kebang Youth Wing (ABKYW), Adi Students' Union (AdiSU), Takam Mising Porin Kebang (TMPK), Galo Youth Organisation (GYO) and All Lower Siang District Students' Union (ALSDSU) met with the Chief Minister. During the meeting, the delegation submitted a joint resolution adopted at a peace

and harmony meeting held at Likabali in Lower Siang district in the wake of the recent incident.

Hime village and the resultant tension along the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh boundary.

The organisations called for a free, fair and time-bound probe into the incident. They also demanded strict action against anyone responsible for violence, destruction of property or intimidation, irrespective of their community or organisational affiliation. The joint resolution further proposed the formation of a Joint Co-ordination Committee comprising the presidents of the TMPK, ABKYW, AdiSU and GYO.

The TMPK's decision to impose an economic blockade across Arunachal Pradesh had angered Arunachal residents, with people facing considerable hardship due to the blockade.

Five Meghalaya Pilgrims Killed in West Bengal Hotel Blaze

Itanagar, Aug 18: A tragic fire at Hotel Bideshini Yatri Nibas in the Birbhum district of West Bengal claimed the lives of eight individuals early on Monday, including five pilgrims from Meghalaya. The fire broke out around 4:30 am on the ground floor of the five-storey establishment located near the Tarapith Temple. Most guests were asleep when smoke began to ascend to the upper levels.

The victims from Meghalaya include Rajendra Nath, Asha Nath, Buran Madak, and two children, 10-year-old Shivraj Madak and 8-year-old Aushnath Madak, all of whom were from the Dalu area. Additionally, three victims from Alipurduar have been identified as

Kamal Roy, Amit Pal, and Subir Saha. Authorities are still in the process of confirming the identity of a fourth resident from Alipurduar, Rajesh Sharma.

Birbhum Superintendent of Police Vidit Raj Bhun-desh reported that rescuers



utilized ladders to save 22 individuals, while 11 were taken to the hospital. In total, 28 people survived the incident, although seven are still receiving medical treatment. "Neither smoke nor flames were visible from the outside," Bhun-desh remarked. Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma declared ex-gratia payments of Rs 2 lakh to

the families of each deceased individual.

"This is an unimaginable tragedy for the families," Sangma expressed. His government is collaborating with the Birbhum district authorities to facilitate the return of the bodies to their homes. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also expressed his sorrow over the loss of life. While

hotel management indicated that a short circuit near the reception may have ignited the fire, the precise cause has yet to be determined. Police have filed an FIR and detained hotel staff for questioning regarding possible deficiencies in the building's fire safety systems. A forensic team is expected to examine the site shortly.

Arunachal Club T20 Cricket Championship Kicks Off

Itanagar, Aug 18: The sixth Arunachal Club T20 Championship for the 2026-27 season has officially commenced. The action began at the AIOC ground located in Jollang, Itanagar. Aalo West MLA Topin Ete was the chief guest at the opening ceremony, with Teli Pada Camdir serving as the guest of honour. The Itanagar Cricket Club is responsible for organizing this event.

Ete expressed his support for the tournament, commending the organizers for providing young athletes with an opportunity to enhance their skills. He welcomed the tournament and acknowledged the efforts of the organisers in offering young cricketers from Arunachal Pradesh a platform to cultivate and display their talents. Additionally, he recognized the contributions of club president Advocate Suraj Tayam in fostering the grassroots cricket scene.

A total of nine teams are vying for the championship title. The rosters feature players from Itanagar, Nirjuli, Seppa, and Aalo. Among the participating teams are the Nirjuli Cricket Club and the Donyi Polo Cricket Academy. This event aims to elevate the levels of competition and promote better sportsmanship throughout the state, providing local youth with the opportunity to compete against



established regional talent.

The tournament serves as a vital stepping stone for the future of cricket in the state. It has also inspired the emergence of other franchise sports in the region. There is a growing interest among the youth in organized competitions across Arunachal Pradesh.

Meghalaya Opens Sustainable and Archaeological Museum Eco-Tourism Projects

Itanagar, Aug 18: Meghalaya launched its first eco-sustainable habitat, the Pine Home, in Mawlangwir village on August 17. The project cost Rs 4 crore. It sits in the South West Khasi Hills. Local masons built the site using wood, bricks, and recycled wool for insulation. This blends traditional construction with modern engineering. The Picasso Pupils Art Society, Emage Architecture Studio of Slovakia, and the Saitsnad Multipurpose Co-operative Society developed the site. The Meghalaya Tourism Department provided support. Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma attended the launch. He emphasized the government's role in local development. "Our job is limited to providing the ecosystem and providing the support

and the policies, for enterprise and for organisations to thrive," Sangma said. The state also inaugurated the Twahlongwar Open-Air Museum in Mawsynram. The site features an 18th-century Khasi settlement. It contains over 20 structures, megaliths, a historic market, and an iron furnace. The government allocated ₹63 lakh for research and infrastructure here. Sangma plans to form a committee to study the Khasi, Pnar, and Garo communities. He earmarked Rs 20 crore for this research, which will include DNA testing. Financial support for tourism continues. Fifteen people received ₹10 lakh each under the Chief Minister's Homestay Scheme. Three tourism societies earned ₹5 lakh each for site development. Sangma also

promised better road infrastructure and confirmed that Shillong airport will handle larger aircraft by next year. Tourism Commissioner Rosetta Kurbah stated the Pine Home serves as a model for ecological conservation. The government aims to make both sites pillars of sustainable, community-based tourism. Updated at 18th August 2026 at 2:00am Beyond its immediate utility, officials intend for the Pine Home facility to grow into a hub for training and research focused on ecological building techniques. Esfulding Marwein, secretary of the Saitsnad Multipurpose Cooperative Society, noted the project has already provided locals with practical insights into using raw materials in environmentally safer ways.

Vizhinjam Port Opens New Gateway to International Trade and Starts Export-Import Operations

Thiruvananthapuram, Aug 18: The launch of full-fledged EXIM operations at Vizhinjam International Seaport signifies the opening of the nation's new maritime gateway through this port, which will turn Kerala into a port city through "Mission Samudra," according to Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan's ambitious maritime vision for Kerala on Tuesday. Chief Minister Satheesan stood at the port's gate and waved two containers into the port for the first time just before speaking to the august assembly. Chief Minister Satheesan addressed the historic opening of land-based export-import operations at the Vizhinjam International Seaport, stating that Kerala must take advantage of the deep-water transshipment port's opportunity to send its goods straight to any region of the world. "This is one of the most important days for Kerala. The gateway to the world has opened today," Chief Minister Satheesan said, stressing that the state must now ensure that the opportunity translates into economic growth and jobs. He acknowledged that Kerala had lost valuable time over the past decade by failing to



advance road and rail connectivity to Vizhinjam. He stated that "not everything is lost" and that "this port would have made huge progress if it had been done." He stated that state agencies had already been instructed to purchase property for logistics parks and other supporting facilities, and he promised that there would be no more delays in matters pertaining to the port. According to Chief Minister Satheesan, "Mission Samudra" aims to expand the state's water-based transportation network, develop the almost 600-kilometer coastline, and connect Kerala's two major ports and network of smaller ports. In order to connect cruise tourism with Kerala's lakes and backwaters, Chief Minister Satheesan also announced plans for a cruise

port at Kochi, with the state offering land to the Cochin Port Authority. Additionally, a nautical museum honoring Vasco da Gama's historic arrival in 1498 and an oceanarium in Kochi are planned. He said that Mission Samudra would go beyond infrastructure to encompass academic programs, logistics, and maritime-related projects, making it possible for Keralan students to find work in the state. Additionally, the government intends to create a Vizhinjam-affiliated consultancy that might offer knowledge for port development in other nations. According to Industries Minister P.K. Kunhalikutty, the event was one of the most significant turning points in Kerala's history. He advised exporters to hold road shows to promote Kerala products internation-

ally and stated that the first EXIM consignments contained traditional Kerala food and snack items headed for European markets. According to Ashwani Gupta, CEO of Adani Vizhinjam Port, the EXIM launch creates a new link between Kerala and India and the rest of the world. He emphasized that the port could handle almost 30% of India's container market with its 2.3 million TEU capacity. According to Gupta, the project required an expenditure of about Rs 7,700 crore, and the group is currently developing Phase II with a further investment of Rs 16,000 crore, bringing Vizhinjam closer to becoming the nation's main marine gateway. He mentioned the port's May 2, 2025, opening by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and stated the project has surmounted cyclones and other obstacles. He also emphasized Vizhinjam's sophisticated automated systems and capacity to manage extremely large boats. However, the launch's message to Kerala was more expansive: Vizhinjam is now more than just a port project; it is the suggested beginning of a new maritime economy for the state and the nation.

An angioplasty is performed on Union Minister JP Nadda; his condition is stable: AIIMS Delhi



New Delhi, Aug 18: Union health minister JP Nadda had an angioplasty on Monday at AIIMS Delhi; the hospital reported on Tuesday that he is stable and undergoing additional monitoring. A medical technique called angioplasty is used to clear constricted or blocked arteries that provide blood to the heart and other

body parts. According to the hospital's official statement on Tuesday, "JP Nadda, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, underwent angioplasty on August 17, 2026 and is stable and under observation in the Dept of Cardiology, AIIMS, New Delhi." The hospital announced on Friday that the Union minister was

taken to AIIMS Delhi last week due to discomfort. The official release from AIIMS Delhi on August 14 stated that "JP Nadda, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, was evaluated for uneasiness with tests including a coronary angiography on the evening of 13th August 2026."

A diagnostic technique called coronary angiography is used to see coronary arteries and measure blood flow. Around 1:00 PM on Friday, the hospital released a formal press release stating that JP Nadda had a coronary angiography following his admission on Thursday. Dr. Rima Dada, the hospital's media representative, made the remarks on Friday. Nadda was admitted to the hospital just hours after Thursday's conclusion of the Monsoon Session of Parliament. The Opposition and Nadda, the Rajya Sabha's Leader of the House, got into a heated argument on the last day of the session.

At UP school, two pupils are said to have died after consuming momos and french fries

New Delhi, Aug 18: After allegedly eating momos and french fries on Monday, the health of two kids at a private school in Uttar Pradesh abruptly declined, leading to their deaths and the recovery of one. The parents claim that on Sunday nite, the kids ate momos and finger chips that were purchased from a store close to Mahendra Chowk. It's unclear if this had anything to do with their ailments. In order to ascertain the precise cause of death, police are investigating the deaths and have sent both remains for post-mortem examinations. The incident happened at BL Vidya Mandir, a private residential school in the Jheel Ka Purwa neighborhood of Banda. Nitin, 12, a residential student in Class 6, and Arun Kushwaha, 9, a student in Class 2, were the deceased. Between Sunday nite and Monday morning, both reported experiencing vomiting and stomach pain at different occasions. According to his family, Nitin, who lives in Sarwasah village near the Girwan police station, became sick on Monday at around one in the morning. He was first

taken to the district hospital by school personnel, but they soon returned him to the school. Around seven in the morning, he was brought back to the hospital, where medical professionals pronounced him dead. Around four in the morning, Arun, a resident of Mahendu hamlet near the Chilla police station, became unwell. At around six in the morning, school personnel brought him to the district hospital, where medical professionals recommended that he attend a medical college. He passed away en route. Yogesh Shivhare, a Class 4 pupil, became ill on Monday afternoon as well and was transported to the district hospital. He was receiving therapy and was said to be doing well. The police had officially started an investigation into the deaths, according to additional SP Banda Shivraj, who also stated that the two students' post-mortems were performed on Monday nite and that their viscera had been saved for analysis. The way the school treated the sick pupils has also come under scrutiny in light of the deaths.

Another prisoner in the murder case of Narendra Dabholkar is granted bail by the Bombay High Court



New Delhi, Aug 18: Sachin Andure, a convict in the murder of Dr. Narendra Dabholkar, was given a life sentence on Tuesday by the Bombay High Court, which also allowed him bail while he appealed his conviction. In response to a request submitted by the right-wing

Nitin Nabin Names BJP In-Charges for Gujarat, Punjab, and UP Ahead of the Elections

New Delhi, Aug 18: Rajya Sabha MP Vinod Tawde and national general secretary Jagdish Ishwarbhai Patel were named co-in-charge of party affairs in Uttar Pradesh by BJP president Nitin Nabin on Tuesday. Satish Poonia, a Rajya Sabha MP and recently named BJP national general secretary, was given responsibility for party activities in Punjab, the party announced. Tarun Chugh, a Rajya Sabha MP, was appointed by Nabin to oversee party affairs in Gujarat. These appointments will take effect right now. The BJP stated in a circular that "the current Prabhari arrangement will continue; other state in-charges will be appointed in due course." Party insiders claim that these selections were made



in anticipation of the next assembly elections. Gujarat will hold elections later in 2027, but Punjab and Uttar Pradesh's assembly elections are scheduled for early next year. This occurs one day after the BJP reorganized its national team under party leader Nitin Nabin, adding a number of new members as

well as notable figures like former RSS employee Ram Madhav as vice president and former Union minister Smriti Irani as general secretary. The new team now has 13 vice presidents instead of only 11, with nine of them being new. Additionally, there are now eight national general secretaries instead of just

seven. There are sixteen national secretaries on the new BJP team. The former team consisted of eleven national secretaries. The only national general secretaries the BJP has kept in its new team are Tawde and Sunil Bansal. One of the newcomers to the group of eight national general secretaries is Poonia, a former president of the Rajasthan BJP Party. Party sources claim that Tawde and Bansal received recognition for their outstanding organizational efforts. According to sources, the party acknowledged Ban-sal's role in helping the BJP win the West Bengal Assembly elections. Rajya Sabha MP Arun Singh has been replaced as the party's central office chief by BJP Rajya Sabha MP Tarun Chugh.

More than 47 lakh Delhi voters will not be included in the draft poll



New Delhi, Aug 18: As part of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process, the names of over 47 lakh Delhi voters will not be included in the draft electoral roll that will be released on August 24. On October 27, Delhi's final voter list will be released. The deadline for submitting enumeration forms was Monday, and when the draft electoral rolls were published on August 24, those who did not submit their forms had an opportunity to submit their claims and objections. Out of the 1.45 crore voters in the city, 97.47 lakh (67.18%) filed their enumeration forms, which were digitized by

booth-level officers (BLOs) in each constituency, according to data issued by the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer's (CEO) office. Several minority-dominated constituencies registered relatively higher numbers of forms submitted and successfully digitized, data showed. The Tughlakabad Assembly constituency had the lowest form submission rate during the third phase of the SIR process, which took place between June 30 and August 17. There, only 52% of voters turned in their forms; the remaining 48% were either missing or untraceable. With just 54.66% of voters submitting their

forms, the Muslim-majority Okhla constituency had the second-lowest turnout. Following with submission rates of 56% and 57%, respectively, were Kasturba Nagar and Kalkaji. Only 877,064 of the 1,557,289 registered voters in the Southeast Delhi district returned their forms, yielding a mere 56.32% submission rate. The Rohini constituency in North West Delhi, with 1,50,398 voters, recorded the highest percentage of forms digitized at 83.43 per cent (1,25,478), while 24,920 enumeration forms were marked as 'uncollectable' there. Shakurbasti (81.26%), Rajouri Garden (79.14%), Mangolpuri (78.76%), and Udam Nagar (77.76%) were among the other assembly constituencies with higher percentages of digitization. During the claims and objection period, which runs from August 24 to September 23, voters who have not yet filed their enumeration forms will submit Form 6. Between August 24 and October 22, the CEO's office will notify these voters and address their concerns and claims.

DMK Regarding Vijay and Trisha's Independence Day Salute

New Delhi, Aug 18: The DMK is not impressed. The main opposition party is not pleased that actor Trisha Krishnan, the alleged girlfriend of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay, was sat in the front row during the Independence Day festivities at Fort St. George. The DMK has questioned the actor's sitting arrangement during the official program and the two, Vijay and Trisha, exchanging salutes in a harshly critical editorial published in Murasoli, the party's official mouthpiece. Trisha was seated in the front row with Vijay's parents, SA Chandrasekhar and Shobha Chandrasekhar, wearing a yellow saree and green blouse. The actor can be seen saluting the Chief Minister as he passes by while carrying out his formal duties during the occasion in recordings that have since gone viral. "Chief Minister Vijay's dignity soared when he raised the flag on Independence Day. Even those who supported him were unable to look at him without feeling ashamed or embarrassed, forcing an actor to sit in the front row while they both saluted one another. The editorial, which was published today and did not identify the actor, stated, "It's such a person who thinks he can justify such vulgarity and disgust by doing it openly and blatantly, has come today as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu." The editorial questioned "how will people react" and asserted that "even Vijay's fans aren't able to accept him bringing an actor to the Independence Day celebrations and saluting her." Additionally, it stated that some "TVK voters were unable to accept" the scene where the two were seen giving each other a salute. But people in Trisha's immediate vicinity, including Vijay's family and admirers, were also observed honoring him. The TVK, Vijay's party, has not yet addressed the criticism. The Chief Minister's wife, Sangkeetha, who just withdrew her divorce petition, had previously accused him of mental abuse, neglect, and an extramarital affair. Vijay had called the development "worthless" during a public meeting. The head of the Opposition in the Assembly, Udhayanidhi Stalin, was detained from his home earlier this month for allegedly making a "double-meaning" comment about Trisha. Police charged him under a number of legal provisions, including those pertaining to the use of profanity and insulting a woman's modesty. The controversy occurred when some members of the crowd allegedly began chanting "Trisha, Trisha" as Udhayanidhi was speaking at a Cauvery demonstration.

Mahua Moitra's battle with Bengal officials heats up, as a TMC MP files a privilege notice on a late-night eviction attempt

New Delhi, Aug 18: After receiving a late-night eviction notice on August 14, Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra filed a privilege notice against three senior officials before Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. The TMC leader accused Nadia government officials of grave procedural violations and disrespectful behavior. Moitra, who arrived at the Nadia Circuit House for an overnight stay at 6:15 p.m., claimed that at 9:47 p.m., she was ordered to leave the official MP accommodations. In accordance with Rule 222 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha,

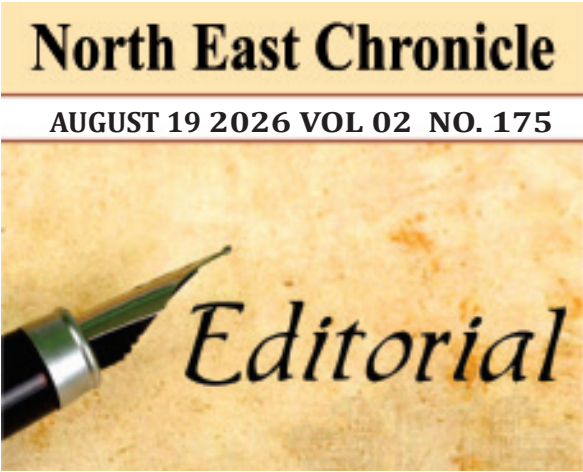
the member of Parliament sent a notice on August 16. She requested action against Nazareth Deputy Collector Anamika Bera, Additional District Magistrate Nirpendra Singh, and Nadia District Magistrate Srikanth Palli. Moitra pled with the Speaker to guaranty protection so she might fulfill her constitutional obligations "free of intimidation and harassment," claiming that attempts were being made to stop her from performing her legislative duties. According to the TMC MP, she told the Speaker about her August 13 visit to the constituency before returning to West Bengal as the Mon-



soon Session came to a conclusion. She had called for safety from intimidation or

obstruction. Moitra claimed that her regular room was ready for her when she arrived to the Nadia Circuit House. "Tea was served in my room at 7 pm and dinner was served at 9.20 pm in the room," she replied. The Nadia extra district magistrate allegedly called her a few hours later at 9:47 p.m., requesting that she leave the room. The ADM allegedly ascribed the order to the district magistrate when she questioned the cause for the eviction, she claimed. She received a copy of an order over WhatsApp later that evening, at 10.52 p.m., informing her that the circuit home would be unavailable start-

ing in the evening of August 14. According to the August 12 order, annual maintenance and cleaning services will be suspended until additional directives are received. It added that reservations made before to August 13 will not be subject to the broad suspension. Moitra has questioned why, if the order had been given earlier on August 12, the administration waited until 10 p.m. to urge her to leave. The TMC MP claimed that neither when she booked the accommodation nor when she checked in, the personnel informed her of any such orders. Rather, she was given a well-prepared room and food.



Freedom defines true national Independence

The term “independence” is linked to “freedom” and is a meaningless word without it. A few years ago I had surveyed the state of freedom in India as the world saw it. I had done this for one of my books, but periodically I revisit this list of indices to see what changes have come.

On Independence Day last Saturday, I thought it would be apposite to do this. Some of the organisations which are referred to here may be unfamiliar to readers but they are reputable and their findings are respected. We shall look at what the government says about them at the end. Let us start. The Pew Research Centre is an American organisation that monitors long term trends. It reviews government restrictions and social hostilities around the world. Its latest finding is that India has high levels of the former and “very high” levels of social hostilities. By 2019, India was in the top 10 in each of the following categories.

CIVICUS is the global alliance of civil society organisations. It monitors freedom of association, of peaceful assembly and expression. In its rating India’s civic space fell from “Obstructed” to “Repressed”. It says that the “deterioration of India’s civic space is alarming” – particularly its assault on freedom of expression using an array of restrictive laws and its attempts to impede human rights groups.” Because of this, its report says that “India has been added to a watchlist of countries that have seen a rapid decline in civic freedoms”. The Economist Intelligence Unit is a part of the Economist magazine based in the UK. It publishes a Democracy Index in which it classifies India as a “flawed democracy”. It says this is the “result of democratic backsliding under the leadership of Narendra Modi” and the “increasing influence of religion under Modi, whose policies have fomented anti-Muslim feeling and religious strife, has damaged the political fabric of the country”.

Founded in 1941, Freedom House says it is “the oldest American organisation devoted to the support and defence of democracy around the world”. In its Freedom in the World report, India fell from “free” in 2014 to “partly free”. Kashmir, which is rated separately, is “not free”. It says that the “BJP has presided over discriminatory policies and a rise in persecution affecting Muslims”. The Washington-based World Justice Project says it is an “independent, multidisciplinary organisation working to advance the rule of law worldwide”. Its Rule of Law Index monitors accountability, just law, open government, and accessible and impartial justice. India fell from 66th in the world to 77th in 2022 to

Why ecological equity demands constitutional protection

Ecological inequality is now one of the most significant, yet least recognised, forms of inequality in India. Geographic variation may explain this asymmetry, but it cannot justify constitutional inequality; when unequal ecological burdens shape people’s lives so differently, the issue becomes constitutional. Article 14 of the Constitution has two connotations: equality before law, which prohibits arbitrariness, and equal protection of laws, which requires differentiated support for unequal situations. Article 38(2) directs the State to reduce inequalities “among groups of people residing in different areas.” Ecological inequality fits squarely within this mandate.

The Himalayan, Northeastern, and Western Ghat regions carry far higher ecological fragility, greater watershed responsibility, and a significantly heavier disaster mitigation burden than the plains. This mismatch between the constitutional principles and ecological reality has created a blind spot India can no longer afford. Forest-rich states shoulder ecological responsibilities

whose benefits flow to the entire nation. They preserve carbon sinks, stabilise monsoon systems, and maintain biodiversity. Industrialised states enjoy higher fiscal returns with lower ecological burdens. Applying identical rules to both produces outcomes that are not only inefficient but constitutionally infirm. This asymmetry also distorts equal opportunity under Article 16. Forest-rich states cannot industrialise freely due to statutory protections, which limit jobs, infrastructure, and fiscal capacity.

Uniform national environmental policies ignore unequal forest distribution, pollution exposure, climate vulnerability and access to natural resources. When applied to states with radically different ecological burdens, these become a source of inequity. Indian jurisprudence has focused on forest diversion, compliance and illegality, without addressing ecological inequality under Articles 14, 38(2) or 21. Recognising ecologically fragile states as a distinct class under Article 14, supported by Article

38(2), would enable asymmetric regulatory obligations, targeted fiscal transfers and region-specific forest strategies. India’s forest policy recognises ecological asymmetry by prescribing 33% forest and tree cover nationally and 66% in hilly and mountainous regions; yet, budgetary allocations and governance frameworks treat plains and hill states as identical. This cannot achieve ecological equality unless the Centre supports states in proportion to their ecological burdens. Judicial interventions have expanded Article 14 to prevent arbitrary environmental harm, but they have not recognised ecological inequality between states. Continuous mandamus in forest matters has centralised decision making without acknowledging differentiated ecological burdens. Ecological justice requires positive discrimination — fiscal transfers, differentiated regulatory burdens and asymmetric development pathways — which clashes with traditional readings of equality as non-discrimination. The Constitution does not prohibit asymmetry; it prohibits arbitrary

ness. Differentiated ecological support is thus an expression of equality.

The Forest Rights Act (FRA) and the Biological Diversity Act are held as guarantees of the rights of forest-dependent communities. FRA is built on a linear architecture: rights and titles are issued once, with no ecological feedback. But forests regenerate and shift through cyclical processes requiring baselines, monitoring and adaptive management. Without these, Gram Sabhas hold authority without stewardship capacity. The Northeastern states have faced a dual crisis: shrinking forest cover alongside persistently weak economic growth. Experiencing forest loss without corresponding economic opportunity creates precisely the regional inequality Article 38(2) seeks to minimise. The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act (CAMPA) offers a financial structure but fails to deliver ecological justice: 90% of the collections in a state goes to that state’s CAMPA fund, while 10% goes to the national fund. This national

fund should support regions facing ecological deficits, irrespective of where the funds were collected. Yet the absence of utilisation rules and non-transparent management of the national fund has prevented it from serving this purpose. Justice-oriented forest governance model must recognise circularity the ecological rule that every right over a forest must carry a responsibility to sustain its regeneration. Embedding this principle can harmonise rights, responsibilities and regeneration, and Payment for Ecosystem Services can reward communities for sustaining ecological functions. Article 21 gives this argument its deepest grounding: Unequal forest distribution translates directly into unequal environmental rights. Articles 14 and 21 converge to articulate a single mandate: Ecological equality is integral to the right to life. A justice-oriented model must acknowledge that forest-rich states subsidise the nation’s climate stability, forest-poor regions require sustained ecological investment and forest-dependent communities deserve protection.

Foundations and fractures: tracing the evolution of India’s parliamentary democracy

For 12 years now, Narendra Modi and the ruling BJP have run a permanent campaign against India’s first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Delhi’s Nehru Memorial Museum and Library has been renamed. A 2021 poster to commemorate ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’ omitted Nehru from the line-up of independent India’s founders. The party’s IT cell is unleashed on cue every time Nehru’s name comes up. The Modi-led BJP’s fixation on Nehru is so obsessive that ‘Blame It On Nehru’ has become an internet meme.

This year, on Independence Day, Modi delivered a rambling, unusually hesitant 75-minute speech. In it, he designated a new national enemy for India: the ‘dimagi Naxal,’ or those who believe in leftist protest. Who are these ‘dimagi Naxals?’ Modi did not specify beyond blustering that they are preventing the emergence of Viksit Bharat. The ‘dimagi Naxal’ is the latest ‘enemy’ in the list of ‘enemies’ Modi has marked out through a sustained campaign of public name-calling to delegitimise all dissent. Modi has hurled abuses such as ‘andolan-jeevis,’ ‘Khan Market Gang,’ ‘urban Naxals’ and now ‘dimagi Naxals’. Instead of building bridges between people, he chooses to build walls instead. This time, he has targeted those who think a certain way, a direct assault on the Constitution, which guarantees, in the Preamble itself, liberty of thought. There was another more telling omission in Modi’s speech. He did not once mention what is arguably the proudest achievement of Indian independence: a functioning Parliament. Not once did Modi speak of parliamentary democracy, the institution that is the beating heart of the republic.

leader he eventually became. It was Nehruvian parliamentary democracy that made Vajpayee’s emergence possible. Vajpayee built his own profile and his party because Parliament gave him the space to do so.

Nehru was famously said to have predicted that Vajpayee would one day become prime minister—an ideological rival was given the oxygen to rise. Nehru listened to parliamentary proceedings through a loudspeaker wired to his office desk. Socialists, communists, Nehru’s fiercest ideological rivals—Ram Manohar Lohia, Hiren Mukherjee, men who attacked Nehru with venom—were all heard, engaged, and occasionally conceded to. The question can be asked: are Opposition leaders today being given that kind of space by the Modi government? Are they being given a platform, dignity and respect? No, they are being hounded, raided, suspended, muzzled and silenced. The lion’s share of Zero Hour mentions go to the BJP. Most Starred Questions (or questions where ministers answer orally on the floor of the House) are all given to the BJP. Maybe before the Winter Session, Modi should read the parliamentary proceedings of the 1950s and ‘60s—Vajpayee’s speeches, Hiren Mukherjee’s speeches, the cut and thrust of a Parliament that argued hard, argued honestly, and still respected itself and its opponents.

Nehru’s own cabinet contained Syama Prasad Mookerji, founder of the Jana Sangh and a committed Nehru detractor and critic. When Nehru died in 1964, it was Vajpayee’s ideological opponent for two decades who rose in the House to describe him as Bharat Mata’s “rajikumar.” In my biography of Vajpayee, I have quoted these words he wrote about Nehru: “He (Nehru) considered Parliament a sacred temple... his very presence charged the atmosphere in the House lending it greater prestige, greater seriousness.” Modi, by contrast, has never, not once in 12 years, taken a question in Question Hour, which exists precisely so that the executive can be held to direct account by elected representatives. Question Hour is the most democratic mechanism built into the parliamentary system, the moment when a minister cannot hide behind a scripted speech and must answer on the House floor. Twelve years, and the prime minister of the world’s largest democracy has never once submitted himself to it.

sion, Modi enacts the ritual appeal for “cooperation”—as if Parliament, having been held in open disdain for a decade, might suddenly start co-operating like a switch being flipped on. On taking power in 2014, Modi famously prostrated himself at the steps of Parliament, touching his forehead to the stone, in a moment that was replayed endlessly on television as a symbol of humility before the temple of democracy. It was nothing but hollow optics. After 2014, what has followed has been not humility but a hollowing-out. The Gujarat model—minimal space for the Opposition, budgets rammed through without discussion, and Opposition members suspended en masse for protesting too loudly—was brought to Delhi and scaled up to the national stage.

In December 2023, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita laws were passed while 146 Opposition MPs remained suspended. In this Monsoon Session, bills have been rammed through with lightning speed: in 17 days, the Modi government passed 10 bills, allowing an average of four minutes per bill. The Opposition was given no meaningful chance to scrutinise what was actually being voted on. Twenty years ago, six out of ten bills went through committee scrutiny. Today, it’s fewer than two out of ten. In parliamentary democracy, political opponents are not enemies. Disagreement and fierce ideological disagreement are part of the furniture of democracy. But for Modi, the Opposition is the enemy—personal enemies and enemies of the state. All Opposition members are “anti-national” or various other pejoratives like ‘dimagi Naxal. Central Hall, once a warm, welcoming place where parties across the aisle met with conviviality, where a Congress MP and a BJP MP once shared a cup of tea and a joke between sessions, has been shut down. Media access to Parliament has been squeezed to a fraction of what it once was. The legislative agenda now moves by stealth—will the FCRA be introduced? Will delimitation be brought in? There are whispers and hints, no open transparent declaration of the government’s intent. Parliament is treated not as an institution to be respected and worked through, but a forum for intense political machinations and dark debilitating intrigue.

When the Home Minister is himself busy splitting rival parties, how can cooperation be demanded during Parliament? How does parliamentary cooperation survive when Opposition parties are being broken outside Parliament? How does political trust survive when defectors can smoothly cross over towards the treasury benches while disqualification proceedings are pending? You cannot demand bipartisan goodwill inside Parliament while practising political warfare outside it. Trust is not a press release issued before the beginning of a session. Trust has to be earned.

It is shocking, deeply absurd, and constitutionally unacceptable that a breakaway faction of the TMC can be embraced and legitimised by the treasury benches while the Speaker sits — indefinitely and conveniently — on disqualification petitions against this faction. Those whose parliamentary identity has not been established were gushingly welcomed by Modi into the ruling NDA. This is not an oversight. This is the method. In this Monsoon Session, Shah—who, like Modi, did not set foot in Parliament for 18 days did not come even when bills were moved under his name. Imagine this: a minister responsible for a Bill is missing from the House when that Bill is moved. Health Minister JP Nadra and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju are repeatedly sent to tackle the House, but it is all too obvious that Modi and Shah are exercising backroom control.

Yet Parliament is the lifeblood of democracy. It is a mechanism by which a government is made accountable to the people who did not vote for it, not only to those who did. A prime minister who treats Question Hour as beneath him, who treats the Opposition as an illegitimate obstacle rather than a legitimate part of the republic, is cunningly and systematically destroying the institution that exists to check the prime minister’s power and be the voice of the people. Parliament is not a notice board for the government. Parliament is the home of the Opposition, where every government must come to answer questions. So here’s a suggestion 12 years late: instead of constantly dissing Jawaharlal Nehru, Modi should try learning from him. Come to the House. Answer a question. Let an opponent grow instead of trying to annihilate them. Nehru built parliamentary democracy; Modi has spent a decade dismantling it. Modi can scrub Nehru’s name off posters and rename libraries, but Nehru’s legacy of Parliament and commitment to Parliament cannot be washed away. By attacking and disrespecting Parliament, Modi is only making sure that Nehru shines more gloriously than ever. Every time Modi avoids Parliament, Nehru walks in a little taller. Every empty front bench writes Nehru’s name in bigger letters.

A climate mission faltering: evaluating slipping targets and policy gaps

The Green India Mission (GIM) is an ambitious climate-action commitment by India to moderate climate change impact through protection of existing forests and restoration of lost forests through tree plantation. Yet, the latest findings of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) exposing the wide gap between GIM’s stated objectives and on-the-ground execution across states are a stark warning that the opportunity for effective climate-change mitigation is slipping away. The CAG findings reveal that the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in 2014 approved GIM for the 12th Plan period (2012-13 to 2016-17) and one year of spill-over to the 13th Plan, i.e., up to 2017-18, at a total cost of Rs. 13,000 crores, which included Rs. 10,600 crores through convergence with schemes like the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management Planning authority (CAMPA) for Rs. 6,000

crore, the MG National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme for Rs. 4,000 crore and the National Afforestation Programme for Rs. 600 crore. The audit observation that the convergence of activities of GIM with other afforestation schemes could not be achieved and the proposed funding support could not be attained lays bare the harsh reality of the wide gap between the intent of the mission and execution on the ground due to lack of coordination among the government authorities and agencies. This resulted in limited budgetary support for the Mission as all the funding for GIM flowed from limited annual budgets of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC). “The shortage of budgetary funds combined with unsuccessful attempts at convergence crippled the implementation of the Scheme and adversely impacted the achievement of targets set under the per-

spective plans,” the report adds. Ironically, the MoEF&CC insistence in its reply to CAG that there was never any provision of roping in of funds from other schemes for GIM implementation and that the convergence is stipulated in terms of the activities with their achievements collating at the national level and not in terms of any financial resources from any schemes contradicts the CCEA’s conditional approval to the Mission linking its funding support to mobilisation of funds through convergence with other schemes. A key finding highlighted in the report that exposes how the non-availability of required funds stemmed from the Mission hopes is that MoEF&CC could provide only 15.15 per cent of funds against the Centre’s share projected under Perspective Plans till March, whereas the states could provide only 14.12 per cent of the total projected share as their matching share.

Bata India to Expand Localised Merchandising Model to 900 Stores by 2026

New Delhi: Bata India plans to expand its Zero Base Merchandising (ZBM) initiative to more than 900 stores by the end of 2026, as the footwear retailer moves towards a more localised and consumer-led retail strategy focused on improving product availability, store experience and inventory efficiency.

The ZBM model is currently operational across more than 800 stores, with the company aiming to extend it to over 900 outlets by the end of the year. The initiative moves away from uniform product assortments and instead uses local demand patterns, customer preferences, seasonal occasions and individual store catchments to determine merchandise selection.

The model is designed to reduce product clutter, simplify store navigation and improve the placement and availability of merchandise. Bata India has reported an 8 per cent improvement in in-store availability, while inventory freshness has increased from the mid-70 per cent range to around 90 per cent, supported by more frequent seasonal product resets.

The expansion follows a broader effort by the company to improve merchandising efficiency and customer experience. Bata had initially piloted ZBM in a small number of stores before progressively scaling the programme.



Earlier company disclosures showed measurable improvements in volume, turnover and availability at stores operating under the model.

Bata India currently operates more than 2,000 brand outlets, supported by over 775 franchise stores, along with multi-brand

ernising its portfolio across Hush Puppies, Power, Floatz, Comfit and its core Bata range, with greater emphasis on contemporary styling, comfort and value. The strategy is aimed at responding to consumers who increasingly weigh convenience, fashion, comfort and price while making footwear purchases.

Bata India Chairman Ashwani Windlass described 2025-26 as a year of transformation, saying the company was working to strengthen competitiveness and improve agility while preparing the business for sustainable growth. He also pointed to diversified sourcing, disciplined inventory management and faster operational responses as important in navigating a complex external environment.

The company's financial performance remained broadly stable in 2025-26, with standalone turnover at ₹3,515.48 crore, compared with ₹3,488.03 crore in the previous financial year. Profit was affected by exceptional and one-off costs, including expenditure related to a voluntary retirement scheme and other items.

Bata India has also approved a final dividend of 180 per cent in line with its dividend distribution policy. The company said its next phase of growth would focus on higher volumes, premiumisation, stronger consumer engagement, omnichannel expansion and operational efficiency.

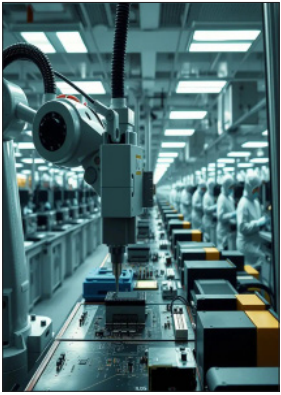
Jyoti CNC Gets Approval for Rs 1,021-Crore Electronics Manufacturing Investment

Rajkot: Jyoti CNC Automation has received approval from the Centre for a proposed capital investment of ₹1,020.65 crore to expand its manufacturing operations and develop in-house capabilities for key electronic components used in computer numerical control (CNC) machinery.

The approval was granted on August 17 under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's Electronic Components Manufacturing Scheme. The scheme provides for a capital expenditure incentive of up to 25 per cent of the eligible investment over five years. Jyoti CNC said the sanction would be placed before its board for consideration.

The proposed investment will support the establishment of greenfield facilities for manufacturing specialised electronic systems, including drives, motors and CNC controllers, which the company currently procures from external suppliers. The move is aimed at strengthening backward integration and reducing dependence on external sources for critical components.

Chairman and Managing



Director Parakrimsinh Jadeja had earlier said the company intended to commercialise its proprietary CNC controllers within two years. The human-machine interface for the controllers has already been finalised. The company also expects to receive matching capital incentives from the Gujarat government, which could together cover around half of the proposed project expenditure.

The electronics investment will run alongside Jyoti CNC's ongoing ₹450-crore manufacturing capacity expansion. The project is expected to add annual production capacity of 10,000 machines, taking the company's total capacity to 16,000 units. The expanded facility is scheduled to be commis-

sioned by late September.

During the first quarter of financial year 2026-27, Jyoti CNC's existing 6,000-machine facility operated at 86 per cent capacity utilisation, with the company delivering 1,406 machines during the period.

For the quarter ended June 30, consolidated revenue rose to ₹508.5 crore from ₹410.2 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year. Consolidated profit after tax stood at ₹57 crore.

The company's order book was valued at ₹4,848 crore in early August, with aerospace and defence contracts accounting for 38 per cent of total orders. General engineering and automotive components were among the other major contributors to the order pipeline.

Jyoti CNC has retained its guidance for 25-30 per cent revenue growth for the full financial year, with operating margins projected at around 25 per cent. The new electronics manufacturing initiative is expected to complement the company's existing expansion plans while strengthening its control over critical components used in its CNC machinery.

Paytm Shares See Rs 2,949-Crore Block Deal as Resilient Sells Residual Antfin Stake

Mumbai: Shares of One97 Communications, the parent company of Paytm, witnessed heavy trading activity after Netherlands-based Resilient Asset Management B.V. executed a block transaction worth about ₹2,949 crore, involving nearly 1.92 crore shares of the fintech company.

The transaction involved around 3 per cent of One97 Communications' total equity at an average price of ₹1,535.10 per share.

Resilient Asset Management, an overseas investment vehicle controlled by Paytm founder and Chief Executive Officer Vijay Shekhar Sharma, was the seller.

The transaction is linked to an arrangement completed in August 2023, when Resilient acquired a 10.20 per cent stake in One97 Communications from Antfin (Netherlands) Holding B.V., an affiliate of Ant Group, through the issuance of optionally convertible debentures.

Although voting and operational control over the shares remained with Resilient, the economic interest in the stake continued



to belong to Antfin. As a result, the proceeds from the latest block transaction will accrue to Antfin, allowing it to monetise a significant portion of its remaining economic interest in Paytm.

Paytm said it was not a party to the transaction and would not receive any proceeds from the stake sale. The transaction also does not affect Sharma's direct holding in the company, which remains at around 9 per cent.

The block deal comes as Paytm has reported an improvement in its financial and operating performance. The company posted a consolidated net profit of ₹220 crore in the first quarter of financial

JPMorgan Retains 27,000 Nifty Target, Favors Power and Data Centre Plays

New Delhi: JPMorgan has retained its base-case target of 27,000 for the Nifty 50, citing stronger earnings momentum in India and greater confidence in selected domestic cyclical, capital goods and infrastructure-linked companies. The brokerage has maintained its broader Nifty 50 bull-case and bear-case targets at 30,000 and 20,500, respectively.

JPMorgan's assessment comes after a stronger-than-expected earnings season, with the brokerage highlighting improving corporate performance and resilient domestic demand. It expects MSCI India earnings to grow 11 per cent in calendar 2026 and 13 per cent in 2027, while continuing to favour sectors and companies positioned to benefit from India's investment and infrastructure cycle.

Power infrastructure and data centres have emerged as key themes in the brokerage's investment view. Rising electricity demand, grid expansion, renewable-energy integration and the rapid development of data-centre infrastructure are expected to support companies involved in power transmission, electrification and related equipment.

Among the companies highlighted under these themes are Hitachi Energy India, ABB India and NTPC. Hitachi Energy has been identified as a beneficiary of increased demand for high-voltage transmission infrastructure and data centres, with its large order pipeline providing visibility for future growth.

ABB India has also pointed to increasing investment in hyperscale, colocation and edge data centres in India. The company said its electrification portfolio is positioned across several stages of data-centre power infrastructure and that it has been expanding capacity to meet demand from large customers.

NTPC's recent financial performance provides further support for the power-sector theme. The state-run utility reported a 12 per cent increase in standalone profit after tax to ₹5,342 crore in the first quarter of FY27, while consolidated PAT rose 13 per cent to ₹6,896 crore. The company attributed the performance to capacity additions and operational efficiencies.

JPMorgan has also identified the broader capital-expenditure cycle, defence spending, an anticipated recovery in the automobile sector and improving consumer-staples volumes as structural drivers for selected domestic cyclical and industrial companies. Rather than taking a uniformly bullish view of the broader market, the brokerage has emphasised stock and sector selection.

The earnings improvement has extended beyond large-cap companies. The brokerage's assessment points to stronger profit growth across the broader market, reinforcing its view that the earnings recovery is becoming more widespread. However, certain heavyweight companies and sectors have continued to weigh on aggregate earnings, including selected names in consumer, pharmaceutical, aviation and other segments.

Domestic demand has remained a key cushion against external risks, with corporate commentary indicating continued investment activity despite geopolitical tensions, supply-chain disruptions and fluctuations in input costs. Companies have also largely maintained their guidance through measured price increases and tighter margin management rather than pursuing volumes at the expense of profitability.

JPMorgan's unchanged 27,000 Nifty target therefore reflects a selective rather than broad-based bullish stance, with the brokerage placing greater emphasis on domestic investment, infrastructure and earnings recovery while remaining alert to global macroeconomic and geopolitical risks.

Draft SHANTI Rules Open Door to Private Nuclear Power, SMR Supply Chain

Rajkot: Draft rules under the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act, 2025 are set to establish the regulatory framework for wider private-sector participation in India's civil nuclear power sector, while creating potential opportunities for engineering, manufacturing and power companies as the country accelerates its nuclear expansion plans.

The proposed framework follows the enactment of the SHANTI Act, which replaced the earlier legal framework governing atomic energy and nuclear liability and enables limited private participation under government licensing and safety oversight. The Department of Atomic Energy had also held an industry consultation in May on strengthening Indian industry's participation in the nuclear energy roadmap.

Under the draft rules, private domestic companies and joint ventures would be able to participate in activities across the civil nuclear lifecycle, subject to the required licences and safety authorisations. The

framework is intended to simplify approvals through a composite licensing mechanism covering the construction, ownership, operation and eventual decommissioning of nuclear facilities.

The rules also propose an in-principle approval mechanism that would allow prospective developers to begin preparatory activities such as land acquisition and vendor engagement before the final project location or reactor technology is determined.

Foreign reactor technologies could also be considered where they meet the prescribed requirements, including regulatory certification and demonstrated operation in the country of origin.

The opening of the sector is expected to create opportunities across the nuclear equipment and engineering supply chain. Companies such as Larsen & Toubro, Bharat Heavy Electricals, MTAR Technologies, Power Mech Projects and Walchandnagar Industries are among the engineering and manufacturing players positioned to participate in a larger domestic nuclear build-out, while

Centre Pushes Faster Industrial Smart City Rollout as Projects Hold Rs 2.21 Lakh Crore Investment Potential

New Delhi: The Centre has stepped up efforts to accelerate the development of industrial smart cities under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP), with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman directing officials and state governments to speed up infrastructure development and land allotment so that industrial projects can move into production within scheduled timelines.

The directive came during a review meeting in which the government assessed progress across industrial corridor projects. Data presented at the meeting showed that 5,348 acres had been allotted across 469 plots, representing an estimated investment potential of ₹2.21 lakh crore. As many as 134 industrial units are already operational within the designated zones, while another 95 units are under construction.

The NICDP, implemented through the National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation, is designed to develop industrial infrastructure along major freight and transportation routes. The programme currently covers 20 approved



projects across 13 states and seven industrial corridors, with the government increasingly focusing on converting approved projects and allocated land into operational industrial activity.

Four greenfield industrial smart cities — Dholera, Shendra-Bidkin, Greater Noida and Vikram Udyogpuri — have already entered the production phase. Together, these projects have an estimated employment potential of around 1.29 lakh jobs.

Sitharaman stressed the need to develop the next pipeline of industrial land and supporting infrastructure before existing capacity is exhausted. She also called for state governments to resolve bottlenecks related to land acquisition, road and transport connectivity,

utilities, statutory approvals and the functioning of project-specific Special Purpose Vehicles.

The government has committed substantial financial resources to the industrial corridor programme. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has sanctioned and released ₹16,172.95 crore to the National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust. Of this amount, ₹14,569.97 crore has been disbursed to various project SPVs to accelerate development at industrial nodes.

Alongside the NICDP, the Centre is advancing the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (BHAVYA), which aims to develop 100 investment-ready, plug-and-play industrial parks across the country. The scheme, ap-

proved in March, received 87 proposals from states against an initial target of 20 projects in its first round.

The BHAVYA initiative is intended to reduce the time and cost involved in setting up industrial units by providing pre-approved land, ready infrastructure and integrated services. The parks are expected to range between 100 and 1,000 acres, with government financial assistance of up to ₹1 crore per acre for essential infrastructure.

Project selection under BHAVYA will follow a challenge-based approach, with preference given to proposals demonstrating strong viability and a commitment to industrial and regulatory reforms. The government expects the combination of ready-to-use infrastructure, private-sector participation and faster clearances to improve the investment attractiveness of the planned industrial parks.

The accelerated push for both industrial smart cities and plug-and-play parks reflects the Centre's broader effort to move industrial corridor development beyond approvals and land allocation towards actual production, investment and employment generation.

Cabinet ministers’ mobile numbers found online after Burnham targeted

UK: At least three UK cabinet ministers have had their personal mobile phone numbers published online, amid mounting concern over the security of senior politicians after Andy Burnham was targeted by an impersonation scam.

The defence secretary, Wes Streeting, the justice secretary, Alex Norris, and the Northern Ireland secretary, Chris Bryant, had their numbers available online with their names.

A reference containing Streeting’s number has since been removed, a source told the Guardian, noting he does all his government business on his official government phone. Officials are understood to be working to take down the others. The leak, first revealed by Politico, come after Burnham exchanged messages with someone posing as Donald Trump’s chief of staff, Susie Wiles.

The prime minister was in contact with an unknown individual pretending to be Wiles before concerns were raised about the incident. No messages of significance were sent and the suspicious activity was quickly reported to the appropriate authorities, it is understood.



The British embassy in Washington was so concerned it raised the matter with the White House, according to Politico. A UK government spokesperson said: “We do not comment on national security matters.” Downing Street refused to say if any measures had been taken to prevent another breach happening. No 10 refused to say whether Burnham was embarrassed that he had communicated

with the impostor, and declined to say if the messages were exchanged on WhatsApp. Last year, the Wall Street Journal reported that the FBI had launched an investigation into efforts to access Wiles’s phone after an unknown person pretending to be her contacted prominent Republicans and US business chiefs. There have been security concerns related to Trump’s White House, with the pres-

ident’s personal phone number common knowledge among reporters covering US politics. In December 2025, a US defence department report concluded that Trump’s defence secretary, Pete Hegseth, had endangered the lives of US service personnel when he discussed details of a military operation with fellow senior US officials in a group chat to which a journalist had been added.

According to a source, Hegseth violated departmental policies when he shared secret information in a Signal messaging chat. The chat was disclosed after the then national security adviser, Mike Waltz, added a journalist for the Atlantic, having saved his number under someone else’s name. Besides Waltz and Hegseth, the group also included the vice-president, JD Vance, and the CIA director, John Ratcliffe.

The source said the report by the inspector general, the internal investigative agency for the department, found the information Hegseth distributed was secret and could have put US troops in danger if it had been intercepted by an enemy force. In March, citing multiple anonymous sources the Guardian has not been able to verify, the Atlantic reported that the White House had been told Trump’s contact details had been offered for sale to people seeking influence. “It’s honestly just wild,” one of them told the outlet. “I’ve heard of CEOs offering money for his number. I’ve heard of crypto bros offering cryptocurrency for it.”

Palestinian American joins family defending home amid settler siege in West Bank



Qusra: A Palestinian American whose home in the occupied West Bank has been surrounded by Israeli settlers for more than a week travelled to his property on Monday to join family members defending the house. The standoff in the village of Qusra has involved groups of settlers surrounding several Palestinian homes and preventing residents from leaving, according to reports. The United States has condemned the siege, while the Israeli military has deployed troops, saying they are there to maintain order. The incident comes amid heightened violence in the West Bank in recent months. Palestinian health officials

said Israeli soldiers and settlers have killed 87 Palestinians so far this year. Palestinians have killed three Israelis, including two who were killed during clashes in the West Bank village of Tell last month. Loui Ridi, an Ohio-based owner of one of the houses, arrived in Israel on Monday before travelling to Qusra. Video footage recorded by his brother showed settlers near the area, including some driving all-terrain vehicles and speaking with Israeli soldiers. Ridi had been monitoring developments through security cameras at his home and said he had been unable to sleep while watching the situation unfold. “I can’t let the settlers

steal my house while I was watching,” he told reporters at Israel’s main international airport. He reached Qusra on Monday evening and reunited with his mother and sister before heading towards his house. His brother, Qusai Abu Rida, and his teenage son had remained inside the property to protect it. The Israeli military has declared the neighbourhood where Ridi’s home is located a closed military zone. Ridi said he was waiting for a military escort to reach the property. “I should be able to go to my house freely, anytime I want,” he said, describing the situation as a “frustration and a nightmare” for his family.

Jared Kushner meets with Hamas ahead of talks with Netanyahu on Gaza

America: Donald Trump’s son-in-law and envoy, Jared Kushner, held a rare meeting with Hamas’s political chief on Sunday in Egypt, in a new diplomatic effort to make progress in the stalled Gaza ceasefire. Kushner will meet on Monday with Benjamin Netanyahu, who is under pressure after rejecting the new 15-point, US-backed road map. The talks aim to salvage the plan for Hamas to disarm and Israel to withdraw from the Palestinian territory shattered by war. At stake are the lives of some 2 million people in Gaza and reconstruction of

the crowded enclave now largely controlled by Israeli forces, more than 10 months since the ceasefire ended major military operations. A meeting between Kushner, fellow envoy Steve Witkoff and Hamas leaders in Egypt last year helped clinch the ceasefire, whose progress until now had been stalled over the key issue of Hamas’s disarmament. The over two-hour meeting in Egypt with Hamas’s political chief, Khalil al-Hayya, was confirmed by a regional official and a Hamas official, both speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk

to reporters. Kushner was one of a trio of envoys meeting with al-Hayya, with officials from mediating countries Egypt, Qatar and Turkey also there. Hamas in a statement later called on mediators and the US-created Board of Peace overseeing the ceasefire to “compel” Israel to approve the road map for next steps. Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, last week rejected the 15-point plan in a rare public show of defiance against the Trump administration, Israel’s closest ally. Kushner, Tony Blair, the former British prime minister, and Nickolay Mladenov,

the Board of Peace director, are to meet with Netanyahu on Monday, according to a source familiar with the plans and a diplomatic source. Both spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a closed-door meeting. Several regional powers including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates issued a joint statement condemning Israel’s rejection of the road map, saying: “Israel now bears responsibility for obstructing the efforts to bring peace in Gaza.” Other signers included Jordan, Pakistan, Indonesia and the ceasefire mediators.

Canadian plasma clinics pause collections after deaths of two donors

Canada: A chain of private plasma donation clinics in Canada has said it is pausing collections after the deaths of two donors and a new government investigation into potential unsafe practices. Grifols, a Spanish healthcare company which runs 17 clinics in Canada and is the country’s only private clinic for plasma donation, said it informed Health Canada of its decision to temporarily pause collections on Wednesday. On the same day, the agency had issued a formal notice of non-compliance for failure to follow blood regulations, a senior official told the Globe and Mail newspaper. The two deaths occurred after plasma donations in October 2025 and January 2026, Health Canada said in March of this year. The donors, both of whom were in the province of Manitoba, went into “distress” while donating, people familiar with the cases said. Though Health Canada did not release the identities of the donors, friends said one was Rodiyat Alabede, 22, an international student and aspiring social worker who donated plasma in Winnipeg

on 25 October. Patient advocates reported at the end of May that there were concerns about whether Alabede had been properly screened. “They had staff taking plasma from donors who did not know how to extract plasma in a safe manner,” alleged Kat Lanteigne, a safe blood campaigner who represents Alabede’s family. “The [failures] were so egregious that ... now we have more questions than answers,” she said in May. An autopsy showed Alabede died of cardiac arrest shortly after donating. Health Canada reported that it found “no link” between Alabede’s death and plasma donation. Patient advocates have called for a new inquest into her death, however, after alleging that “significant medical discrepancies” had been uncovered between her autopsy, which was completed two days after her death, and the medical summary drafted by Health Canada published on 27 March of this year. The Guardian has also seen Health Canada inspection reports from May that found deficiencies at Grifols

clinics, including inadequate training for staff, failures in standard operating procedures, poor record-keeping and a failure by Grifols to remedy past issues. The Health Canada report also found that staff did not stop plasma collection when alarms went off, and described the company’s reporting as “incomplete” and “inaccurate”. Prior to the newly announced pause, donations were permitted at Grifols twice a week. The company paid donors up to C\$100 (£55) for each donation. Plasma is a pale yellow, protein-rich liquid in blood that assists in moving red and white blood cells, along with platelets, through blood vessels, according to Canadian Blood Services, the non-profit that operates Canada’s national blood supply. Plasma also helps prevent excessive bleeding and is used to create medications for a variety of conditions including haemophilia, liver disease and various cancers. The plasma donation process differs from donating blood overall. A medical device called an apheresis machine draws the blood, sepa-

rates it into individual parts, collects the components needed and then returns the remaining blood back into the body, according to Canadian Blood Services. The process takes about 90 minutes, whereas a general blood draw takes about 10. In Canada, provinces and territories decide whether paid plasma clinics are permitted. British Columbia and Quebec do not allow the practice, for example, but Manitoba, where the deaths occurred, does not prohibit companies from paying donors for plasma. Grifols said it decided to pause collection “proactively and voluntarily” due to what it deemed “unfounded attention”. It said the pause would allow it to work with Health Canada and Canadian Blood Services. The company has denied the two deaths were connected to plasma donation. On Friday, Health Canada said it found “various deficiencies” specifically at the Taylor Avenue Grifols location in Winnipeg. A spokesperson for that location said it was working closely with the company so that it could return to operations.

BLA Claims 26 Pakistani Military Personnel Killed

Islamabad: The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), an armed organisation leading an insurgency for Balochistan’s independence from Pakistan, has claimed responsibility for a series of attacks that it says caused heavy casualties among Pakistani security forces. In a statement sent to the media, BLA spokesperson Jeeyand Baloch said the group had carried out attacks at 22 different locations

across Balochistan over an eight-day period and claimed that 26 Pakistani military officers were killed. The claims could not be independently verified. According to a report by The Balochistan Post, the BLA alleged that Pakistani forces had carried out killings of civilians and prisoners in Sohrab and Panjgur in recent days. Referring to these incidents, Jeeyand Baloch said the attacks were carried out in retaliation. Ac-

cording to the statement, the clashes took place between August 9 and August 16. The BLA claimed that its fighters targeted military positions and alleged death-squad hideouts, while also attacking police stations and security checkpoints. The group further claimed that several bridges were destroyed in explosions and that nine government vehicles were also blown up. It said two of its commanders were killed

during the clashes. The BLA also claimed that its fighters seized hundreds of weapons from military installations and police stations during the attacks. On August 12, the group claimed that its fighters destroyed the Chethar police station in Chagai in an explosion during the day. Later that night, it claimed that an attack on military vehicles in Rudinjo, Kalat, killed 17 military personnel, including officers and soldiers.

Burnham scraps restrictions on disabled people’s bus passes in England

UK: Disabled people across England will be able to use their free bus passes at any time of day from next April, as Andy Burnham expands a policy he introduced as mayor of Greater Manchester. The prime minister has said the current weekday restrictions on when disabled people can use their bus passes will be removed from 1 April 2027. Their passes are valid only between 9.30am and 11pm on weekdays, although some councils pay to allow people free travel outside those hours. The change means disabled bus pass holders will be able to travel free on local bus services where the pass applies at any time of day or night. The charity Mencap welcomed the measures, noting that disabled people often struggle with the cost of living as well as the cost of

their disability. Burnham is putting up £60m in funding for the change, with £40m coming from the Department for Work and Pensions and £20m from the Department for Transport. Government sources said the funding has no set end date and was not a one-off payment. They said the change would take seven months to introduce because it must be passed by parliament, and the April start date gave local transport authorities time to prepare. Burnham is on the second week of his summer tour during which he is focusing on the cost of living. The disabled bus pass policy has been in place in Greater Manchester since March. “Buses are a lifeline for so many people – making it easier to get to work, education and healthcare,” Burnham said. “It’s



simply not right that many disabled people cannot travel using their pass during certain times

of the day. So we’re fixing that. Disabled people will now have unlimited free bus travel 24/7. “I did it before in Greater Manchester and I’m proud to do it now for the whole country. This is part of our ongoing action to bring back hope and give people some much needed breathing space on the cost of living.” Ministers say the move will help disabled people get into work, education and training as well as helping with the cost of living. The transport secretary, Heidi Alexander, said the change would end a postcode lottery under which disabled people got different levels of support depending on where they lived. The government says the measure is part of wider plans to make bus travel cheaper, including keeping the £2 fare cap throughout 2027 and giving

under-16s free bus travel this summer. The executive director of strategy impact and social change at Scope, James Taylor, said: “Disabled people face extra costs every day and many need to travel in the morning for work, education and healthcare. Making free bus travel available around the clock is a welcome step that will put money back in people’s pockets and remove barriers to everyday life.” The chief executive of Bus Users UK, Lydia Horbury, said: “Disabled people don’t live off-peak lives. Lifting these restrictions nationwide replaces an arbitrary postcode lottery with genuine freedom, independence and dignity. “It will help more disabled people access work, reduce isolation, support bus use and reduce unnecessary car dependency.”

Understanding your undertone could change how you construct your wardrobe

Have you ever considered why some colors can instantly enhance your complexion while others appear to dull it? The explanation may be found in the undertones of your skin. Recognizing whether your undertones are warm or cool can significantly simplify the process of selecting clothing, accessories, and daily color pairings. Rahul Dayama, the founding partner of Urbanic and Savana by Urbanic, has provided insights on how to determine your undertone and create a wardrobe that harmonizes with your skin tone.

“One thing we’ve consistently observed while building a global apparel brand is that people often assume they need an entirely new wardrobe to elevate their style, when in reality, sometimes it’s just about choosing the right colours,” said Rahul. Understanding your undertone can completely change the way you shop because it helps you become more intentional about what you invest in. You stop buying pieces that look great on the hanger but never quite feel right once you wear them. “I don’t think fashion should ever become a set of rules,” added Rahul.

Trends come and go, and colour theory is a useful guide, but personal style should always come first. If wearing a certain shade makes you feel confident, that’s reason enough to wear it. The idea is to use your undertone as a tool, not a restriction. How to identify your undertone? One of the easiest ways to identify your undertone is looking at the veins on your inner wrist in natural light. If it appears green or olive, then you have a warm undertone; if blue or purple, then you are of cool undertone; while if it is both or blue-green, you

have a neutral undertone. However, Rahul also highlighted that, “We’ve seen that customers naturally gravitate towards colours that make them feel good, even if they don’t know why.” According to Rahul, someone with warmer undertones may repeatedly choose earthy greens, rusts or warm neutrals, while someone with cooler undertones might lean towards blues, berry tones or crisp whites. Once people recognise that pattern, shopping becomes easier because they understand what truly works for them instead of chasing every trend.

“We’ve always believed fashion should empower people to express themselves rather than fit into predefined categories. We want customers to have the freedom to experiment while also finding pieces they will reach for again and again,” highlighted Rahul. For anyone trying to discover their undertone, Rahul advises keeping it simple. Look at the pieces in your wardrobe that you’ve worn the most over the years. More often than not, you’ll notice a pattern. Fashion isn’t just about what’s trending this season. It’s about building a ward-



robe that feels authentic to you, and understanding your undertone is one of those small details that can make getting dressed every day a lot more effortless.

The New Balance Abzorb 2000 during the monsoon in Coorg and long travel days



I received an invitation to visit the New Balance store to test the Abzorb 2000 and the more recent Abzorb 2010. However, the 2010 model hardly had an opportunity to impress me. The Abzorb 2000, displayed prominently on the shelf, immediately captured my attention. I experimented with every available color before ultimately choosing the black and silver, which seemed like the most logical option. The rich black mesh, complemented by silver accents and the prominently visible cushioning pods, impart a distinctly early 2000s technological runner aesthetic, yet it does not evoke the feeling of a costume from that era. It is also not a lightweight little sneaker. The build feels substantial from the moment you pick it up, which makes sense given the full-length Abzorb sole unit and segmented cushioning system. New Balance lists the shoe at 419.2 grams. I took my pair to Coorg for a monsoon getaway. I have barely taken them off since. What makes the New Balance Abzorb 2000 design stand out? The Abzorb 2000 is not trying to look like a conventional New Balance sneaker. The shape is chunky, the sole is highly visible, and those individual cushioning pods underneath give it a futuristic quality that feels very Y2K. The black and silver colourway makes a big difference here. The black keeps the shoe easy to wear and far more forgiving when you are travelling, while the silver detailing catches the light and gives the otherwise dark shoe some character. It looks particularly good indoors under artificial lighting and outside when the silver elements catch the sun. The upper uses mesh with printed overlay patterns, while the sole combines full-length Abzorb cushioning with Abzorb SBS pods. There is also a Stability Web shank within the segmented sole unit and reflective detailing. For me, the clever part is how all of this comes together without making the shoe look excessively busy. The N branding and silver accents add just enough detail, while the black base keeps everything grounded. And then there is the versatility, which surprised me. I wore these with barrel jeans and tops, straight-fit jeans with shirts, and even a cotton

shirt and skirt co-ord. More recently, I have been pairing them with mini dresses and shorts. Somehow, the very sporty shoe works with all of it. That was not something I expected when I first picked them up. 1. New Balance Abzorb 2000: How comfortable is the Abzorb 2000 for all-day wear? This is where the Abzorb 2000 completely won me over. I have flat feet, so footwear tends to reveal its problems very quickly. A shoe can look fantastic and still have my feet protesting within a few hours. The Abzorb 2000 did not do that. Testing the underfoot tech: A daily user breakdown Abzorb foam core: The full-length cushioning gives the shoe a substantial feel underfoot and takes the edge off hard surfaces. New Balance combines the Abzorb cushioning with Abzorb SBS pods across the sole rather than relying on a single slab of foam. Abzorb SBS pods: These are the most noticeable part of the shoe visually, but they are not just there for show. Underfoot, the cushioning feels firm enough to keep you stable while still giving your feet plenty of support. Support: My real test came on travel day. I left home at 6 am, took a flight from Bhopal to Bengaluru, spent four hours at the airport, flew to Mangaluru and then took a taxi to Virajpet in Coorg. We reached around 9 pm. That was a very long day, involving plenty of airport walking and sitting, and my feet did not hurt or feel uncomfortable at any point. For me, that is a serious win! Upper and airflow: The mesh upper keeps the shoe reasonably comfortable in warm weather, while the structured construction provides a secure fit. The fit feels more streamlined than some of the roomier New Balance styles, so people with broader feet should try them on before ordering. And then came Coorg. The monsoon gave these shoes plenty to deal with. There was drizzle, puddles, and plenty of splashing around, yet my socks never got wet. The shoes themselves stayed surprisingly dry too. I would not call them waterproof, but they handled the wet conditions far better than I expected from a lifestyle sneaker. Clearly these were designed for more than just pairing with cute outfits!

2. New Balance Abzorb 2000: How do you style the black and silver Abzorb 2000? This is probably my favourite thing about this colour and style. You can go full Y2K with oversized hoodies, dark grey or faded black jeans and technical outerwear, and the chunky sole fits right in. But you do not have to dress like you are heading to a 2000s music video to make them work. I wore mine with barrel jeans and tops, straight-fit jeans with shirts and a cotton shirt and skirt co-ord in Coorg. The black and silver combination worked with all three. Then I tried them with mini dresses and shorts. That was the fun element! The Abzorb 2000 has enough visual weight to make a simple outfit feel finished. With a dress, the chunky sole creates a nice contrast. With shorts, the black upper keeps things casual without making the outfit look overly sporty. Compared with a plain white sneaker, this is less likely to disappear into an outfit. Compared with a tonal grey sneaker, it has far more personality. Yet the black base makes it exceptionally low maintenance for a shoe that gets this much wear. For someone like me who travels with limited footwear and wants one pair to work across several outfits, that matters. How does the sizing fit, and are they durable? My experience with the fit has been comfortable from the first wear, with no painful break-in period at all. That is worth mentioning because many shoes need a few outings before they settle into your feet. These did not. For online shoppers, I would stick to your usual New Balance size as a starting point, but people with broader feet should ideally try them on first. The upper has a more streamlined shape than some of New Balance’s classic retro runners. As for durability, I have worn these through airports, long travel days, wet paths and regular city walking, and they are holding up well so far. The sole still feels supportive, and the cushioning has not developed that tired, compressed feeling that some frequently worn sneakers develop. I have not owned them long enough to make a long-term durability claim, but the early signs are very good. Should you buy the New Balance Abzorb 2000? I went into this thinking I had found a good-looking travel sneaker. I came out of Coorg wondering if I had found my new favourite everyday pair. The Abzorb 2000 works particularly well for people who like statement sneakers, want proper cushioning for long days and enjoy the Y2K tech runner look. It is also a very good option for travel because the black and silver colourway is easy to style and forgiving when you are constantly on the move. If you prefer very lightweight, minimal sneakers or roomy retro runners, this may not be the one for you. For me, the comfort is the real story. I never expected to say this after years of wearing the ASICS GEL series, but the New Balance Abzorb 2000 has given them some serious competition.

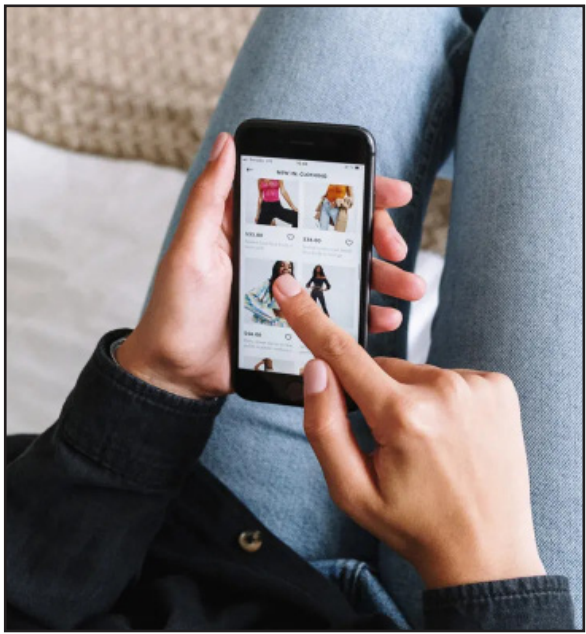
Social media trends are everywhere

There was an era when selecting an outfit involved opening your closet and deciding what you wished to wear for the day. Perhaps it was your beloved jeans, a kurta that has been in your possession for years, a shirt that consistently boosts your mood, or that somewhat absurd handbag you are unwilling to part with. Now, it sometimes feels like getting dressed starts with opening Instagram. One week, we’re told that skinny jeans are back. The next, everyone needs barrel-leg denim. Then it’s quiet luxury, tomato girl, mob wife, office siren, coastal grandmother, clean girl, old money and whatever new aesthetic has taken over TikTok by Tuesday morning. And somewhere between saving outfit reels and adding viral pieces to our carts, personal style seems to be taking a backseat. When your wardrobe starts looking like your algorithm The strangest part isn’t that trends exist. Fashion has always worked this way. What has changed is the speed at which we’re exposed to them. A trend that might once have taken months to filter from runways to magazines to high-street stores can now appear on our feeds hundreds of times in a single week. See a particular shoe enough times and suddenly your perfectly good sneakers look outdated. Watch enough videos about oversized blazers and you start wondering why your fitted one is still hanging in your wardrobe. Social media has essentially turned fashion into a constant stream of recommendations. And because we’re repeatedly seeing the same silhouettes, colours and accessories on people we follow, they start feeling less like trends and more like necessities. That’s where things get tricky. Not every trend is going to suit every person. More importantly, not every trend is going to feel like you. The pressure to look “current” is real. I’ve noticed this even with relatively simple wardrobe staples. A classic white shirt doesn’t suddenly become less stylish because oversized shirts are trending. A straight-leg pair of jeans doesn’t need to be replaced because wide-leg denim is having a moment. And you definitely don’t need three different pairs of ballet flats because the internet has collectively decided they’re the shoe of the season. Yet fashion content can make us feel like we’re constantly be-

hind. There’s always another “must-have” waiting around the corner. The result? We end up buying things not because we genuinely love them, but because we’re afraid of looking unfashionable. And that is probably one of the easiest ways to lose your personal style. Trends aren’t the problem. Blindly following them is. I’m not anti-trend at all. In fact, trends are one of the most fun parts of fashion. They introduce us to new silhouettes, styling ideas and designers. They can push us out of our comfort zones and sometimes help us discover something we genuinely love. The problem starts when the trend becomes more important than the person wearing it. Take oversized tailoring. If you love relaxed blazers and wide trousers, fantastic. Build around them. But if you feel most confident in a fitted blazer that defines your waist, there is absolutely no reason to abandon it simply because your feed is full of oversized tailoring. The same applies to everything from micro bags to chunky sneakers, maxi skirts, low-rise jeans and statement jewellery. A trend should be an addition to your wardrobe, not its entire personality. I think we need to start asking a different question. Instead of asking, “Is this trending?”, I think the better question is: “Would I still want this if I hadn’t seen it online twenty times?” That one question can save you from a surprising number of impulse purchases. Before buying something viral, I now like to think about three things: Would I wear it with at least three things I already own? If the answer is no, it’s probably not going to become a wardrobe staple. Does it actually suit my lifestyle? There’s no point buying a pair of delicate heels because they’re trending if you’re constantly commuting, walking around the city or spending your days at work. Do I like the piece, or do I like how it looks on someone else? This is perhaps the biggest one. A particular dress can look incredible on a fashion creator and still not be the right dress for you. That’s not a failure. That’s simply how personal style works. Your wardrobe doesn’t need a complete reset every season. One of the biggest myths

social media has created is that you need to constantly reinvent your wardrobe. You don’t. In fact, I think the most stylish wardrobes are often built around a few reliable pieces that keep returning in different combinations. A good pair of jeans. A flattering black dress. A crisp shirt. A comfortable pair of trousers. A versatile kurta set. A handbag that actually fits your life. Shoes you can walk in. Then, if you want to experiment, bring in the trend through smaller additions. Instead of replacing your entire wardrobe with the season’s aesthetic, try a trend-per-outfit approach. Love the quiet-luxury look? Try a structured handbag or a neutral belt. Interested in the sporty trend? Add sneakers to an outfit you already wear. Want to experiment with the current denim silhouette? Buy one pair instead of replacing every pair you own. It’s much easier on your wardrobe, your bank account and, frankly, the environment. The smartest fashion purchase might be the one you already own. This sounds painfully unexciting in an era of endless shopping links, but restyling what you already own can completely change how your wardrobe feels. That black trousers you’ve worn a hundred times? Try them with a fitted shirt instead of your usual oversized one. Your favourite kurta? Wear it with jeans. A formal blazer? Throw it over a simple dress. Your everyday saree? Change the blouse, jewellery and shoes and suddenly it has an entirely different personality. Sometimes we don’t need more clothes. We need more ideas. And ironically, social media can actually help with this if we use it differently. Instead of saving links to things we want

to buy, save styling ideas that can be recreated with pieces already sitting in our wardrobes. That’s a much healthier relationship with fashion content. So, should we stop shopping trends altogether? Absolutely not. I’m certainly not going to pretend I can resist every viral fashion moment. Sometimes you see something and immediately think, okay, I need that. And that’s fine. The goal isn’t to become immune to trends. It’s to become better at choosing which ones deserve a place in your wardrobe. If a trend genuinely makes you excited to get dressed, fits your lifestyle and works with what you already own, go for it. But if you’re buying something because your entire feed seems to own it, maybe pause before hitting “Add to Cart”. Because ultimately, the most interesting person in the room isn’t necessarily the one wearing every trend. It’s the one who looks like herself. How I would shop trends without losing my personal style If I’m shopping online, I like to divide potential purchases into three categories: The forever pieces: things I’d happily wear even if nobody on social media was talking about them. The trend updates: pieces that give my existing wardrobe a current feel without completely changing my style. The fun experiments: things I may wear for a season or two simply because they’re fun. There’s nothing wrong with the third category. Fashion is supposed to be fun. The important thing is knowing which category you’re buying into. So the next time your feed tells you that your wardrobe desperately needs a new aesthetic, take a look at what you already own first.



ENTERTAINMENT

The Emraan Hashmi and Alia Bhatt family connection explained



Mumbai : Emraan Hashmi is currently basking in the success of his recently released film ‘Awarapan 2’. The film has been doing strong business at the box office, putting the actor back in the spotlight. Did you know Emraan shares a family connection with another major Bollywood star? The actor is actually related to Alia Bhatt, though their family link is not widely known.

The link comes through Emraan’s grandmother, veteran actress Purnima,

whose real name was Meherbano Mohammad Ali. She was the sister of Shirin Mohammad Ali. Shirin was the mother of filmmakers Mahesh Bhatt and Mukesh Bhatt. Mahesh Bhatt is Alia Bhatt’s father. Emraan’s father Anwar Hashmi and Mahesh Bhatt are

first cousins, which makes Emraan and Alia second cousins, and part of the same extended family.

There is an interesting Bollywood connection here too.Emraan’s grandmother Purnima (Meherbano) was a successful actress in her time. She worked in Hindi cinema from the 1940s onwards and appeared in several films.She was also seen in the iconic Amitabh Bachchan starrer Zanjeer. She played a small but memo-

orable role in the film.Meherbano initially married Syed Shaukat Hashmi (Emraan’s grandfather). But after their marriage went off the tracks, she tied the knot with producer-director, Bhagwan Das Verma.

Meanwhile, Emraan was recently seen in Awarapan 2, which was released in theatres on August 14. The film is a sequel to his 2007 hit Awarapan and sees him return as Shivam Pandit. The film crossed the Rs 90 crore mark within four days. Awarapan 2 is directed by Nitin Kakkar and written by Bilal Siddiqui and Vishesh Bhatt. It is produced by Bhatt under the Vishesh Films banner, with his father, Mukesh Bhatt, presenting the film. It also stars Disha Patani, Shabana Azmi, Puran Gabbi and others. Meanwhile, Emraan will also be seen in Gunmaaster G9, which also stars Genelia D’Souza and Aparshakti Khurana. The film, which is said to be a mix of action, romance and musical, has now locked its theatrical release date, and will arrive in cinemas worldwide on November 27, 2026.

Film fraternity mourns as actress Ananya Raj passes away at 27

Mumbai : The All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) has paid a tribute to actress Ananya Raj after she passed away on Sunday at the age of 27.

The body took to their X, formerly Twitter, and penned a long note for the actress. They wrote, “With profound grief and a heavy heart, the All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) mourns the untimely demise of actress Ananya Raj, who passed away at the young age of just 27 on 15 July 2026. Her family has now made the news of her passing public, nearly a month after her demise. According to the family, Ananya had been battling health issues for the past year, during



which she went through immense physical and mental challenges. Despite these difficult circumstances, her family remembered her as a strong-spirited girl who lived like a Queen”.

Ananya further mentioned, “Ananya Raj was a part of several Bollywood films, including 7 Hours to Go (2016), The Final Exit

(2017), and Ghost (2019). Her untimely passing has sent shockwaves across Bollywood and the entire Indian film industry. The loss of a young artist is not just a loss for her family, it is a loss for the entire film fraternity. A member of our extended film-industry family has left us far too soon. Her work, her presence and

her memories will always remain a part of the Indian film industry”. The actress had been dealing with physical and mental health issues for over a year and passed away peacefully in her sleep on July 15.

“The All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) expresses its deepest condolences to the bereaved family and loved ones. We pray that the departed soul finds eternal peace and that her family receives the strength and courage to bear this irreparable loss. Ananya Raj will always be remembered. Her journey may have ended, but her memories will live on forever. All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA)”, they added.

Sayani Gupta denies copyright claims on debut film ‘Aasmani’

Mumbai : Sayani Gupta turned director with a short film titled Aasmani. However, it soon ran into trouble after the Indian Film Festival of New Zealand (TIFFNZ) withdrew its invitation to screen the film citing copyright claims. Sayani has now broken her silence by reacting to the allegations. She maintained her stance that Aasmani is an original film created by her.

Sayani Gupta said she deliberately stayed away from the public discussion around the allegations because the matter was already being dealt with by the relevant authority. In an interview with Hollywood Reporter India, she clarified that her silence should not be seen as acceptance of the claims. She said she preferred to let the facts speak for themselves through the proper legal process rather than engage in conversations across WhatsApp groups, private messages or social me-



dia. Sayani said the complaint was made by another FTII filmmaker over an unfinished documentary project, which she claimed she knew nothing about. While acknowledging the filmmaker’s right to raise concerns, she maintained that she has consistently stood by her own account of what happened. Sayani also said the allegations appeared to be based on assumptions, pointing out that the filmmaker had not seen her short-fiction comedy Aasmani. She reiterated that she was not aware of the documentary project referred to in the complaint.

“There is a difference between an allegation and a finding. Aasmani came from its own world, its own journey. And without any knowledge of any other film in development. To see that distinction collapse into a public narrative of ‘copyright infringement’ is not only misleading, it is deeply unfair to the film and to everyone who has tirelessly worked on it. What has been troubling to watch is this become a copyright issue when it absolutely isn’t one.”

Gupta maintained that the script for Aasmani was de-

veloped over several years before it was finally turned into the short film. She said the film was shaped through her own writing and creative process.She also pointed out that films can sometimes have similar themes or elements without one being copied from another. According to Gupta, details such as a woman, a car, ageing or independence can appear in different stories, but that alone does not establish copyright infringement. She stressed that copyright applies to the way an idea is expressed, rather than the idea itself.

Sayani Gupta made her feature film debut in 2012 with Second Marriage Dot Com. She has since appeared in supporting roles in films such as Fan (2016), Jolly LLB 2 (2017) and Article 15 (2019). She played the role of a blind Pakistani-Bangladeshi lesbian activist named Khanum in Margarita with a Straw opposite Kalki Koechlin.

Sonu Nigam settles Bombay HC identity dispute with namesake

Mumbai : Singer Sonu Nigam’s name became the subject of a legal dispute after concerns were raised over its use on social media. The matter has now been settled in the Bombay High Court after Sonu Nigam Singh agreed to certain terms regarding the use of the singer’s name and identity online.

Justice Madhav Jamdar recorded the settlement on August 13 after lawyers representing both sides told the court that they had resolved the matter. The consent terms submitted by the parties were accepted by the court as undertakings. Sonu Nigam had approached the High Court seeking protection of his personality and publicity rights. His petition sought to stop Sonu Nigam Singh and people or entities associated with him from using the name “Sonu Nigam”, the singer’s image, likeness or other aspects of his identity without permission.

The singer had also raised concerns that the similar name and images could confuse people into believing that Singh’s social media accounts or services were connected to, endorsed by or belonged to him. His plea also sought restrictions on creating, publishing, uploading, sharing or repro-



ducing the content in question. The High Court also referred to an earlier order passed on July 11, 2025. At the time, Singh and anyone acting through him had been restrained from using “Sonu Nigam” as a display name or account name on social media platforms.

During the latest hearing, the lawyers told the court that the order had been followed. The settlement terms were signed by Sonu Nigam’s power-of-attorney holder, Saira Dawood Makani, and Sonu Nigam Singh. Makani was present in court, while Singh joined the hearing through video conferencing. Both sides confirmed that they had

agreed to settle the dispute.The Bombay High Court subsequently disposed of the commercial intellectual property suit. “Various statements made in the Consent Terms are accepted as undertakings given to this Court,” Justice Jamdar said in the order.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Sonu Nigam’s recent project includes Rajkumar Santoshi’s Batwara 1947. The film is backed by Amir Khan Productions and stars Sunny Deol, Preity Zinta, Shabana Azmi, Karan Deol, Ali Fazel and Abhimanyu Singh, among others. Sonu has sung the song Tabasum, which is composed by AR Rahman and written by Javed Akhtar.

Avika Gor issues public apology to Farrhana Bhatt following khatron ke khiladi 15 dispute

Mumbai : Balika Vadhu fame Avika Gor has publicly apologised to her fellow Khatron Ke Khiladi 15 contestant Farrhana Bhatt after their spat on the show. In a recent episode of the stunt-based reality show, Avika

joined Farrhana’s team. While Farrhana welcomed her, Avika was irked, and reminded her that she had earlier made it clear that she did not want her on the team. Now, after the episode aired, Avika shared an Instagram

story, apologizing to Farrhana for taking out her frustration, and admitted that she was wrong.

In the latest episode of Khatron Ke Khiladi 15, Farrhana congratulated Avika and wished her luck after she

joined the team. However, Avika, who appeared to be upset, said, “Aap toh chahti nahi thi main aaoon. (You didn’t want me to come to the team).” Now, Avika shared a clip from the episode on her Instagram story and

apologised for the way she behaved. “I honestly didn’t like my behaviour Farrhana Bhatt, I’m sorry. I was wrong to take out my frustration on you when I was upset with the team. Lots of love,” she wrote.Avika later apologised

again in the comments, admitting that her reaction was driven by her own frustration and that she had unfairly directed it towards Farrhana. “

The actress later followed it up with another apology in the comments, making it

clear that her reaction came from her own frustration and was not fair to Farrhana. “I didn’t really like what I did. Sorry @farrhana_bhatt I think I was just upset aur woh aap ki taraf nikla. Not cool. Sorry sweetheart,” she wrote.

Meanwhile, Avika Gor is the latest contestant to get evicted from Rohit Shetty-hosted show. She was eliminated in the second week after losing a face-off stunt against Orhan Awatramani, popularly known as Orry.

Emraan Hashmi's Awarapan 2 hits ₹90 Cr; Batwara 1947 slips further

Mumbai : Awarapan 2 has continued to stay ahead of Batwara 1947 at the box office. The Emraan Hashmi and Disha Patani starrer crossed the Rs 90 crore mark within four days, even though its collections dropped sharply on Monday. According to Sacnilk, Awarapan 2 earned Rs 9.25 crore net in India on Day 4. This was a 64.4% drop from its Sunday collection of Rs 26 crore. With Monday’s earnings added, the film’s India net collection now stands at around Rs 91 crore.

The film had a much stronger weekend, which helped it build a comfortable lead early in its run. Monday brought a noticeable slowdown, but Awarapan 2 still managed to



cross the Rs 90 crore milestone. The next target for the film is now the Rs 100 crore mark. It needs around Rs 9 crore more to get there. Overseas, Awarapan 2 added around Rs 2.50 crore on Day 4. This takes its total overseas gross collection to Rs 21.80 crore so far. The film’s

worldwide gross now stands at approximately Rs 130.82 crore.

Meanwhile, Batwara 1947 witnessed a significant drop at the box office on its first Monday, August 17. The film collected around Rs 2 crore net in India, with an overall occupancy of about 11%

across 6,771 shows. This marks a 72.4% decline from the Rs 7.25 crore it earned on Sunday.While both Batwara 1947 and Awarapan 2 released on the same day (August 14), the gap between the two films has become quite wide. Awarapan 2 earned more than four times as much as Batwara 1947 on Day 4 in India.

Batwara 1947 has reached an India net total of Rs 28.50 crore in four days, and its India gross stands at around Rs 33.95 crore. The film added approximately Rs 0.75 crore from overseas on Day 4, taking its overseas gross to Rs 6.25 crore. Its worldwide gross now stands at about Rs 40.20 crore.

Parvathy Thiruvothu Joins Kartik Aaryan starrer ‘captain India’

Mumbai : Kartik Aaryan’s Captain India is getting bigger, with Parvathy Thiruvothu becoming the latest notable addition to the cast. The acclaimed actor has reportedly joined Shimit Amin’s aviation thriller in a pivotal role. While the makers have chosen to keep details of her character under wraps, sources suggest that she will be an integral part of the narrative.

The casting marks another interesting step in Parvathy’s Hindi film journey. Known for performances that have earned her acclaim across Malayalam cinema, she has built an impressive body of work with films such as Take Off, Koode, Uyare and Bangalore Days. She made her Hindi debut opposite the late Irrfan Khan in the 2017 romantic comedy Qarib Qarib Single, where her performance brought her to the attention of a wider audience.She subsequently appeared in Pankaj Tripathi’s Kadak Singh and made a cameo in Bejoy Nambiar’s survival thriller Tu Yaa Main. Her upcoming projects also include Storm,



Hrithik Roshan’s maiden web series production, which is set to premiere on Prime Video later this year.

According to reports, Captain India was one of the more interesting Hindi projects offered to Parvathy in recent times. Her decision to come on board adds another accomplished performer to a film that is already attracting attention for its unusual combination of scale, subject and talent. Actor Manish Chaudhary has also reportedly joined the cast in a key role. Recently seen in Chand Mera Dil, Chaudhary is expected to bring further depth to the ensemble.

A major draw of Captain India is the return of Shimit Amin to feature filmmaking. The director has been away from the director’s chair for more than a decade and a half, following a remarkable run that included Ab Tak Chhappan, Chak De! India and Rocket Singh: Salesman of the Year. The three films, released between 2004 and 2009, established Amin as a filmmaker with a distinctive ability to balance strong characters with compelling mainstream storytelling.Captain India is inspired by one of India’s major humanitarian rescue operations and follows a pilot who plays a crucial role in bringing civilians to safety from a war-torn country. Kartik Aaryan will reportedly portray the pilot at the centre of the high-risk operation.

The film is being produced by Harman Baweja’s Baweja Studios and Bhushan Kumar’s T-Series. Kartik is currently committed to Kabir Khan’s upcoming sports drama, which he is expected to wrap by the first week of September before moving on to Captain India.

Zoya Akhtar announces ZNMD sequel 15 years later with plot tease

Mumbai : Zoya Akhtar has finally confirmed what fans of Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara have been waiting years to hear: work on a sequel is underway. Fifteen years after the original became a favourite, the filmmaker has revealed that she is developing a follow-up to the Hrithik Roshan, Farhan Akhtar and Abhay Deol

starrer.

The update comes after years of speculation around Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara 2. The excitement grew further in 2025 when Hrithik, Farhan and Abhay reunited in an ad for Yas Island, with fans immediately hoping that Arjun, Kabir and Imran were finally returning. Speaking to The Hollywood

Reporter at the Monsoon Film Festival, Zoya confirmed that the sequel is being worked on. “We are on it,” she said.She also made it clear that the project will only move ahead if the story feels right for the characters at this stage of their lives.

“We don’t know what will happen and what won’t... if we will get to a place where

it feels correct, in catching up with these characters today. But it will be nice.”

That is the clearest update yet on the much-awaited sequel. Earlier this year, Zoya had been more guarded when asked about Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara 2, saying, “When it happens, I’ll announce it.” The 2025 Yas Island advertisement had

already brought the three actors together, leading many fans to believe that a sequel announcement could be around the corner. Zoya admitted that the reaction was so strong that people initially thought the commercial itself was a trailer. “People thought it was a trailer,” she said.

The reunion had revived

memories of the original film, which followed Arjun, Kabir and Imran on a life-changing trip through Spain. Released in 2011, the film starred Katrina Kaif, Kalki Koechlin and Naseeruddin Shah alongside the central trio. Fifteen years after its release, it continues to be described as a cult favourite.



Nitin Gadkari constructed the Mumbai-Pune Expressway 27 years ago, yet it remains devoid of potholes

Pune, Aug 18: Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, stated on Monday that the Mumbai-Pune Expressway he built 27 years ago is still devoid of potholes today. I developed the Mumbai-Pune expressway 27 years ago. It's still devoid of potholes, but nobody writes about it. During the 'Festival of Thinkers' hosted by Symbiosis International University in Pune, he joked about getting mocked on social media after a building at the missing link fell, despite the fact that it was a state government project. "I guess social media is good for quality control," the BJP MP remarked, adding that the forest department did not provide clearance to build the missing connection back then. In May, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated the much-awaited 13.3-km-long "Missing Link" project on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway to bypass the steep mountain pass section aimed at improving road safety and reducing travel distance between the two key cities. In July, a landslide hit near Tunnel 2 of the missing link entrance following heavy rain. Meanwhile, emphasising the role of technology in infrastructure management, Gadkari said modern tools such as drones, artificial intelligence, LiDAR and satellite technology should be used to monitor roads and identify defects before they become major issues. Recalling his experience on building the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, Gadkari said he had pushed for an eight-lane road considering future traffic requirements, but later felt that a bigger vision was needed after seeing highways abroad.

When I saw roads in other countries, I thought we should have planned at least a 40-lane road. Recently, I constructed a 40-lane road between Delhi and Meerut," he said. He also added



that infrastructure development must be planned with a long-term vision of 25 to 50 years instead of addressing only present-day requirements. He said infrastructure development is the foundation for economic growth and plays a crucial role in generating employment and reducing poverty. Gadkari highlighted the link between infrastructure, technology, research, innovation and economic development. Describing "knowledge to wealth" as an important pathway for India's future growth, he stressed the need to promote research, entrepreneurship, skill development and technological advancement. Gadkari added that infrastructure capacity should be planned by anticipating future requirements, noting that temporary solutions to current problems should be avoided and projects must be designed with a futuristic approach. "Roads and infrastructure provide a boost to industry, trade, tourism and employment. Better connectivity reduces transportation costs, increases competitiveness of Indian industries and helps farmers access wider mar-

kets," he said.

The Union minister further said India's automobile sector has witnessed significant growth due to advancements in technology, electric vehicles, alternative fuels and biofuels. The sector has the potential to create large-scale employment opportunities and strengthen India's exports, he added. Gadkari also stressed the importance of "knowledge with ethics", stating that knowledge must be supported by integrity, quality, reliability and values. He advised students to avoid shortcuts and focus on sustainable success. He also highlighted the need to balance development with environmental protection and sustainable economic growth. Speaking on Pune's infrastructure development, Gadkari stated that projects worth over Rs 60,000 crore are planned for the city in the next years. He stated that novel funding options are being considered for the implementation of these infrastructure projects, and that a forward-thinking strategy would be required to fulfill Pune's expanding demands.

Mohun Bagan Win Penalties Over Jamshedpur FC, Secure Semi-Final Place



Kolkata: Mohun Bagan Super Giants defeated Jamshedpur FC 9-8 on penalties to go to the Durand Cup semi-finals on Monday. The game ended 1-1 after normal time, with Sahal Abdul Samad and Devendra Murgaonkar scoring for their respective teams, before Mohun Bagan won in a protracted shootout. The shootout went the distance, culminating in sudden death with the first 16 kicks being converted. Lawmsangzuala's fourth sudden death kick was saved by Vishal Kaith, but

Tekcham Abhishek Singh stepped up and scored the game-winning penalty to send Mohun Bagan Super Giant through. Mohun Bagan will face the winner of the quarterfinal between Shillong Lajong FC and NorthEast United FC. Earlier, Mohun Bagan made the perfect start, taking the lead inside the second minute. Pronay Halder's pass to Rashithoi Meetei was not properly controlled, and Sahal pounced on the loose ball. He drove into the box and slotted a low finish into the bottom-right corner

to hand the hosts an early lead. The goal lifted Mohun Bagan, who began to press with real intent in the opening exchanges. Jamshedpur gradually settled after the early setback. By the 15th minute, the visitors were enjoying longer spells of possession and looking to create chances in the final third, though Mohun Bagan's defence remained solid. Jamshedpur equalized on the stroke of halftime. Rashithoi scooped up the ball beyond Mohun Bagan's box and struck from a distance. Kaith could only parry the attempt, but Devendra was on hand to finish from close range, bringing both teams level at halftime. The game developed into a tight, open struggle until the end, with both teams continuing to attack but failing to find a clear opening. Mohun Bagan pressed forward in quest of a late winner, but Jamshedpur stood firm as a team to finish regular time. Deep into stoppage time, Sayan tested Albino from long range, prompting a superb save that resulted in a wasted corner. PTI APA DDV.

Marathi test Here is what will happen to Mumbai auto-taxi drivers starting today



Mumbai, Aug 18: Mumbai auto and taxi drivers who do not speak Marathi may face consequences when the Maharashtra government begins enforcing its language requirement on Tuesday. The government previously allowed drivers time to learn Marathi and complete the necessary training. That deadline has already passed. Drivers who do not understand Marathi will not lose their licenses instantly. What happens if a driver does not understand Marathi? Drivers have up to four months to comply. According to Transport Minis-

ter Pratap Sarnaik, drivers who cannot demonstrate the requisite Marathi knowledge would be issued a 30-day warning. If they fail to meet the Marathi language requirement even after the notice period, their driving licence can be suspended for three months. If they still do not comply after the suspension, the licence can be permanently cancelled. Around 1.25 lakh auto and taxi drivers who completed the Marathi language course conducted by the government and received certificates will not face action under this provision. At the

concluding ceremony of the 'Hinduhridaya Samrat Balasaheb Thackeray Marathi Language Course Campaign' held in Thane, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said Marathi is a "language of devotion, not compulsion". According to him, around 1.25 lakh auto and taxi drivers learnt Marathi, passed the examination and received certificates during the 105-day campaign. Shinde said people should speak to non-Marathi speakers in Marathi instead of making fun of those who are learning the language. He said Marathi should be learnt out

of love and respect, rather than fear of the law. At the same time, Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik took a strict stand on the rules and said the attitude of "I will not speak Marathi" will no longer be accepted. Sarnaik credited Eknath Shinde with the political drive behind the Marathi-learning movement. He said the campaign would not have been feasible if Shinde had not been his political mentor. He further said that some Hindi-speaking leaders attempted to malign him and his department. Sarnaik added that the Industries Department, led by Uday Samant, contributed Rs 1 crore to the campaign. Non-Marathi people are concentrated in Mumbai, Thane, Navi Mumbai, Pune, and other Maharashtra cities. People from other states make up a sizable portion of the car, taxi, and transportation workforce. According to the government, the goal is to encourage everyone in Maharashtra to study Marathi rather than to target non-Marathi speakers specifically.

"To Be Hanged Till Death": Top Court Maintains Noose for Capital Punishment

New Delhi, Aug 18: The Supreme Court has rejected a plea to substitute hanging with "less painful" techniques like lethal injection. The Supreme Court upheld the constitutional legitimacy of death punishment by hanging and underlined that it will continue to be the mode of execution in the country for the time being. A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta denied a plea seeking the adoption of an alternate method for carrying out the death penalty, other than hanging, that causes less anguish to the accused and maintains their dignity. The Supreme Court also rejected the request to send three previous decisions on the subject to a bigger court. The petitioner had sought that the three earlier Supreme Court judgments on the issue be referred to a larger bench. However, the bench said there was no sufficient basis to do so. The petition filed by law-

yer Rishi Malhotra suggested alternatives to hanging such as lethal injection, shooting, electrocution, or gas chamber, which can cause the death of the convict within a few minutes. The PIL described hanging as extremely painful, inhuman, and cruel. The petitioner sought that awarding the death penalty by hanging under Section 354(5) of the CrPC be declared unconstitutional, and that the right to a dignified death be recognized as a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution. The petition also stated that it takes nearly 40 minutes to declare death after hanging, while the process is completed in about 5 minutes through shooting or lethal injection. Malhotra also cited a United Nations resolution which states that where the death penalty is imposed, it should be carried out in a manner that inflicts the least possible suffering. The Court add-

ed that its judgment is not the final word on the subject, and that the issue may be examined again in the future if compelling scientific evidence is produced regarding alternative methods of execution. "Before parting, we clarify that the dismissal of the present writ petition must not be understood as foreclosing future constitutional scrutiny should compelling scientific, medical, or empirical evidence emerge demonstrating that the factual and scientific basis on which the decision in Dina proceeded has been materially displaced by subsequent developments," it said. The court also said that the Central Government, if it wishes, can constitute a committee of experts to conduct a comprehensive review of alternative methods of carrying out the death penalty. The Supreme Court had concluded the hearing and reserved its verdict on January 22.

Mohammed Siraj scares umpire with bullet throw, leaving Ravindra Jadeja amused

Sri Lanka: An incident involving Mohammed Siraj and Ravindra Jadeja on Day 3 of India's first Test against Sri Lanka went viral on social media. It all started with Siraj's deep throw, which nearly missed leg umpire Ahsan Raza.

Raza was on the field as a replacement umpire after Rod Tucker did not appear. Siraj fielded the ball in the deep, and his strong throw came perilously near to striking Raza, but the umpire moved fast to avoid it. Jadeja recognized the humorous side of the affair and was amused by everything, and his reply had countless social media fans in stitches. Coming into the contest, Manav Suthar and Ravindra Jade-



ja each took seven wickets as India knocked Sri Lanka out for 284 on Day Three of the first Test, securing a commanding 178-run first innings advantage. Arriving on the tour with high expectations, Suthar lived up to them by striking with his first ball and finished with 4-76 in a period in which he got spin and bounce while hitting the

correct distances. Jadeja, his senior spin partner, contributed 3-57 and helped him reach 350 Test wickets. Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, and Prasidh Krishna took a wicket apiece to round off a thoroughly clinical collective bowling effort for India, who briefly entertained hopes of enforcing the follow-on after reducing the hosts to 90/5.

"Hats Off To Volunteers, BAI": PV Sindhu Gives Special Praise As World Championships Return To India

New Delhi: Star shuttler PV Sindhu praised the efforts of volunteers, support staff, the government, and the Badminton Association of India (BAI) in ensuring a well-organized World Championships, stating that the players' experience at the home tournament was particularly favorable. "The conditions, whatever is said and done, the volunteers, the support staff, the government, and, of course, the Badminton Association of India have put in a lot of effort," said Sindhu, who won the 2019 BWF World Championship with a comfortable 21-7, 21-11 win over Ireland's Sophia Noble on Monday. The 31-year-old, who was attending her 10th World Championships and was aiming for her sixth medal, praised the attention to detail at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium and stated that the players had received help at every stage. "And I think from the home crowd added another dimension to her return to the World Championships. Sindhu said walking onto the court with thousands of supporters cheering for her gave her an emotional lift. "It was really good to get out of the court, and I could see a lot of people cheering and supporting me. I think that gave me a lot of confidence. Irrespective of who the opponent is, it was just that I had to play my game and give



my best," she said. On the court, Sindhu gave a confident performance against Noble, who was ranked 141st. She quickly secured an 8-0 advantage in the first game and never let her opponent get settled, winning the first game 21 to 7. In the second game, Noble displayed more resistance and was only three points behind at the interval. After the break, however, Sindhu improved, securing the match by winning 10 of the next 13 points in 29 minutes. Although the Indian acknowledged that nerves in the first match can have an effect on even the most experienced players, she was satisfied with the way she got settled in the contest. "Yeah, I think definitely that does happen to a lot of athletes, including me, where, you know, the first time you're getting onto the court, you don't know how the conditions

are, you're a bit jittery, you make a lot more mistakes. And then slowly, you know, you get used to it." "But I think today I started well. I started with a big lead, even though I was giving two, three points here and there, but I still could maintain that lead. So, I think it was a good start for me, and I was comfortable throughout. So, that was good." Sindhu also refused to look too far ahead despite being one of the leading contenders for a medal. "Right now, the medal is quite far away. For me, it's just one match at a time. I have to give 100% in every match. It's my first match, so I need to relax and focus on the next match. It's just one match at a time for me, so I just have to give my best and play my game." In the Round of 32, she will face Wen Yu Zhang of Canada, ranked 49th in the world.

Ex-Indian Star Explains Why Shubman Gill And Co 'Could End Up Losing' Galle Test vs. Sri Lanka

Ex-Indian Star Explains Why Shubman Gill And Co 'Could End Up Losing' Galle Test vs. Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Former Indian cricket team batsman Aakash Chopra feels India should bat for 40 overs on Day 4 of the first Test against Sri Lanka, with a goal of roughly 350. Chopra noted that the method is not without dangers, with India potentially losing. However, he indicated that the ideal option for the visitors would be to play at a reasonable pace and declare their innings around the 40-over mark, even if it would offer Sri Lanka a chance. "Add 178 more to 178 and reach 350. Even if you play at an average of five, it will take you 40 overs to score 200, and there are huge chances of rain. So you will have to move really quickly. You will have to play slightly aggressively. Yashasvi, play like Yashasvi. KL Rahul, you have many gears. Activate the T20 and ODI gear this time," Chopra said on YouTube. "There is a lot of depth in the batting. Just keep moving faster. I am giving India about 40-odd overs. Score around 150 to 175 runs and declare. Bite the bullet. I know if 50 overs happen and 90 overs of the last day also happen, we can actually end up on the losing side in 140 overs," he added. Chopra explained that in the event of a full game, Sri Lanka could have a chance of winning. However, if rain plays a part, India might not have enough time to bowl them out and register a victory if they choose to bat for a longer period. "If we play the entire match and are unable to bowl them out, they will have time to score 350 runs. However, we shall be rubbing our hands if we bat too long and a session is ruined by rain. It will be a difficult decision, but it is one that India must take," he remarked.

Hardik Pandya Makes Kranti Gaud’s Birthday Extra Special With His Thoughtful Signed Jersey Gift

Bengaluru: India women’s cricketer Kranti Gaud shared a special moment with her idol Hardik Pandya after meeting the India all-rounder at the BCCI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru. Pandya gifted the young cricketer a signed jersey and also celebrated her birthday during the meeting. Kranti has previously spoken openly about Pandya’s influence on her cricketing journey and considers him one of her biggest inspirations. Sharing pictures from their meeting on Instagram, Kranti wrote, “Thank you so much bhaiya.” The young cricketer’s admiration for Pandya became particularly visible after India’s World Cup triumph, when she recreated his trademark victory celebra-



tion on the pitch. Kranti went viral after striking Pandya’s famous victory pose moments after India lifted the ICC World Cup trophy. She placed the trophy on the ground before copying the all-rounder’s celebration, creating one

of the memorable images from India’s title celebrations. The moment also highlighted the influence Pandya has had on Kranti, who has looked up to his aggressive and fearless style of cricket since her early days. Her latest meet-

ing with Pandya brought that admiration full circle. The signed jersey gives Kranti a personal memento from the player she has repeatedly credited as an inspiration for her own career. The meeting also came at an important stage

in Kranti’s development as a young India cricketer. From playing cricket in the lanes of her hometown to making her mark at the international level, her journey has continued to gather attention. Indian women cricketer Kranti Gaud met her idol Hardik Pandya at the BCCI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, where Pandya gifted her a signed jersey and celebrated her birthday. Kranti has openly admired Pandya, crediting his aggressive style and victory celebrations as inspirations throughout her cricket journey. Their meeting symbolized the full circle of her admiration, highlighting Pandya’s profound influence on her growth from a young player to an emerging international talent.

Hockey World Cup: India Seeks Composure Against Pakistan

New Delhi: India head coach Craig Fulton admitted that defensive lapses in the third quarter cost his side dearly as England beat India 4-2 in their second pool match of the men’s Hockey World Cup on Monday. India were the better side for large parts of the first half and scored twice in the second quarter. But their defensive intensity dropped after the break, allowing England to take control of the match. “The first half was good. We got PCs on the counter-attack and came back nicely with a bit more control. In the third quarter our defence was not as good as it was supposed to be,” Fulton said after the match. “England played like a world number three team. We created a few chances but couldn’t convert those.” The defeat leaves India need-

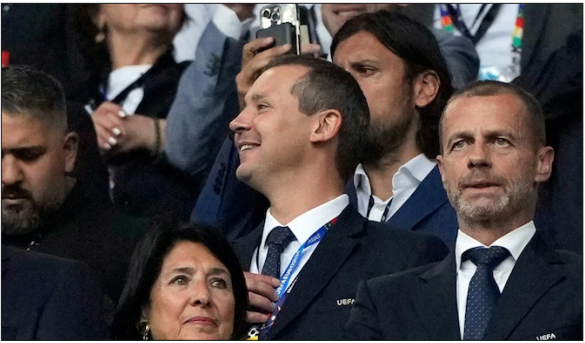


ing a strong response against arch-rivals Pakistan in their final pool match on Wednesday. Fulton said India cannot afford to dwell on the loss and must show greater composure in the crucial encounter. “If we had won today, we still have to do the business in the next game. We just have to be better on the ball in the final match and show a bit of composure. We needed to press out and put some pressure on

them,” he said. “The forward line played well but we needed to score three-plus goals and we could only score two. It’s just the second match and we will learn from this loss. We have another big opportunity against Pakistan and the boys are motivated for that.” Manpreet Singh also admitted that India’s defensive lapses proved costly and stressed the need for discipline against Pakistan.

FIFA Confirms Kevin Lamour Exit After Infantino Criticism: Was He Sacked?

New Delhi: FIFA has confirmed the departure of Chief Operating Officer Kevin Lamour, just weeks after he publicly challenged Gianni Infantino over a controversial plan to bring private investment into FIFA’s tournament business. The timing has raised questions over whether Lamour’s criticism contributed to the end of his tenure. Lamour, who joined FIFA’s senior leadership in November 2024, had previously worked closely with Infantino during his rise to the FIFA presidency. FIFA said their professional relationship ended on August 17, while Sky News reported that staff were told Lamour had been sacked. “FIFA can confirm that the working relationship between FIFA and Kevin



Lamour as FIFA’s Chief Operating Officer has ended on 17 August 2026,” a FIFA spokesperson said. “FIFA thanks Kevin for his two years of service and wishes him the best of luck for the future. No further comment will be made on the matter,” FIFA added. Lamour became one of the most senior FIFA figures to publicly oppose Infantino’s proposed commercial restructuring. The plan in-

volved creating a subsidiary to handle major tournament rights and seeking as much as 4.2 billion US dollars from private investors in exchange for a minority stake. Lamour had argued that FIFA employees had not been properly informed about the proposal and questioned whether it served football’s wider interests. He also acknowledged that speaking out could cost him his position.

Rodri Arrives For Barcelona Medical, Vows Team Will Fight For Every Major Title

New Delhi: Rodri, the Manchester City and Spain midfielder, has arrived in Barcelona to complete his medical ahead of his blockbuster move to FC Barcelona. The 30-year-old is closing in on a 76.5 million euros transfer that will bring his seven-year spell at the Etihad to an end. Rodri landed at Barcelona’s El Prat airport after an intense few days that saw the two clubs finally reach an agreement. Speaking to reporters, he said he was delighted to have the move completed. “I’m very happy to be here. It’s been an intense few days, but I’m glad everything is sorted out,” Rodri said. “Playing for Barcelona is a dream come true for me. I’m really looking forward to being

with my teammates, most of whom I already know from the national team, so now it’s time to work hard and give my best,” he added. Rodri also made Barcelona’s ambitions clear, insisting the club will target the biggest prizes immediately. “We’re going for the Champions League, we’re going for everything that comes our way,” he said. The move ends a hugely successful seven-year stint at Manchester City, where Rodri became a central figure in midfield. He won four Premier League titles and scored the only goal in City’s 2023 Champions League final victory over Inter Milan. He also claimed the Ballon d’Or in 2024, although injuries have disrupted his recent seasons. An ACL injury ruled him



out for much of the 2024-25 campaign, while hamstringing and groin problems limited him to 33 appearances in City’s most recent season. Manchester City had hoped to retain their midfield linchpin, particularly with Rodri entering the final year of his

heavily in the position and are closing in on Lille youngster Ayoub Bouaddi, while Chelsea’s Enzo Fernandez remains on their radar. For Barcelona, Rodri’s arrival adds experience, control and elite-level pedigree to a midfield already packed with Spain internationals. If his medical goes smoothly, the club are expected to confirm the signing, with his formal presentation scheduled for Wednesday. Rodri, Manchester City’s Spanish midfielder, is set to join FC Barcelona for €76.5 million, ending his seven-year tenure at City. He completed his medical in Barcelona and expressed excitement about joining teammates, many of whom he knows from the national team.

Jordan Cox Draws Inspiration From Virat Kohli Ahead Of Pakistan Tests

Itanagar: Jordan Cox will walk into England’s new-look Test side against Pakistan with a familiar voice in his corner. The 25-year-old batter has revealed how Virat Kohli’s advice helped him approach his Test debut and why he plans to draw on those words again as he prepares for another major opportunity. Cox’s elevation comes after Jacob Bethell was ruled out with a knee injury. He has been told he will bat at No. 3 in at least the first two Tests of the three-match series against Pakistan, beginning at

Headingley on Wednesday. “I probably don’t want to share all of them, but I just wanted to ask him a few questions. He was saying: ‘Enjoy the moment. You only get one debut. Just enjoy it and have fun’. ‘Family and friends, everything they have worked hard for, every time they have come to a game to support you, show them something why they have done all that sacrifice for you,” Cox told the BBC. Cox joined Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) during the 2026 IPL season as the franchise de-

fended their title. Although he did not feature in a match, he spent several months around Kohli and developed a close relationship with the former India captain. “I’ll keep it forever, I think. He’s someone that I’ve looked up to and I’ve managed to spend what felt like four months with him in India. He’s someone that I’ll text if I’m ever feeling down or need a bit of help. He’s always at the end of the phone,” Cox added. The Essex batter now steps into a key position following Bethell’s injury, with Ben Stokes also having



retired from Test cricket. Cox has predominantly batted at No. 4 in first-class cricket,

making the promotion another test of his adaptability. His county record provides reason for optimism. Since joining Essex in 2024, Cox has averaged around 68 in first-class cricket, establishing himself as one of the county’s leading batters. Cox made his Test debut against New Zealand earlier this year and will now have an opportunity to build on that experience against Pakistan. With England beginning a new phase, his performance could have a significant bearing on whether he becomes

a long-term part of their Test plans. Jordan Cox will make his Test debut for England at No. 3 against Pakistan after Jacob Bethell’s injury. At 25, Cox draws inspiration from advice and support from Virat Kohli, with whom he developed a close bond during his time with Royal Challengers Bangalore. Having averaged around 68 in first-class cricket for Essex since 2024, Cox faces a new challenge following Ben Stokes’ retirement. His performance in the three-match series could determine his future Test side.

Giant-Killer Ayush Shetty Leads India’s Perfect Opening Day At Delhi Worlds

New Delhi: Seventeen years after India last hosted the BWF World Championships, the homecoming could hardly have been scripted better. Five Indian entries took to the courts on the opening day in New Delhi. Five came away with victories. But one of those wins towered above the rest. Ayush Shetty, 21 and playing at his first World Championships, sent the home crowd into raptures by knocking out World No. 1 and defending champion Shi Yuqi in a pulsating three-game thriller at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium. It was the sort of win that announces a player on the biggest stage. And Shetty did it against a man who had beaten him three times before. There was power in the 6-foot-4 Indian’s smash-



es, discipline in his defence and, when the match threatened to slip away from him in the decider, composure beyond his years. On a day India went 5-0, Shetty’s victory was the one that made the Delhi crowd believe this World Championships could be special. And there was a

curious piece of history attached to it. The last time an unseeded player knocked out the men’s singles World No. 1 in the opening round of the World Championships, that player went on to win the title. Loh Kean Yew did it in 2021, beating then-World No. 1 Viktor Axelsen

in the first round before going all the way to the crown. Okay, let’s not put that kind of pressure on Ayush Shetty just yet. Known for being a giant-killer, Ayush produced one of the finest controlled displays of his career to pull off the upset of the day in front of a roaring home

crowd. “I think I’m feeling great. I think it’s a really special win and, yeah, we’re happy with the way I played today,” he said after coming up with a mellowed celebration following his thrilling win, in which there was more relief than joy. When training at Bengaluru’s Centre for Badminton Excellence, Ayush was told to write down a note: August 17 would be a bad day for Shi Yuqi. And the 21-year-old delivered exactly that. Ayush, carrying the baggage of a 0-3 record against Shi, came out all guns blazing after getting to begin the match from the end where he could hit against the drift. He was switched on from the word go, seizing the momentum by winning a 45-shot rally early on.

An Se-young Shines In Delhi, Fluent On Court And English

New Delhi: There is not much left for An Se-young to prove on a badminton court. At 25, the South Korean has already conquered the biggest stages, established herself as the undisputed world No. 1 and built a reputation for relentless excellence. But away from the court, she is still looking for ways to improve. These days, that includes English. The Olympic champion has been working on her English-speaking skills, putting in time every week to learn the language while continuing to add to and refine her game. “Yes, I always look to improve my English. I want to improve my English. One week at a time,” An told the media after her first-round win over 20-year-old Kaloyana Nalbantova. It was a small but noticeable sign of the progress she has made. Three years ago, decorated commentator Gillian Clarke was thrilled to see An speak English during



her post-match interviews. Earlier this year, at the All England Open, An revealed that she had been taking notes and attending weekly lessons as she worked on mastering the language. On Monday, in the mixed zone at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, she needed little help from the translators, answering most questions in English with relative ease. An Se-young is not alone in recognising that there is more to growing a global sport than what happens on court. Across badminton, players from South-east Asia and Europe

have increasingly embraced English in interviews and social media, making themselves more accessible to fans beyond their home countries. Viktor Axelsen did this particularly well, building a huge following with his willingness to speak directly to fans, share his thoughts and engage in English. In a sport that has traditionally drawn much of its audience from Asia and Europe, that ability to communicate across borders has helped its biggest stars become personalities far beyond the badminton court.