

## 90.8 Hills FM, Dimapur Forest Division sign MoU partnership

**Dimapur, Aug 22:** In a significant step toward strengthening environmental awareness and community engagement, 90.8 Hills FM and the Dimapur Forest Division signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on conservation-focused initiatives and outreach programs.

The partnership aims to leverage the reach of community radio to spread messages on forest conservation, biodiversity protection, and sustainable living practices. Officials noted that the collaboration would help bridge the gap between government

agencies and local communities by using radio as a medium for education, dialogue, and participation.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, representatives from the Forest Division emphasized the importance of involving citizens in conservation efforts. “Protecting our forests requires collective responsibility. Through this partnership, we can reach households directly, raise awareness, and encourage active participation in safeguarding Nagaland’s natural heritage,” said a senior forest officer.

90.8 Hills FM, known for



its grassroots programming, expressed enthusiasm about the collaboration. Station officials highlighted that radio remains one of the most accessible platforms in rural

and semi-urban areas. “Our listeners trust us. By broadcasting programs on forest laws, wildlife protection, and eco-friendly practices, we can inspire communities to

take ownership of their environment,” said the station manager. The MoU outlines joint initiatives such as regular radio segments on conservation, interactive talk shows with forest officials, and campaigns on afforestation, anti-poaching measures, and waste management. Special focus will be given to engaging youth and students, encouraging them to participate in plantation drives and eco-clubs. Community leaders present at the event welcomed the partnership, noting that awareness campaigns often fail to reach remote villages.

## Red Run held at Deomali to raise HIV, STI awareness

**Itanagar, Aug 22:** A 5-km Red Run Mini Marathon was organised at Deomali in Tirap district on Friday to promote awareness about HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among young people.

The event was organised by the Red Ribbon Club (RRC) of Wangcha Rajkumar Government College, Deomali, in collaboration with the NSS Unit, Deomali Forest Range Office and Care Me Home Welfare Society, Tirap, under the aegis of the Arunachal Pradesh State AIDS Control Society (AP-SACS). The theme of the event was “Youth for HIV & STI.”

Around 50 participants, including students, NSS volunteers and RRC members,



took part in the mini marathon, combining the messages of health awareness, physical fitness and social responsibility. Principal of WRGC, Deomali, Dr Watsen Bangsia, emphasised the importance of discipline, healthy living and responsible citizenship. He encouraged students to adopt positive lifestyles and contrib-

ute to building a healthier and responsible society.

RRC Programme Coordinator Ngamwang Lowang urged students to remain informed and vigilant about HIV/AIDS and STIs. He also highlighted the importance of regular physical activity and participation in sports in promoting a healthy and active lifestyle.

## Jacob inspects damaged Niuland road, assures swift repair measures

**Niuland, Aug 22:** Nagaland Minister Jacob Zhimomi inspected a severely damaged road in Niuland district, assuring residents that immediate steps would be taken to restore connectivity and ensure safe travel. The inspection followed repeated complaints from locals about deteriorating road conditions caused by heavy monsoon rains. Accompanied by engineers and district officials, Jacob surveyed the affected stretch, noting the extent of erosion, potholes, and waterlogging. He emphasized that road infrastructure is critical

for both rural livelihoods and regional development. “Connectivity is the backbone of progress. We cannot allow damaged roads to disrupt daily life and economic activity,” he said during the visit. The minister directed the Public Works Department (PWD) to prepare a detailed assessment and initiate emergency repairs. He also stressed the need for long-term solutions, including improved drainage systems and durable construction materials, to withstand recurring monsoon challenges. Local residents expressed relief at the minister’s inter-

vention, highlighting that the road is a vital link for farmers, traders, and students. “We have struggled for weeks with unsafe travel. His visit gives us hope that repairs will finally happen,” said a community leader.

Officials confirmed that temporary measures, such as filling potholes and clearing blocked drains, would begin immediately, while a comprehensive restoration plan would be submitted within days. The government is also exploring the possibility of allocating special funds for Niuland’s road network under



state infrastructure schemes. Jacob underscored that the administration remains committed to improving rural connectivity across Nagaland. He noted that road projects are being prioritized to support agriculture, tourism, and local industries. “Better roads mean better opportunities. We will ensure Niuland gets the attention it deserves,” he added. The inspection reflects the government’s broader push to strengthen infrastructure resilience in the face of monsoon-related disruptions. Analysts believe such proactive measures can build public

confidence and accelerate development in vulnerable districts. The inspection reflects the government’s broader push to strengthen infrastructure resilience in the face of monsoon-related disruptions. Analysts believe such proactive measures can build public

## Arunachal explores sea buckthorn cultivation via Ladakh visit

**Itanagar, Aug 22:** Arunachal Pradesh has taken a significant step toward diversifying its agricultural potential by exploring the cultivation of sea buckthorn, a high-value medicinal and nutritional plant, through an exposure visit to Ladakh.

A delegation comprising officials, scientists, and progressive farmers from Arunachal recently visited Ladakh to study the successful cultivation practices of sea buckthorn, which has been widely promoted there for its economic and ecological benefits. The visit was organized under the state’s initiative to identify new crops that can thrive in Arunachal’s unique climatic zones.

Sea buckthorn, known for its berries rich in vitamins, antioxidants, and oils, is used in pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and health supplements. Experts believe that the plant could be a game-changer for Arunachal’s farmers, offering both income



generation and opportunities for agro-based industries.

During the exposure program, the team interacted with Ladakh farmers, research institutions, and government agencies to understand cultivation techniques, harvesting methods, and value-addition processes. Special focus was placed on soil conditions, irrigation practices, and post-harvest management, which are critical for scaling

production. Officials noted that Arunachal’s high-altitude districts share similarities with Ladakh’s terrain, making sea buckthorn a promising candidate for pilot projects. “This crop has the potential to transform livelihoods while promoting sustainable agriculture. Our visit to Ladakh has provided valuable insights that we can adapt to Arunachal’s conditions,” said a senior agriculture officer.

## Gov Nand Kishore presents Rajya Puraskar to 58 Scouts & Guides

**Kohima, Aug 22:** Nagaland Governor Nand Kishore conferred the prestigious Rajya Puraskar on 58 Scouts and Guides in a ceremony held at the Raj Bhavan, recognizing their dedication to discipline, service, and youth leadership. The Rajya Puraskar, the highest state-level award for Scouts and Guides, is given to young achievers who demonstrate exceptional commitment to community service, skill development, and leadership. This year’s recipients represented schools and institutions across Nagaland, having successfully completed rigorous training and service projects.

In his address, Governor Nand Kishore praised the awardees for embodying the values of courage, teamwork, and civic responsibility. “The Scouts and Guides movement



instills discipline and compassion. These young achievers are role models for their peers and the future of our society,” he said.

The ceremony included the presentation of certificates and badges, with proud parents, teachers, and mentors in attendance. Several awardees shared experiences of participating in disaster relief, environmental campaigns, and literacy drives, reflecting the practical impact of the movement in addressing local challenges. Officials from the

Bharat Scouts and Guides emphasized that the Rajya Puraskar is not just recognition but also a call to continue serving the community. They noted that the awardees had undergone extensive evaluations, including proficiency in survival skills, leadership tasks, and social service initiatives. The event also highlighted the importance of youth engagement in nation-building. By honoring the Scouts and Guides, Nagaland reaffirmed its commitment to nurturing a generation that values disci-

pline, empathy, and civic duty. As the ceremony concluded, the Governor urged the awardees to remain active in community service and inspire others to join the movement. “Your journey begins anew with greater responsibility toward society,” he remarked. The recognition of 58 Scouts and Guides stands as a testament to the enduring relevance of the movement in shaping responsible citizens and strengthening the social fabric of Nagaland. Parents and educators expressed

pride in the achievements of the awardees. “This honor is not only for our children but also for the schools and communities that support them. It shows that discipline and service are still valued in society,” said one parent.

The ceremony concluded with the Governor’s call to action: “Your journey does not end with this award. It begins anew with greater responsibility toward society. Continue to serve, continue to inspire, and continue to lead.”

The recognition of 58 Scouts and Guides stands as a testament to the enduring relevance of the movement in shaping responsible citizens. For Nagaland, the event reaffirmed the state’s commitment to empowering youth, strengthening community service, and building a future rooted in discipline and compassion.

## Nagaland braces for rainfall, thunderstorms forecast till August 25

**Kohima, Aug 22:** The Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA) has issued a fresh advisory warning of continued rainfall and thunderstorms across the state until August 25, urging citizens to remain alert as monsoon conditions intensify.

Meteorological officials confirmed that active monsoon systems are likely to bring widespread showers, accompanied by lightning and gusty winds in several districts. The authority cautioned that localized heavy downpours could trigger landslides, flash floods, and waterlogging, particularly in hilly and low-lying areas.

District administrations have been directed to remain on high alert, with emergency response teams kept



ready to tackle any eventuality. Farmers, fishermen, and those engaged in outdoor activities have been advised to exercise caution and avoid exposure during peak storm hours.

Officials highlighted that

the weather pattern may affect road connectivity, with risks of blocked highways and damaged rural routes. Citizens have been urged to avoid unnecessary travel, especially in landslide-prone zones, and to follow official

advisories rather than relying on unverified information.

The NSDMA has also emphasized preparedness at the community level. Residents are encouraged to secure loose structures, keep essential supplies ready, and avoid sheltering under trees during lightning strikes. Relief camps and medical teams are being kept on standby to assist families in vulnerable areas.

Meteorologists noted that the rainfall is part of a broader monsoon surge affecting the Northeast, with Nagaland expected to experience moderate to heavy precipitation over the next three days. The advisory underscores the importance of vigilance, as even short bursts of intense rain can cause significant disruption.

## Chowna Mein chairs agri roadmap meet, promotes Khaw-Tai

**Itanagar, Aug 22:** Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein chaired a high-level meeting in Namsai to review the state’s agriculture roadmap, with a strong push for promoting Khaw-Tai rice and expanding cash crop cultivation. The meeting brought together senior officials, agricultural experts, and farmer representatives to chart strategies for boosting productivity and diversifying the rural economy.

Addressing the gathering, Mein emphasized that Khaw-Tai rice, a traditional variety native to the region, holds immense potential both as a cultural symbol and as a premium product in niche markets. He urged departments to prioritize its promotion through scientific cultiva-



tion methods, branding, and market linkages. “Khaw-Tai rice can become Arunachal’s identity crop, combining heritage with economic opportunity,” he said. The roadmap discussions also highlighted the importance of cash crops such as ginger, turmeric, and large cardamom, which have strong demand in domestic

and international markets. Mein stressed that diversification into cash crops would enhance farmer incomes, reduce dependence on subsistence farming, and create new avenues for agro-based industries. Officials presented strategies for improving irrigation, introducing modern farming techniques, and strengthen-

ing cooperative societies to support smallholders. Special focus was placed on training programs for farmers, ensuring that traditional knowledge is blended with modern practices.

The Deputy Chief Minister underscored the need for infrastructure support, including cold storage facilities, rural roads, and digital platforms for marketing. He called for coordinated efforts between the agriculture department, research institutions, and private stakeholders to ensure that farmers benefit directly from policy initiatives. Farmer representatives welcomed the roadmap, noting that Khaw-Tai rice has long been cultivated in pockets of Namsai but lacked organized promotion.

## Akhil Gogoi claims that a coal syndicate led by Susanta Borgohain Dharmeswar Konwar

**Dispur, Aug 22 :** MLA Akhil Gogoi of Sivasagar has accused Sonari MLA Dharmeswar Konwar, MLA Mayur Borgohain, and Assam Water Resources Minister Susanta Borgohain of being a part of a “syndicate” that is purportedly involved in mining operations along the Dikhow river, and of causing the devastating floods in the district. Gogoi further claimed that Jayanta Malla Baruah, the Assam Minister for Finance, Environment and Forests, and Mines and Minerals, was responsible for the actions. He ultimately held Himanta Biswa Sarma, the Chief Minister, accountable. Speaking on a Facebook Live on August 22, Gogoi said that the flooding was the result of several factors, including damage to river protection structures along the Dikhow river, rather than a cloudburst, as Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had asserted. According to Gogoi, he dispatched a special team with drones to assess the water situation and write a report. He said the researchers found multiple causes for the floods. He said that five coffer dams had been built in locations where stone mining was occurring along the



Dikhow River. Gogoi claims that the monsoon caused damage to the buildings, which increased water levels and resulted in floods. Additionally, he said that the river’s protective stone embankments had been destroyed or damaged, making a number of areas susceptible to flooding. Gogoi accused Sonari MLA Dharmeswar Konwar, MLA Mayur Borgohain, and Water Resources Minister Susanta Borgohain of being members of a “syndicate” that allegedly engaged in riverine mining. He asserted that local tea plantations had been harmed by the purported

demolition of river protection structures. The state government’s assertion that the floods were caused by a cloudburst was also contested by the Sivasagar MLA. He accused the chief minister of deceiving the Assamese people and asserted that the India Meteorological Department had ruled out a cloudburst. Gogoi also criticized the rescue and relief efforts for the flood, claiming that just around 10% of the necessary aid reached those in need. He said that the beds given to flood victims were of such low quality that they could not even be

used for domestic animals, and that some of the rice delivered smelled bad. He further claimed that rescue efforts were unable to reach all impacted individuals and that officials neglected to promptly warn locals despite being aware of the looming danger. Gogoi called on the state government to launch an investigation into Susanta Borgohain, Dharmeswar Konwar, and Mayur Borgohain’s purported involvement in the actions he said caused the floods and demanded that those found guilty face consequences.

## After flood rescue, Joymoti travels to Vantara for emergency medical attention

**Dispur, Aug 22:** In addition to these difficulties, Joymoti’s left hind leg has been lame for a long time due to a fracture she suffered during logging. Her mobility is impacted by the illness, which makes daily tasks like getting food and drink more challenging. After her rescue, she was given immediate first aid and primary veterinarian care, which included supportive care, pain management, multivitamin and mineral supplements, and wound dressing. However, she now needs more specialized veterinary care due to the quantity and severity of her injuries, her advanced age, and her current movement issues. The purpose of her trip to Vantara is to take care of these medical requirements. Joymoti will be able to get to a specialized elephant hospital as fast and safely as possible thanks to the use of air transport, which reduces the time and physical strain of a long-distance ground trip. She will have a thorough veterinary examination at Vantara in order to evaluate her general health and decide on

the best course of action. In addition to dietary, medical, and supportive care customized for her recuperation, she will receive specialized treatment for her wounds and eye problems. In India, airlifting an elephant for critical medical care is a first-of-its-kind project that necessitates careful coordination between logistics, veterinary, and animal care teams. Joymoti’s health and well-being were given first consideration throughout her relocation to Vantara. Prior to the trip, her status is evaluated, and certain procedures are followed for her handling, loading, flight monitoring, and hospital arrival. Each step was carefully planned to reduce physical strain, discomfort, and tension. Reducing the length of a long-distance trip is crucial for an elephant with several injuries and limited mobility. Joymoti can receive specialized veterinary care more quickly thanks to air transportation, which also helps prevent the physical strain of extended ground trips. Diaspora and South Asians Joymoti’s ex-



perience also highlights the necessity for specialized wildlife treatment facilities in areas where animals are subjected to natural disasters like floods and conflicts between humans and wildlife. Vantara has suggested three wildlife veterinarian care facilities in Assam, including one specifically for elephants, to bolster the local veterinary response. These facilities are intended to offer veterinary care and infrastructure tailored to each species, enabling animals in need of immedi-

ate assistance to get the care they need closer to the scene of catastrophes. The Assam Forest Department would oversee the autonomous operation of the proposed facilities. When specialized care can be given closer to the animals’ habitat, the goal is to increase local capacity and lessen the need for animals to travel great distances. Joymoti is only being transferred to Vantara for medical care; this is not a long-term move. She will return to her natural habitat as soon as she is well enough to do so.

## Tawang intensifies planning for the International Tourism Mart



**Itanagar, Aug 22:** In Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh, preparations are being made for the projected International Tourism Mart (ITM), which is provisionally set for October 28–31. Deputy Commissioner Namgyal Angmo oversaw the district administration’s coordination meeting on Friday to go over plans for things like transportation, lodging, hygiene, medical assistance, and road upkeep. Additional deputy commissioner Rinchin Leta, district tourist officer Tsering Deki, taxi and tour company representatives, and other stakeholders attended the meeting. The suggested itinerary for ITM participants and their trips to popular tourist locations in and around Tawang were thoroughly discussed. Deki commended the state government and the union tourism ministry for choosing Tawang as the location for the esteemed event while presenting the preliminary schedule and pointing out a notable rise in visitor arrivals. “Hosting the mart would provide an important opportunity to showcase Tawang’s tourism potential, cultural heritage, natural beauty, and hospitality before a wider audience,” she stressed, calling on all parties involved to actively participate. Angmo emphasized that all departments and stakeholders should start working closely together right once, even though there was enough time for preparations. “The previous ITM conducted in Tawang was very successful,” she recalled. To ensure the event is a huge success, we must be even more organized and cooperative this time.” Cleanliness and responsible travel were given special attention, and Angmo talked with tour and taxi providers on how to manage plastic and other garbage at tourist locations. She emphasized the necessity of working together to maintain tourism destinations’ cleanliness and environmental sustainability.

## Officials from Assam and Meghalaya meet at a high level to discuss in Jorabat Violence in Shillong protests

**Dispur, Aug 22 :** On Saturday, August 22, Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister Sniawbhalang Dhar and Assam Border Protection and Development Minister Atul Bora convened a high-level meeting in Guwahati with senior officials from both states to discuss the current state of affairs between Assam and Meghalaya in light of the recent protests in Jorabat and violence in Shillong. The conference took place in the midst of tensions between the neighboring states following reports that on August 19, during a KSU black-flag protest in Shillong, vehicles transporting tourists from Assam were attacked. Numerous tourists were reportedly hurt, and several cars had their windows and windshields damaged. Bora claimed that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had acted quickly in the wake of the violence, calling the Shillong episode “unwarranted and unfortunate.” He said that after speaking with Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, Sarma has given Dhar the task of discussing the current state of affairs and looking at ways to promote harmony and easy travel between the two states. “Our relationship is very old, so I would like to appeal to people of both

states to maintain peace and harmony,” Bora stated. Assamese motor vehicle workers’ unions protested the violence in Shillong. The next day, demonstrators blocked automobiles registered in Meghalaya from entering Assam and, in some cases, forced them to return to Jorabat, a crucial entrance crossing between Meghalaya and Assam. On Friday, the third day of the protests in Jorabat began, with protesters calling for an apology from the relevant authorities and compensation for cars damaged in Shillong. To stop any escalation, a large number of police and reserve officers were stationed in the vicinity. According to a protesting taxi driver, the employees sought both compensation for the harm done to their cars and a solution to the problem. Additionally, he stated that automobiles registered in Meghalaya should be paid for any damage they sustained during the protests. The driver questioned the security measures in place during the KSU protest in Shillong and said that the police presence in Jorabat had shielded Meghalayan cars from harm during the demonstrations there. The Shillong incident came after a black-flag protest at KSU, where vehicles trans-

porting visitors from Assam were allegedly targeted by anonymous people with masked faces. In relation to the violence, three top KSU office bearers were taken into custody late on Wednesday night: general secretary Reuben Najjar, vice president Pynkmenlang Sanmiet, and president Raymond Kharjana. Sarma stated on Thursday that he had spoken with Sangma and that, in light of the current situation, addressing the worries of Assamese citizens who were still stranded in Meghalaya was the first priority. Organizations in Assam have also called for more forceful action in response to the developments. On Friday, the Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP) demanded an economic blockade and threatened to expel inhabitants of Meghalaya from Assam if attacks on Assamese in Shillong persisted. Restoring normal movement across the Assam-Meghalaya border and averting further escalation are expected to be the main goals of the most recent meeting between senior leaders of the two states. Bora has called on both parties to prevent the long-standing ties between the neighboring states from being damaged by individual occurrences.

## 35th Manipuri Language Day is observed at the state level in Tripura

**Imphal, Aug 22:** Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee Town Hall in Agartala hosted the 35th State-level Manipuri Language Day celebration. The event was opened by Finance Minister Pranajit

Singha Roy, who emphasized that although the government can acknowledge and safeguard a language, it is ultimately the people who speak, write, and transmit it to future generations. The

Directorate of Kokborok and Other Minority Languages, Government of Tripura, arranged the event. Paonam Gunindro, Vice-Chancellor of Manipur University of Culture, and Khurajam Lo-

ken Singh, Minister of Art and Culture, Government of Manipur, were honored guests. It was noted that the language’s constitutional recognition. He also highlighted the significance

## Mukul Sangma calls on TMC members to remain united



**Shillong, Aug 22:** Mukul Sangma, the former chief minister and leader of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) Legislature Party, admitted on Friday that the party was dealing with a “storm” amid what he called an unusual political situation in the nation. When the organization is under pressure, he advised party members to stay together rather than defect. Political parties unavoidably encounter difficulties, both expected and unanticipated, according to Sangma. He did, however, characterize the current political environment as “abnormal” and “unprecedented,” emphasizing in particular the recent tendency of elected officials switching parties following Assembly elections—something he claimed had never been observed in India’s political history. “Every political party will face obstacles, both anticipated and unexpected, as well as some surprises. That’s a normal occurrence since, in the end, both naturally occurring and unnaturally occurring things can occur,” he stated.

“Today’s entire political dynamics are unfolding across the nation is something abnormal which is unprecedented, it has never been before,” he continued. Following the most recent Assembly elections, a peculiar and irregular political situation has emerged. “We are in a democracy where the pride and strength of the nation comes from our Federal structure,” Sangma said, highlighting the special circumstances of India’s federal system. When we examine the peculiar circumstances of today, state politics are different, but in general elections, which are national elections, parliamentary elections are different and are based on the number of votes a political party receives. MPs have never changed parties after a state election, but sadly, this is happening in this nation right now. the state politics is different but in a general elections, rather a national elections party but today unfortunately in this country this is happening,” he added.

## The chief minister of Manipur sends sixteen young people to Japan for employment

**Imphal, Aug 22:** The Chief Minister advised the aspirants to never forget that they are Manipuris, even if they remain in Japan, while giving each one a replica of the Pena, an indigenous musical instrument from Manipur.

He advised the candidates to maintain their identity and stay linked to their roots even if they would be exposed to a foreign nation’s culture, customs, and advancements. The Chief Minister cited Singapore, a small country with one of the greatest per capita incomes in Southeast Asia, as an example of how proud Singaporeans are to be Sin-



gaporeans. He claimed that while many Manipuris now hesitate to identify as Manipuris, in the past they did so with pride. He continued by saying that everyone should be proud to be a Manipuri

and that this way of thinking needs to change. Additionally, the Chief Minister announced that public transportation services on the National Highway-2 route between Imphal, Dimapur

(Nagaland), and Guwahati have returned as of Friday. This is a significant step toward guaranteeing people’s freedom of movement and reestablishing normalcy in the state.

## Assam has reported new Covid cases During July and August, with experts indicating that the infections are predominantly mild

**Guwahati, Aug 22:** Over the last two months, Assam has reported a new increase in Covid-19 cases, with 80 to 90 infections found in Upper Assam in July and August. The cases that have been recorded thus far, according to medical professionals, have not been very serious. The rise in infections has been noted since the end of June 2026, according to health officials. The RF.5 subvariant of Omicron, which originated from the JN.1 lineage, is the Covid-19 variant that is presently circulating in India. Health experts claim that people infected with the variety are primarily exhibit-

ing flu-like or influenza-like symptoms, and there is yet no proof that RF.5 is causing serious sickness. While officials pointed out that sequencing of the variation found in Assam has not yet been done, a microbiologist said that the symptoms seen in patients have generally remained moderate. Health experts report that the state is currently experiencing the spread of influenza A and influenza B viruses in addition to Covid-19. In 2025, Assam also reported Covid-19 cases; the most recent cases were noted in December. According to officials, Covid-19 has



evolved into a recurrent viral disease, and new strains may cause reoccurring outbreaks. Because the latest spike in Assam has mostly been confined to localized pockets, experts have cautioned people not to panic. Additionally, they noted that a sizable portion of Indians have acquired hybrid

immunity as a result of prior vaccinations and infections. However, older adults, expectant mothers, and those with existing medical disorders like diabetes, hypertension, or kidney disease are still more susceptible to consequences and have been urged to be more cautious.

## Gold, cash, and a penthouse worth Rs 6.87 crore were found during raids on a Telangana revenue officer



**Hyderabad, Aug 22:** A Tahsildar (revenue official) was the subject of a disproportionate assets complaint filed by the Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Thursday. The ACB valued the Tahsildar's assets at more than Rs 6.87 crore. Desani Srinivas Reddy, who presently serves as a divisional administrative officer in

Ibrahimpatnam in the Ranga Reddy district, has been identified as the officer. On August 20, searches at Reddy's home, workplace, and five other places turned up documentation for a number of assets worth Rs 6.87 crore. This comprises eight open plots spread over the city and its environs, ten acres of agricultural land, two res-

idential apartments valued at Rs 2.63 crore, and a ground-plus-three penthouse valued at Rs 1.61 crore. Reddy had additionally invested Rs 86 lakh as his share in a bar and restaurant. Rs 4 lakh in cash, bank deposits, 680 grams of gold, three four-wheelers, two two-wheelers, and several household articles and electronic items have also been recovered.

While the ACB's documented valuation stands at Rs 6.87 crore, the market value of the immovable properties is reportedly several times higher and is estimated at around over Rs 50 crore. The ACB alleges that Srinivas Reddy amassed the assets through corrupt practices and beyond his known sources of income. Reddy will appear before the special court for judicial remand after being taken into custody. Reddy was a mandal revenue inspector in December 2009 when a disproportionate assets complaint was filed against him.

## Anti-Reservation Demonstrators Arrested by Delhi Police at Jantar Mantar

**New Delhi, Aug 22:** According to a senior official, the Delhi Police apprehended a number of demonstrators who had assembled at Jantar Mantar for an anti-reservation demonstration on Friday. Security was increased in and around the protest venue due to the large turnout. Images showed police officers apprehending demonstrators, most of whom were men, as a sizable crowd gathered at the location with banners, posters, and saffron flags while shouting anti-caste-based quota slogans. Social media was used to organize the demonstrators, who demanded that economic factors take precedence over caste when deciding who is eligible for government assistance and reservations. Police deployed personnel and paramilitary forces at key points in the area ahead of the protest and put up barricades to regulate the movement of people towards Jantar Mantar.

The Delhi Police said no permission had been granted for any protest, procession, demonstration or assembly at Jantar Mantar. However, a no-objection certificate (NOC) was issued for a peaceful protest under the banner of "Reservation Hatao Andolan" at a different venue -- Ramlila Ground -- on Friday, according to an official communication by the office of the Central District DCP. The NOC allowed a maximum of 500 people to gather at the Ramlila Ground until 4 pm, with police stating that it had "no objection" to a protest at Ramlila Maidan from a law and order point of view. The protest campaign was spearheaded by "Reservation Hatao Andolan", an Insta-



gram-based page that subsequently appealed to people to join a physical demonstration at Jantar Mantar on August 21. The page has 5.6 million followers on Instagram. The protesters demanded that economic condition be considered while deciding who should receive government support, including assistance for education, coaching and other needs. "Our demand is that economic condition should be considered while deciding who needs government support. A poor person, irrespective of caste, should be provided assistance for education, coaching and other needs," a protester associated with the Akhil Bharatiya Kshatriya Mahasabha said. Another participant sought a review of the existing reservation system, saying its benefits did not always reach the most disadvantaged sections. "We have been raising this issue for several years. Our contention is that the government should examine whether the present system is achieving its intended purpose and whether benefits are reaching people at the grassroots level," he said. Some protesters also called for the introduction of a creamy-layer criterion in reservation and sought changes in policies

relating to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. "We are not advocating for the abandonment of those with lower incomes. Another demonstrator stated, "We are arguing that aid should be directed toward those who need it, including through scholarships, fee support, and coaching." The demonstrators also brought up concerns about higher education regulations, such as the University Grants Commission framework, and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. A participant also called for a reconsideration of the policy in light of current social and economic circumstances, questioning the persistence of reservation measures decades after they were first introduced. "Over the years, the situation has altered significantly. He stated, "There should be a broader conversation about whether the current framework needs to be reviewed and how economic disadvantage can be addressed without discrimination." Some demonstrators said that internet jammers had been placed across the location, making it challenging to use social media from there. The assertion could not be independently confirmed.

## The monsoon session of the Tripura Assembly will start on August 27

**Agartala, Aug 22:** The Tripura Legislative Assembly's monsoon session is set to start on August 27 and end on August 31. The House will meet for three days, on August 27, 28, and 31. On Friday, August 21, the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) met in the Assembly and made the decision. Speaker Rampada Jamatia presided over the gathering. Jamatia stated that the session will start at 11 a.m. and clarified that the dates had been decided upon to minimize the typical disruption that occurs when a session starts on a Friday due to the weekend. The Speaker stated, "There is no bill listed at this time, but one may come during the session." The Assembly has already received a short-notice discussion notice from Congress MLA Sudip Roy Barman on issues concerning smart meters and electricity bills. The notice has been admitted, Jamatia said. More notices on matters of public interest may also be received before the session, he added. The BAC meeting discussed the agenda, duration and arrangements for the smooth conduct of the session. On the proposed paperless Assembly, Jamatia said the process would require some more time before it could be implemented. Deputy Speaker Ram Prasad Paul, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ratan Lal Nath, Transport and Tourism Minister Sushanta Chowdhury, Leader of the Opposition and CPI(M) MLA Jitendra Chaudhury, Congress MLA Gopal Chandra Roy and Minister Animesh Debbarma attended the meeting.

## "They Have Their Own Agenda" India Attacks US Organization Seeking RSS Sanctions



**New Delhi, Aug 22:** The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has been called a "biased organization" by India for advocating sanctions against Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The US group has been making "disparaging and inflammatory remarks" about India, according to Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for the External Affairs Ministry. It is a prejudiced organization. These organizations, in my opinion, should be avoided as they lack credibility and have their own agenda. Jaiswal stated, "We do not anticipate that the USCIRF would accept the peaceful coexistence of its varied groups or interact with the realities of India's pluralistic framework. USCIRF chair Asif Mahmood - a Paki-

stan-born American citizen who has maintained close ties with his homeland's political and diplomatic leadership - had opposed RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's upcoming visit to the US and called upon the US government to impose sanctions on the RSS. Bhagwat is scheduled to visit New York on August 29. The US body also asked Washington not to extend diplomatic courtesies to its leaders, and described RSS as an "umbrella organisation" whose sub-groups have "perpetrated attacks on religious minorities". "Instead, the USG (US Government) should focus on imposing sanctions on RSS members found responsible for FoRB (freedom of religious belief) violations," the US body said. Earlier in March, the USCIRF annual report

criticised India for alleged "violations of religious freedom" and backed "targeted sanctions" on individuals and entities such as the RSS and Research and Analysis Wing, holding them responsible for the matter. In its recommendation, the USCIRF also called for designating India as a "country of particular concern". The USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan US federal government agency. It makes policy recommendations to the US President, the Secretary of State, and Congress, and tracks their implementation. HinduPACT, a US-based advocacy group, said that the USCIRF had "disgraced its mandate" in response to members' public objection to the RSS chief's visit to New York. Its chair sounds more like a supporter of a hardened anti-Hindu narrative than the leader of a pluralistic American committee when he discusses India and the RSS. One of the most significant Hindu organizations in the world is led by Mohan Bhagwat. Ajay Shah, the founder and chair of HinduPACT, stated, "He shouldn't be met with slander scripted by CAIR, IAMC, and HHHR, groups that have made a habit of treating Hindu self-assertion as extremism."

## After a 15-year pursuit, Delhi Police apprehend a 72-year-old in an extortion case

**New Delhi, Aug 22:** The Delhi Police's Special Cell has apprehended a 72-year-old man who had been wanted for over 15 years in relation to an extortion case. In 2016, a court pronounced the accused, Hari Singh Shekhawat, a native of Jaipur, Rajasthan, to be a proclaimed criminal. The lawsuit began in 2008 when Shekhawat reportedly tried to extort money from a well-known global clothing firm where he worked. On March 15, 2008, Shekhawat was charged with extortion, criminal intimidation, and an attempt to conduct crimes. As he repeatedly failed to appear before the court and allegedly continued to evade legal proceedings, he was declared a proclaimed offender on April 2, 2016.

The Special Cell said its South-Western Range team has been tracking long-evading criminals and carried out extensive human surveillance to locate Shekhawat. During the investigation, police found that he had initially shifted to Gujarat and later moved to Rajasthan in an attempt to avoid arrest and legal proceedings. On April 2, 2016, he was labeled a proclaimed of-



fender due to his frequent failure to appear in court and his suspected continuous evasion of legal processes. Changed Base to Avoid Arrest In order to find Shekhawat, the Special Cell said that its South-Western Range team had been monitoring long-running offenders and conducted intensive human surveillance. In an effort to evade arrest and legal action, authorities discovered throughout the inquiry that he had first relocated to Gujarat and then to Rajasthan. On August 13, the crew acquired concrete proof that Shekhawat was hiding in Jaipur following almost a month of monitoring. A raiding team led by Sub-Inspector Rakesh, along with SI Vishal Tiwari, Head Constables Naveen Chhillar, Naveen Sharma and Kuldeep, was sent to Jaipur.

The team conducted searches and eventually traced Shekhawat to a residential society in the city. After confirming his identity and residence, he was apprehended and arrested in accordance with the law. The accused was employed by many multinational corporations Shekhawat, a graduate of the Xavier School of Management, formerly known as the Xavier Labor Relations Institute (XLRI), has held high roles with a number of international corporations, according to the police. He reportedly tried to extort money from a global clothing firm in 2008 while he was employed there, according to the Special Cell. His capture, according to the police, after a protracted interstate search that included tracking him via Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, and Rajasthan.

## Andhra tensions as student groups fight on the road and strike each other with sticks



**Visakhapatnam, Aug 22:** A group of about 20 young people battled on Andhra Pradesh's Marikavalasa-Thimmapuram Master Plan Road in Visakhapatnam on Thursday, causing tension and leading to police involvement and the imprisonment of 17 people. The police said that a disagreement between two kids close to Chandrampalem School set off the altercation. After the young people split up into two groups and allegedly approached one another with sticks, what had started out as a fight subsequently became more heated. During the altercation, four persons were allegedly attacked. Police said some of them were suspected to have consumed alcohol before the incident. The situation became tense again later on Thursday night when some of those involved allegedly attempted to confront each other at Shivashakti Nagar on Thimmapuram Road. "A case has been registered against six youths in connection with the incident. Three of them are majors, and three are minors. We are investigating the role of each person involved," CI Balakrishna said. On receiving information about the renewed confrontation, police reached the spot. The young people reportedly fled after seeing the police. 17 of the 20 suspects connected to the event were later located and taken into custody by the police. In order to establish the chronology of events and identify the particular roles of individuals involved, police have registered six cases and are reviewing CCTV video, statements, and other available evidence. "Those who engage in violence or try to disrupt public order will face severe consequences. We urge young people to refrain from using violence to resolve personal conflicts or to take the law into their own hands," CI Balakrishna stated. Additionally, police are investigating if drug or alcohol use had a role in the conflict's escalation and whether anybody else was involved.

## Akhil Gogoi claims that a coal syndicate led by Susanta Borgohain, Dharmeswar Konwar, and Mayur Borgohain caused floods

**Guwahati, Aug 22:** MLA Akhil Gogoi of Sivasagar has accused Sonari MLA Dharmeswar Konwar, MLA Mayur Borgohain, and Assam Water Resources Minister Susanta Borgohain of being a part of a "syndicate" that is purportedly involved in mining operations along the Dikhow river, and of causing the devastating floods in the district. Gogoi also claimed that Jayanta Malla Baruah, the Assam Minister for Finance, Environment and Forests, and Mines and Minerals, was responsible for the actions. He eventually held Himanta Biswa Sarma, the Chief Minister, accountable. Speaking during a Facebook Live on August 22, Gogoi alleged that the flooding was not caused by a cloudburst, as claimed by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, but was the result of multiple factors, including damage to river protection structures along the Dikhow river. Gogoi claimed that he had sent a special team equipped with drones to study the flood situation and prepare a report. According to him, the team identified several factors behind the flooding. He alleged that five coffer dams had been constructed along the Dikhow river in areas where stone mining was taking place. According to Gogoi, the structures were damaged during the monsoon, contributing to the rise in water levels and



subsequent flooding. He further alleged that protective stone embankments along the river had been damaged or removed, leaving several stretches vulnerable to flooding. Gogoi accused Water Resources Minister Susanta Borgohain, Sonari MLA Dharmeswar Konwar and MLA Mayur Borgohain of being part of a "syndicate" allegedly involved in mining activities along the river. He claimed that the alleged destruction of river protection structures had also damaged tea gardens in the area. The Sivasagar MLA also questioned the state government's claim that a cloudburst triggered the floods. He claimed that the India Meteorological Department had ruled out a cloudburst and accused the chief minister of misleading the people of Assam. Gogoi also

criticised the flood relief and rescue operations, alleging that only around 10 per cent of the required relief reached affected people. He claimed that some of the rice distributed had a foul smell and that the mattresses provided to flood victims were of such poor quality that they could not even be used for domestic animals. He also claimed that rescue efforts were unable to reach all impacted individuals and that officials neglected to promptly notify locals despite being aware of the looming danger. Gogoi called on the state government to launch an investigation into Susanta Borgohain, Dharmeswar Konwar, and Mayur Borgohain's purported involvement in the actions he said caused the floods and demanded that anyone found guilty face consequences.

## Muslims in Manipur object to non-Muslims being on the Waqf Board

**Imphal , Aug 22:** On August 21, Muslims protested over the state government's selection of non-Muslims to the Waqf Board in the Thoubal district of Manipur. Raising shouts against the BJP-led administration and calling for a reconsideration of the appointments, the demonstrators marched roughly 4 km from Usoipokpi to Lilong Bazar.

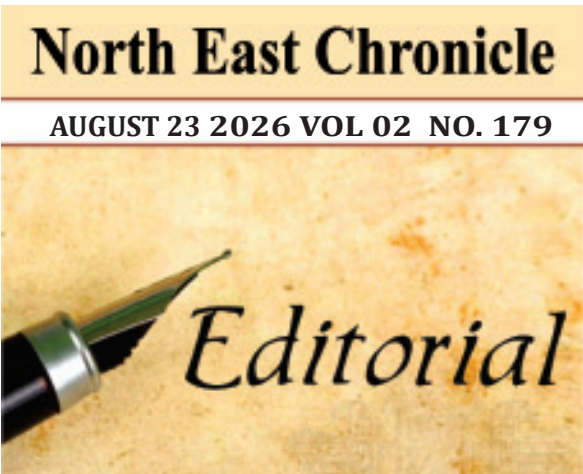
On August 3, the state government named seven people, including Rajya Sabha MP A Sharda Devi and BJP state president, to Manipur's eighth Waqf Board. The admission of non-Muslims, according to members of the Pangal, or Muslim, community, has led to widespread animosity and prompted questions about the community's role in overseeing its religious affairs. "The Pangal community's feel-



ings have been severely damaged by the presence of non-Muslim members. A protester told reporters, "It also raises concerns about our religious identity and the long-standing practice of managing our own religious affairs." The appointments were made in accordance with the Waqf Amendment Act, which allows women and non-Muslims to serve on Waqf administration boards. Amid

the protest, Manipur Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh said he had met representatives of civil society organisations from the Pangal community to hear their concerns over the Waqf Board. Waqf Board chairman Y Antaz Khan also attended the meeting, Singh said in a social media post, adding that he had assured the representatives that their concerns would be examined on priority.

The Coordination Committee for Protection of Waqf Properties Manipur (CCPWPM) welcomed the meeting, saying the chief minister was aware of the concerns raised by the Pangal community. "We thank the chief minister for meeting us and discussing the issues. He was aware of the concerns of the Pangal community over the matter," a CCPWPM representative said.



## Challenging the narrative: re-examining the 1991 reforms

The last week of July went virtually unnoticed by many. It marked 35 years of economic liberalisation. It was on July 24, 1991 that the P.V. Narasimha Rao government announced a new industrial policy which away with licensing for the majority of industries, which meant that no permission was needed to set up new enterprises, or for expanding and upgrading the existing ones, allowing for import of foreign technology, foreign collaboration and foreign funds. This is what is generally celebrated by the naïve enthusiasts of liberalisation, naïve because they do not see the gradual shift in the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948, 1956, and the Industrial Policy statement of 1973, 1977 and 1980. The propaganda that in 1991, the chains of the licence-permit raj were broken is inaccurate, to the say the least. For example, the 1991 statement said the 1973 Industrial Policy Resolution “identified high-priority industries where investment from large industrial houses and foreign companies would be permitted”. This was a shift from the 1956 Industrial Policy Resolution, which “gave primacy to the role of the State to assume a predominant role and direct responsibility for industrial development.” So, the image of the long, dark ages of socialism from 1947 to 1991 is an intellectual myth. And 1973 is generally identified as the high noon of Indira Gandhi’s romance with socialism. Perhaps the honest question to ask, and which has not been asked, is how closed was the Indian economy at the end of the 1980s. It was not the socialist dystopia that the “andh bhakts” of reforms make it out to be. Economists Suresh D. Tendulkar and T. Bhavani, in their 2007 book, Understanding Reforms Post-1991 India, introduce without elaborating “economic nationalism” along with socialism as an inhibiting factor. It is to be recalled that the fringe organisation called Swadeshi Jagran Manch was a vocal opponent of liberalisation in the early years.

Looking back to 1991 with rose-tinted blinkers even after 35 years is not an intelligent thing to do, but it is what market-friendly economists stalwarts continue to do. There have been honourable exceptions. In 1996, five years after Annus Mirabilis, economists Amit Bhaduri and Deepak Nayyar in their book titled The Intelligent Person’s Guide to Liberalisation, write: “The mood of the moment, among those who make decisions and shape opinions in India, is such that economic liberalisation is perceived as both virtue and necessity. But to the citizen it is obvious that economic liberalization is no panacea. And only the dishonest or the naïve can think of it as a magic wand.” This observation holds good even today in the middle of rising oil prices, inflation and scarcity of jobs. Such has been the socialism intellectual hang-over that no one paused to ask questions about the challenges that a market economy poses. It is common sense that if the State-controlled Soviet-style socialist economy is

held back by inertia, market economies are rocked by volatility in trade and finance, leading to squalls and crises. The first market crisis came with the dotcom bust in 2001. This was followed by the financial meltdown of 2007-08, which hit India in 2011. As a matter fact, the global markets have not recovered from the 2007-08 shocks, and growth rates everywhere declined, with China moving to the new normal of six per cent growth rate from the 10 per cent average of two decades and more, and Europe is stuck in the low growth rate orbit. One of the ardent, even fanatical, advocate of market economics threw his hand up in bewilderment when faced with the issue of financial derivatives, which led to the fall of investment banks in the United States. More interestingly, the economic reforms evangelists are not able to make up their mind whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s State-driven market economy is a happy model of a free market, and whether this is the reason for sluggish private investment of the last decade. Many of the market-loving economic pundits have gingerly expressed their reservations about the Modi approach, but they have not laid their exact diagnosis of the slow growth of seven per cent, which paradoxically happens to be the fastest among major economies, on the table. The reason is a certain intellectual timidity because the government is still the powerful institution which doles out rewards. It is also interesting that not many economists are ready to accept that reforms in India have been ushered in stealthily. It is only Bhaduri and Nayyar who point this out, while Tendulkar and Bhavani say that coalition governments with no consensus on reforms pursued the policy from 1991 to 2007. The economists can rightly argue that it is not their business whether the reforms policies were implemented through stealth or transparently.

There is also no interest by a majority of economists to analyse the policy pot-holes that gave birth to the Rs 4,000-crore stock market scam of Harshad Mehta in 1992, or the scandalous collapse of Enron in 2001 and the liabilities that were laid at the Maharashtra government’s door and debt restructuring had to be arranged. It was a perfect case study of how markets can go astray. Instead of recalling with a bleary eye the liberalization dawn of 1991, there should be a thorough examination of how the markets performed in India in the past 30 years. There have been enough danger signals on the way, which need to be highlighted. There are enough hidden scandals behind the irrational exuberance about the startups and unicorns. Sebi, the market regulator, should indeed be on alert because of the unusual market valuations of the so-called startups. But no one really wants to rock the markets’ boat, as it were, or break the lotos-eaters’ reverie that all is well with the markets. The Indian markets are thriving and there is no need to be protective about them.

# The disconnect in Indian democracy: why street protests no longer shape laws

This summer, across India, the same pattern of protest emerged with almost nothing but method in common. Marina Beach in Chennai filled with NEET protesters, aspirants gathered at public service commissioner’s office in Ranchi, Youth Congress workers near the Prime Minister’s residence in Delhi, BJP workers at the doors of rival governments shared no common organisation, manifesto, or ideology. Judged by the metric of visibility and immediate executive response, they often succeeded. A minister resigned. Examinations were cancelled. Parliament, meanwhile, stayed busy. Bills were de-

bated and enacted. And yet, the grievances that brought citizens onto the streets remained largely unresolved. It is tempting to conclude that Indian democracy now rewards disruption over de-liberation. But the deeper crisis is that India’s representative institutions have become far better at converting public anger into amplified political spectacle than at converting dissent into legislation. Protest was never meant to replace representative politics. Street was the opening move alone. Citizens made grievances visible. Parties organised them into political demands. Legislatures debated competing solutions.

Governments translated those debates into reforms. Today, that democratic transmission belt is breaking. Part of the explanation lies in the changing nature of protest itself. Political theorist Anton Jäger describes our moment as one of hyperpolitics. Decentralised, issue-specific movements assemble rapidly and dissolve just as quickly. Their strength is speed and weakness is durability. A swarm can expose administrative failure or force an immediate concession. It cannot redesign recruitment systems, rewrite examination laws, or reform public institutions. Those tasks require organised political

parties and legislatures. The larger failure lies not with protesters but with the institutions meant to receive their demands. Twenty-four-hour TV and algorithmic social media reward confrontation far more than months of committee work. Mobilisation is politically more valuable than legislation. Executive dominance has narrowed the Opposition’s room to manoeuvre. But losing a legislative battle is different from declining to fight one. Even where parliamentary arithmetic makes victory unlikely, parties can still draft bills, demand committee scrutiny, build public coalitions and force

sustained deliberation.NEET illustrates this disconnect. After the 2024 paper leak, the Opposition demanded the Education Minister’s resignation. Two years later, a fresh controversy revived almost the same demand. What remained largely absent was a sustained legislative effort to strengthen examination governance, statutory oversight or institutional accountability. The slogan endured because institutional response barely evolved. None of this argues for less protest. Streets are the spaces where citizens without wealth or privileged access make invisible grievances politically visible. The

danger is not that citizens bypass Parliament but that Parliament fails to absorb what they say. Ministries should be required to table a written response to nationally significant protests within a fixed number of sitting days, followed by a parliamentary debate or committee hearing. A public scorecard tracking which parties pursued legislation and which merely organised demonstrations would make the gap between mobilisation and law impossible to ignore. Democracy does not fail when citizens take to the streets. It fails when the journey from street to statute ends halfway.

## The unseen burden: women and caregiver fatigue

In the middle of June heat, Nallammal Thamizhselvan, 40, was getting ready for farm work. Her days usually start much before everyone else in her family wakes up. She has to be on the farm by 6 am and all the household chores have to be done before that. Every day, before she sets off, she leaves one instruction with her two daughters: “Appavukku edhavadhuna udanea phone pannunga.” Her husband, Thamizhselvan, has been living for decades with schizophrenia and is also prone to epileptic seizures. This constant fear of a crisis means that Nallammal has to be available at all times to deal with medical emergencies. She routinely turns down any farm work that needs her to travel more than 3 km. In the 17 years of their marriage, she has been his only caregiver and she is exhausted by the responsibility. “I can’t leave him. But, I need to sleep at least one night peacefully in my life without anxieties,” she says. She is the primary earner in her family but there are few jobs for her in her village, Kothakottai, situated in Alangudi Taluk of Tamil Nadu’s Pudukottai district. It is an arid region where agriculture depends largely on rainfall. This means that farm work is erratic – one day, Nallammal would be cleaning the field, the next she would be plucking chillies or pounding tamarind, sometimes she reaps greens. Eight hours of hard work earns her just Rs 170. Women farm workers earn no more than Rs 200 in this region, half what the men can demand. If Thamizhselvan needs hospitalisation or medicines, she has to borrow from her neighbours. This has left her family in a state of constant precarity. The family also bears the stigma of mental illness and the isolation this brings, as we detail later.

The caregiver burden for mental health is all consuming – it is physical, psychological, emotional, social, and financial, show our interviews with women. Chronic stress, declining personal well-being, exhaustion, and low energy experienced by spouses are often referred to as spousal caregiver fatigue. And this fatigue can last years given the failure of early detection of mental illness. Till three years ago, Nallammal had no help from any quarter, not even from her own or her husband’s family. Nallammal’s entire life is planned around Thamizhselvan’s needs – adapting, calculating, overextend-

ed, overexploited, and of course, uncompensated because carework is assumed of a wife. Seventeen years of marriage have deepened Nallammal’s time poverty. It was her encounter with WORD (Women’s Organisation and Rural Development), an NGO that works in partnership with Carers Worldwide India to support unpaid carers, that lifted her and her family out of precarity. WORD has been working in around 80 villages of Pudukottai district spread over Thiruvarangulam and Pudukottai to provide support to carers of persons with mental health issues. It offers monetary support to carers and also guides them on how they can access mental health care at government hospitals. When Nallammal became a part of the network, she got a loan of Rs 5000 to buy goats for her husband to rear. The network of support also gave her the courage to take on better-paying work as a catering assistant at weddings outside the village. We found in our interviews with women across Pudukottai that carework was not just physically and emotionally exhausting but it also drained families of precious resources. They have to pay for medicines, transportation and hospitalisation costs. This often meant the loss of a month’s salary leading to a debt trap. The crisis we found is worsened by inadequacy of the public mental healthcare network. Carers complained about the frequent shortages of medicines and psychiatrists at government hospitals that force them to seek out expensive alternatives. The one disability scheme the government runs has been digitised and it now faces access and awareness issues. We discuss these issues in detail later in this article.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Indian women spend 301 minutes or five hours a day on unpaid work in their homes. The Time Use Survey (TUS), conducted in 2024, revealed that 41% of women aged 15-59 years participated in caregiving for their household members, while with men the participation was 21.4%. Women, as per a 2021 study Caregiver Burden Among Working Women and Homemakers Taking Care of Psychiatric Patients, are twice as likely to become caregivers than men – 55% of the caregivers surveyed were mothers and 31% were wives. As per a 2015-16 National Mental Health Survey (NMHS) study by the

National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), 10.6% of Indian adults, roughly 11 of every 100, were living with a diagnosable mental health disorder. These studies read together would indicate that women are also the primary caregivers for persons with mental health issues. Take the case of Nallammal. With only primary education, she was forced to marry Thamizhselvan when she turned 23 though her family knew that he needed special care and she could not get any support for this. “I’m the third of five children. My younger brother got married before me and thinking that this would affect my matrimonial prospects, my parents married me off to Thamizhselvan. I did not know him and I did not have any idea about his life,” she recalls.

The stigma around epilepsy and mental health meant that her husband would not find many job opportunities. It fell upon Nallammal to run the family, make ends meet, plan for her daughters’ future, and ensure regular health checks and medicines for Thamizhselvan and nurse him to health when he was hospitalised. Through all this, she also had to deal with spousal violence. “My parents and siblings promised to help me during medical emergencies but every emergency taught me that their promises were empty,” she says. “Earlier, I thought faith healers, temples and dargahs could cure him. But nothing helped. Now, with medical care, and growing awareness over time, I learnt how to manage.” Now, her teen daughters take turns to look after him while Nallammal takes on contract employment in neighbouring districts as a catering assistant. In the last three years, she has been to Trichy, Karaikudi, Chennai and Coimbatore on work. Employers provide accommodation, food and cover transportation costs. These assignments get her between Rs 1000 to Rs 1500 for two days. “This is handy in managing our expenses,” she says.

Nallammal’s example shows how caregiving not only impacts women’s employment opportunities and financial stability, but also affects every aspect of their life, including leisure. “I could not recall a night when I slept peacefully. I stopped attending family functions. With this marriage, my autonomy was taken away from me to honour my family,” she says. Indian women are expected to unquestion-

ingly care for family members, especially elderly in-laws, apart from handling domestic chores like cooking and cleaning. It is not unusual in families for women to quit work to care for the elderly. “Caring for someone with mental illness takes up a lot of energy, but it is a socially reinforced responsibility, and it is expected of women,” says Rakshana, senior resident psychiatrist, who practises at a private hospital in Vellore. For the last seven years, Fathima Abbas, 38, of Vallathirakottai has been caring for her sister-in-law Mehernisha, 50, who is schizophrenic. Thilagavathi Murugesan, 40, of Koozhayan Kaadu village takes her 16-year-old daughter with an intellectual disability wherever she goes. “As medical advances continue to raise the life expectancy of patients living with chronic disabling conditions, it is apparent that the “second victim” in this scenario is the caregiver,” says this research paper, The Cost of Compassion: Caregiver Fatigue Associated with Caring for Persons with Disability in a Rural Population in India.

WORD traced 700 persons with mental illness and their carers in Thiruvarangulam and Pudukottai blocks of the district. Among them, including Nallammal, Fathima, Thilagavathi, 620 are women and 80 are men, emphasising the gendered nature of the caregiving role. Schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) are some of the more common mental illnesses reported among the people who live in the two blocks of Pudukottai. There are men caregivers too in the region but how they approach their work and time is different. The ones we interviewed say they assign caregiving responsibilities to their children if they need to travel, go on a pilgrimage or simply catch up with friends. Women in similar situations only travel for work. For three years in the blocks of Thiruvarangulam and Pudukottai, WORD’s mental health campaign has centred around financially empowering women carers. To trace persons with mental illness and their carers in these blocks, WORD hired 10 volunteers (9 of them women) to spread out in 49 panchayats in Thiruvarangulam and 28 in Pudukottai. Once the carers were identified, WORD created 50 self-help carer groups and provided loans of Rs 5,000 to 104 of them.

## Prioritizing student well-being is essential for education reform

Education in India has changed significantly. Curricula have become more progressive; technology has expanded access to knowledge and assessment is gradually moving beyond rote learning. These changes reflect a larger shift in how we think about preparing young people for an uncertain future. Yet one part of that preparation is still often treated as secondary: the emotional experience of learning.

A child does not leave their worries at the classroom door. Pressure to perform, fear of disappointing parents, friendship struggles, loneliness or uncertainty about the future can influence how they concentrate, participate and respond to challenges. If education is meant to prepare young people for life, then how they feel while learning cannot remain separate from what they learn. This is why I believe the next chapter of education reform must place emotional wellbeing alongside academic development. Not instead of excellence, but as an essential part of enabling it. The need is increasingly visible. An NCERT survey conducted in 2022, cited by UNICEF India, found that 11% of students reported anxiety, 14% experienced extreme emotions, and 43% reported mood swings. The importance of early intervention is equally clear: half of all mental health disorders begin by age 14, and 75% by the mid-20s.

These figures should prompt us to look beyond whether a child is keeping up academically and consider whether they are developing the emotional resources to cope with the demands placed upon them. Emotional literacy is not a soft skill. It is a life skill. It begins with giving children the vocabulary to understand what they are experiencing. A child who can recognise frustration before it becomes anger, understand anxiety rather than simply fear it, or articulate that they need help is developing a capacity that will remain valuable far beyond school. A psychologically safe classroom allows children to question, disagree, make mistakes and try again without feeling diminished. If children associate mistakes with embarrassment or failure with loss of worth, they may become more focused on avoiding errors than on discovering, experimenting and learning. The role of the teacher is therefore changing too; not into that of a mental-health professional, but into that of an informed and observant adult within a child’s support system. A sudden withdrawal, behavioural change or disengagement can sometimes signal that a child is struggling. Teachers need not become mental-health

professionals, but they do need the awareness to recognise such signs, respond with empathy and know when professional support may be required.

This also means rethinking how we interpret behaviour. Children facing mental-health concerns may be labelled “lazy”, “hyperactive” or “naughty” when they may actually need understanding and support. In one school-based intervention, 95% of teachers reported a positive change in how they perceived students with mental-health concerns. Student referrals offer another important insight: 20% were related to poor academic performance, while others involved aggressive behaviour. Such changes should not automatically be viewed as disciplinary issues; they can also signal that a child may be struggling emotionally. But recognition is only the first step. Students must also have access to the right support, without placing the entire responsibility on teachers. UNICEF India notes that India has only 0.75 psychiatrists per 100,000 people, with shortages extending to psychologists and psychiatric social workers. This is why strengthening mental wellbeing in education cannot mean placing another responsibility on teachers and schools without strengthening the wider support system. Schools need clear pathways to professional care, while counselling must be normalized as a resource rather than viewed as a last resort. Equally important is bringing parents into the conversation and strengthening relationships between students, teachers and families. Often, meaningful support begins with something simple: an adult who listens without immediately comparing, correcting or trying to solve everything. The experience of implementing the curriculum demonstrates how strengthening emotional skills and relationships can create a school environment that is more conducive to learning, while also contributing to academic outcomes. Across all grade levels, students became better at managing their emotions and more willing to seek help when needed. Both coping skills and help-seeking behavior improved significantly from baseline to endline across every age group. The impact was also visible beyond the classroom, with parents observing positive changes in how children handled everyday conflicts. When students are equipped to regulate emotions, seek help and build healthier relationships, classrooms can become more supportive spaces where both well-being and learning can thrive.

## Gold ETF Inflows Rise to Rs 1,179 Crore as Safe-Haven Demand Strengthens

**Mumbai:** Gold exchange-traded funds (ETFs) attracted an estimated ₹1,179 crore in net inflows during the first half of August, as investors increased exposure to the precious metal despite a sharp rise in prices.

The inflow follows ₹1,560 crore invested in gold ETFs in July, taking the category’s assets under management to around ₹1.73 lakh crore across 12.53 million accounts.

Gold prices have rebounded strongly after a correction in June. International spot gold rose 9 per cent in the first two weeks of August to \$4,391 an ounce, while domestic MCX prices increased nearly 7 per cent to ₹1,51,744 per 10 grams by August 14.

Analysts attributed the renewed demand to expectations of changes in global monetary policy, a weaker US dollar and continued preference for gold as a safe-haven asset. Physical jewellery demand and pre-festive stocking by retailers have also strengthened.

Gold imports more than doubled in July to \$4.16 billion, equivalent to around 40-45 tonnes, from \$1.97 billion in June. Meanwhile, average daily turnover in gold derivatives on the MCX increased 9 per cent month-on-month to ₹21,400 crore in July.

With the festive and wedding seasons approaching, industry experts expect both investment demand for financial gold products and consumer purchases of physical gold to remain supportive.



## Zee Entertainment Secures Rs 660 Crore Upfront Funding Through Warrant Issue



**Mumbai:** Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd has completed the preferential allotment of 20.94 crore fully convertible warrants to promoter group entity Sunbright Mauritius Investments at ₹126 per warrant, securing an upfront capital infusion of ₹659.76 crore.

Sunbright Mauritius has paid the mandatory 25 per cent subscription amount of ₹31.50 per warrant. The remaining 75 per cent, or ₹94.50 per warrant, will be payable within 18 months of

bunational stayed certain market restrictions imposed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India in connection with an investigation into the alleged encumbrance of a company asset. The tribunal also allowed additional time until August 21 for completion of the warrant allotment, subject to conditions including the deposit of the prescribed penalty.

The proceeds are expected to support Zee Entertainment’s operational requirements, digital platform development and content expansion across its television and streaming businesses.

The company’s paid-up share capital will remain unchanged until Sunbright Mauritius exercises the warrants and completes the required payment for their conversion into equity shares.

the allotment. The outstanding amount is estimated at ₹1,979.28 crore, with the conversion window extending until February 21, 2028.

Once the remaining amount is paid and the warrants are converted into equity shares, the promoter group’s holding in Zee Entertainment is expected to rise to around 17.90 per cent on a fully diluted basis.

The fundraise follows interim relief granted by the Securities Appellate Tribunal on August 14. The tri-

## Forex Mobilisation Crosses \$72 Billion as NRI Deposits Surge Ahead of Deadline

**Mumbai:** India has mobilised \$72.85 billion in foreign currency through the Reserve Bank of India’s special US dollar-rupee swap facility, with Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) deposits accounting for the overwhelming share of the inflows as banks race to meet the August 31 deadline.

According to data released by the RBI based on reports from authorised dealer banks, total forex mobilisation stood at \$72.85 billion as of August 21. FCNR(B) deposits contributed \$65.397 billion, accounting for nearly 90 per cent of the total. Overseas Foreign Currency Borrowings (OFCBs) added \$4.86 billion, while External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs) contributed another \$2.59 billion.

The strong response marks a significant increase from the \$56.85 billion mobilised through the facility as of August 13, when FCNR(B) deposits stood at \$52.3 billion. The rapid increase in foreign currency mobilisation prompted the RBI to bring forward the closing date for the FCNR(B) component of the facility.

The central bank introduced the special USD-INR swap facility on June 8 as part of efforts to strengthen foreign exchange reserves and improve external liquidity. The programme covers FCNR(B) deposits as well as ECB and OFCB inflows, allowing banks to swap eligible foreign currency with the RBI.

Under the arrangement, banks can mobilise foreign currency deposits from non-resident customers and enter into swaps with the central bank. The mechanism helps banks manage their foreign currency exposure while encouraging them to attract larger deposits by offering competitive returns on longer-term FCNR(B) deposits.

The FCNR(B) component was initially scheduled to remain available until September 30. However, following the stronger-than-expected response,



the RBI announced on August 14 that only deposits mobilised up to August 31 would qualify under the special swap facility. Eligible swaps against those deposits can be undertaken with the RBI until September 11.

The borrowing windows for ECBs and OFCBs have not been brought forward and will continue under the existing framework until December 31. This means banks and eligible borrowers can continue accessing the remaining channels of the special forex mobilisation programme beyond the August deadline applicable to FCNR(B) deposits.

the domestic financial system while allowing banks to hedge their foreign currency exposure through swaps with the RBI.

The early closure of the FCNR(B) window has also attracted market attention. RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra has described the decision as a data-driven and calibrated policy adjustment rather than a reversal of the central bank’s broader approach. The move reflected the faster-than-expected mobilisation of foreign currency and the RBI’s assessment that sufficient inflows had been generated to meet its reserve-building objectives.

With the FCNR(B) deadline approaching, banks are expected to continue mobilising deposits from non-resident customers through August 31. The latest figures underline the strong response to the RBI’s initiative, with the total forex mobilisation already substantially exceeding the level recorded just over a week earlier.

## Forex Mobilisation Crosses \$72 Billion as NRI Deposits Surge Ahead of Deadline

**Mumbai:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed stricter advertising rules for online bond platform providers to curb misleading yield claims, influencer-led promotions and marketing tactics that could encourage retail investors to make rushed investment decisions.

Under a consultation paper open for public com-

ments until September 11, 2026, SEBI has proposed restrictions on artificial scarcity, countdowns, urgency-based messaging and other behavioural nudges designed to push investors towards quick transactions without adequate due diligence.

Platforms promoting specific debt securities would also have to provide standardised information, including the issuer’s name, maturity period, credit rating and recent rating changes, secured or unsecured status, clean and dirty prices, yield to maturity and Credit Risk-o-meter classification.

The regulator has proposed allowing terms such as “fixed returns”, “predictable returns” and “passive income” only in a general, non-promissory manner,

accompanied by prominent disclosures stating that returns are not guaranteed and that debt investments carry market, credit and default risks.

Claims such as “high yield”, “high rated” and “high returns” would be prohibited where they cannot be supported by verifiable information. Existing restrictions on celebrity endorsements would continue, while additional disclosure requirements would apply to market-linked debentures and platforms promoting their own holdings.

The proposed framework would operate alongside the broader advertising code applicable to securities market intermediaries and aims to make online bond promotions more transparent while strengthening investor protection.

## Rs 7,000-Crore LPG Pipeline Expansion Cleared Across Six States

**Mumbai:** The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has approved three LPG pipeline projects spanning nearly 1,800 km across six states, with an estimated investment of ₹7,000 crore to strengthen India’s fuel transportation network and improve supply reliability. State-owned GAIL (India) Limited will execute the projects across Telangana, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Karnataka and Goa. Once completed, the projects are expected to expand the country’s PNGRB-authorised com-



mon-carrier LPG pipeline network from around 7,700 km to nearly 9,500 km, representing a growth of about 23.5 per cent. The three approved corridors include a 556-km Cherlapally-Nagpur pipeline covering Telangana and Maharashtra, a 611-km Jhansi-Sitarganj route connecting Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and a 633-km Shikrapur-Hubli-Goa corridor covering Maharashtra, Karnataka and Goa. The projects will complement major existing infrastructure, including the 2,757-km Kandla-Gorakhpur LPG pipeline, while improv-

ing the movement of bulk LPG from coastal import terminals to inland consumption centres. The expanded pipeline network is expected to reduce dependence on road-based LPG transportation, lowering the number of tanker movements, logistics costs, traffic congestion and risks associated with transporting the highly inflammable fuel by road. The infrastructure will also strengthen India’s energy security by providing greater flexibility in moving LPG to inland markets. As the country remains significantly dependent on imported LPG arriving through coastal terminals, a wider pipeline network can help maintain supplies during demand surges or temporary disruptions in the supply chain. The projects are therefore expected to improve the resilience of LPG distribution while supporting safer and more efficient transportation of the fuel across major consumption centres.

## BEL Eyes Multi-Year Growth on Rs1.2 Lakh Crore Pipeline

**Mumbai:** Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) is positioned for sustained medium-term growth, supported by a strong existing order book and a potential business pipeline estimated at around ₹1.2 lakh crore, according to a research assessment by Jefferies. The Navratna defence public sector undertaking currently has an order book equivalent to about 2.6 times its FY26 revenue, providing visibility for future execution. The prospective pipeline includes tenders for radar systems, avionics, electronic warfare equipment, naval combat systems and counter-drone solutions. BEL is expected to benefit from India’s ongoing military modernisation and the government’s focus on indigenous defence production. The increasing use

of advanced electronics in fighter aircraft, warships and air-defence systems is expected to create additional opportunities for the company. Jefferies estimates BEL’s revenue could increase from ₹27,480 crore in FY26 to ₹47,533 crore by FY30, implying a sustained mid-teens growth trajectory.

However, the ₹1.2 lakh crore pipeline represents potential business rather than confirmed orders. Its conversion will depend on defence procurement approvals, tender timelines, contract awards and project execution. Margin performance will also depend on the company’s evolving project mix. The brokerage also expects BEL to benefit from the government’s continued push for higher domestic content in defence procurement.

## AMFI Unveils Five-Point Plan to Expand Mutual Fund Investor Base

**Mumbai:** The Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) has launched five investor education and capacity-building initiatives under its “Mutual Funds Sahi Hai” campaign, focusing on women, rural and semi-urban communities, self-help groups and first-time investors.

The initiatives were announced at AMFI’s 31st Foundation Day event in Mumbai in the presence of SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Whole-Time Member Amarjeet Singh, Executive Director Manoj Kumar, AMFI Chairman Sundeeep Sikka and Chief Executive Venkat N. Chalasani.

In partnership with the National Institute of Securities Markets, AMFI will organise 20 specialised workshops across 10-12 cities to



train around 10,000 mutual fund distributors over the next year. The programmes will focus on regulatory compliance, ethics, fiduciary duties, prevention of mis-selling and data privacy.

AMFI has also partnered with microfinance industry body Sa-Dhan to conduct 500 Investor Awareness Programmes across five states, targeting 25,000 participants and training 100 community-level financial educators, or “Nivesh Sakhis”. The “Bharat Nivesh Mela” will extend investor awareness activities to Tier-II and

Tier-III cities, with sessions covering systematic investment plans, compounding and fraud prevention. A separate financial wellness initiative with Pinkathon will cover 52 cities and focus on encouraging greater participation among women investors.

SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said the mutual fund industry’s assets under management had grown from ₹15 lakh crore in July 2016 to nearly ₹86 lakh crore in July 2026, representing a compound annual growth rate of 19 per cent.

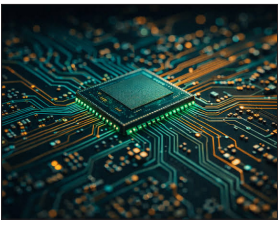
Pandey stressed the importance of investor outcomes, stronger governance and multilingual financial education, and called on the industry to work towards doubling India’s mutual fund investor base to 12 crore in the coming years.

## Amazon Raises Hardware Prices as AI Boom Drives Up Memory Costs

**Mumbai:** Amazon has raised prices across several consumer electronics products, including Echo smart speakers, Kindle e-readers, Fire TV streaming devices and Eero networking systems, as rising demand for memory and storage components from the artificial intelligence industry pushes up hardware costs.

The company said the broader electronics sector is facing substantial increases in the cost of DRAM and NAND flash components as AI data centres consume growing volumes of memory chips. Amazon had absorbed higher input costs for as long as possible before passing part of the increase on to consumers.

The entry-level Echo Dot has recorded a 60 per cent increase, rising from \$49.99



to \$79.99. The Fire TV Stick 4K Max has increased from \$59.99 to \$84.99, while the Fire TV Stick HD has risen from \$34.99 to \$39.99.

Kindle devices have also become more expensive. The 16GB base Kindle now costs \$149.99, up from \$109.99, while the Kindle Paperwhite has increased by \$40 to \$199.99. The Eero Pro 7 Wi-Fi system has recorded a \$100 increase, taking its price to \$799.99.

The price revisions reflect the wider impact of the AI infrastructure boom on the semiconductor supply

chain. The rapid expansion of AI data centres has increased demand for memory and storage components, putting pressure on suppliers and raising procurement costs for electronics manufacturers.

The trend is also being seen at other technology companies. Apple recently increased prices for several MacBook, iPad and Apple TV products by \$30 to \$300, citing higher memory-chip costs linked to strong demand from global AI data-centre expansion.

The latest increases indicate that rising component costs are moving beyond high-end computing equipment into mainstream consumer electronics, potentially putting further pressure on technology prices in the coming months.

# Israeli settler attacks shift focus to West Bank areas under direct Palestinian rule

**Israel:** Violent Israeli settler attacks in the two areas of the occupied West Bank under direct Palestinian rule have almost doubled since 2025, as settlers pursue a self-proclaimed “great settlement revolution” in the very heart of the territory earmarked for a Palestinian state.

According to a report by the Israeli human rights organisation Yesh Din, shared with the Guardian, data shows that almost two-thirds of incidents of settler violence so far in 2026 have taken place in the so-called Areas A and B – placed under Palestinian Authority governance in the 1995 Oslo accords.

The report, The Next Frontier, Violence by Israeli Civilians in Areas A and B, describes the “rapid shift” in “violence and pressure exerted by the government, military and settlers on Palestinians ... from Area C into Areas B and even A”. While all three designated administrative areas on the West Bank were intended under the Oslo peace deal to encompass the shape of a future Palestinian state, successive Israeli governments, driven by the settler movement, have pursued a long-term policy of undermining Palestinian claims.

In Area C, accounting for 60% of the West Bank, Israel was initially given what was supposed to be temporary responsibility for all civil and security affairs pending a final status agreement for a Palestinian state. This arrangement was exploited for settlement. All government-approved Israeli settlements (regarded as illegal under international law) are located in Area C, as are the main roads and traffic arteries of the West Bank.

In Area A, which makes up about 18% of the West Bank and includes the major Palestinian cities, the Palestinian Authority became responsible for civil affairs and internal security. In Area B (22%), which includes the built-up areas in Palestinian rural spaces, the PA became responsible for civil affairs and public order. Since 2024, Israel’s settlement movement has explicitly and violently expanded its efforts by establishing new farming “outposts” in areas A and B. Settler leaders have said openly that these are designed to “gain a foothold” in “very strategic” Palestinian locations. As the report says: “Most Palestinian daily life occurs in these areas.”

According to the report’s analysis, the percentage of violent West Bank incidents taking place



in Area B stands at 55% so far this year, compared with 25% last year, while attacks in Area C declined in the same period from 67% to 37% of the overall figure, indicating a deliberate change in strategy.

“As settler and state violence against Palestinian communities in Area C has intensified in recent years, Palestinians have been forcibly pushed into Areas A and B, making these areas increasingly critical for maintaining safety and a semblance of normal everyday life,” said Yesh Din, which has been documenting settler violence for more than two decades.

A map posted earlier this summer in the WhatsApp group of the Hilltop Foundation, an organisation that supplies equipment, support and funding for the es-

“the successful establishment of so many outposts in obvious violation of Israeli law, demonstrates that Israel is deliberately choosing not to effectively address the issue and that the settlers’ openly declared goals align with government policy”.

“Senior ministers Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich [who have both called for the cancelling of the Oslo accords] openly speak of their ambition to gain control of Area B and abolish the division created under the Oslo accords.”

There is increasing international concern over the escalating pace of settler violence on the West Bank. Sanctions have been placed in the US and Europe on settlers and pro-settler figures, including Ben-Gvir, Israel’s national security minister. Announcing France’s sanctions against Ben-Gvir on Wednesday, the French foreign minister, Jean-Noël Barrot, said what was happening on the West Bank was “utterly disgraceful and should fill us all with revulsion”.

According to the UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as of 20 July, 18 Palestinians had died during attacks involving settlers, of whom 12 were killed by settlers and three by Israeli forces. Responsibility for the remaining three deaths was disputed, OCHA said.

According to the UN agency, there were about 190 attacks a month in the first four months of 2026, putting the West Bank on a trajectory to reach more than 2,000 attacks by the end of this year.

Yesh Din concludes: “This Israeli strategy, implemented in part through the expansion of outposts and the settler violence launched from them into new areas, pushes Palestinian residents into the centres of towns and villages and empties surrounding areas of Palestinian presence.

“In doing so, it advances Israel toward the realisation of a policy, already reflected in ministers’ public statements, that seeks to annex as much West Bank territory as possible with as few Palestinians as possible living there.

“The path to this goal is paved with systematic, organised criminality, backed and supported by state institutions, revealing a clear intent: to make the area Palestinian free, in other words, to carry out ethnic cleansing.”

The Israeli military has been approached for comment.

## Rewilded land remains green amid drought-stricken English countryside, images show

**UK:** Aerial footage of an estate in Somerset has revealed the benefits of re-wilding land in the face of extreme weather brought about by the climate crisis.

The area of the National Trust’s Holnicote estate where rivers have been returned to their natural courses and wetlands have been restored have remained green and lush during the five heatwaves across the summer. In contrast, the surrounding countryside has become parched and brown. The two interventions are significant rewilding projects and provide strong evidence that nature-based solutions can protect against wildfires. This contradicts claims by some rightwing commentators, who have blamed rewilding for causing wildfires.

“Nature is providing solutions to some of the biggest challenges facing society today,” said Ben Eardley, the project manager at the Holnicote estate. “For generations as a nation we’ve drained wetlands, straightened rivers and moved water off the land as quickly as possible. Here, we’ve reversed that approach and the results are remarkable.

“By reconnecting river systems with the surrounding area and creating natural sponges in the landscape, we’ve created a system that stores water during drought, keeping wetlands and the surrounding habitats healthy, and slows water during storms and periods of extreme rainfall, helping to protect villages from the risk of flooding downstream.” Eardley said the same natural processes that helped wildlife recover were also helping communities adapt to climate breakdown.

More than 90% of the UK’s wetlands have been lost over the last century and restoring the habitats to make them wet again is becoming increasingly important for climate adaptation, water security and nature recovery.

Harry Bowell, the National Trust’s director of land and nature, called on the government to boost its efforts to invest in nature-based solutions to help the country become more resilient.

“This year’s summer has been a stark warning of how our weather systems are changing,” he said. “Climate change is no longer something of the future – it’s happening here and now. With another El Niño predicted for next year it’s likely many more of us will be subject to more frequent floods, droughts, heatwaves and wildfires, and we are not immune.” The lowland heath at Dunwich, another National Trust estate, was destroyed after a wildfire ripped through the land this summer.

Bowell said: “It’s places like Holnicote where nature is showing us the way – demonstrating how, by treating and investing in nature as essential infrastructure, we can create landscapes that are more resilient to benefit communities and nature alike.” There are many good reasons not to despair: despair is self-fulfilling; despair is disempowering; despair is what the bastards want you to feel. But above all, despair is irrational. Let me explain why. However sophisticated our forecasting tools may be, we simply have no means of knowing what comes next. Like the climate, like every ecosystem, society is a complex system. Its properties and adaptive responses cannot be predicted by studying its components in isolation, regardless of the brilliance of social scientists and futurologists. Things happen – unexpected things – sometimes at astonishing speed. In other words, society has tipping points. It can quickly flip from one equilibrium state to another.

The complex system we call society has two equilibrium states: impossible and inevitable. The change we want always looks impossible. Votes for women? You must be off your rocker. Independence for India? Britain will never let it go. Civil rights? Ridiculous! But with sustained pressure, a bit of luck, a change in circumstance, bang!, the impossible happens. Then everyone says, “Well, that was inevitable, wasn’t it?” I think we could be approaching a tipping point on climate breakdown. For years we’ve been told, “You’re asking for the moon. Fossil fuels are here to stay.” Part of me has believed it. But now, as the Guardian’s reporting has shown, suddenly fossil fuels are far more expensive than renewables. Suddenly it is green technologies that are generating vast employment and income. Suddenly, technological barriers that looked insuperable have come tumbling down. Suddenly, fossil-funded politicians look outmoded, ridiculous, corrupt. Suddenly, we are waking up to the need for urgent action, as heat shocks hammer the message home.

This kind of rapid change requires a public informed by independent media sources, journalists in hock to the facts rather than corporate interests. The Guardian’s open, reader-funded model is a clear antidote to other outlets – both the billionaire media and public service broadcasters – who are actively shirking this challenge, cutting their climate coverage at a time when it has never been more critical. So, at the Guardian and beyond, we keep pushing, keep exposing, keep demonstrating how change might happen. And, for wholly rational reasons, keep hoping. We can only do this because of your generous support. Thank you so much, we’re all so appreciative.

## Burnham to dispatch 100 Whitehall officials to help regional mayors

**UK:** Andy Burnham is to send more than 100 Whitehall officials to bolster the teams of regional mayors, after convening leaders from across England from his base at No 10 North to discuss how to spread growth.

The government described the meeting as a “situation room” to bring local and regional leaders into national decision-making.

After the call led by Burnham, the government said five to 10 civil servants would be sent to every mayoral authority for secondments of less than a year during a pilot programme in 18 mayoralities.

Mayors requested the extra capacity at the first meeting of Burnham’s National Economic Council at the end of last month.

There will also be a new civil service fast stream pilot in Yorkshire and Humberside, and an expansion of the future leaders scheme, which trains high performers in the civil service, to mayoral and local authority officials.

Burnham said his No 10 North office was “bringing together mayors from



different political parties to work on these challenges, because people deserve problem-solving rather than point-scoring”.

His deputy, Louise Haigh, said it marked an end to “the days of Westminster hoarding power” and would be the biggest transition of power and resources in a generation away from Whitehall.

Mayors have long been requesting more firepower from Whitehall, although on their own terms to request help and talent rather than having officials sent from London to monitor their activities – which has happened when local authorities are struggling.

Among the cabinet ministers at Friday’s meeting discussing growth across the country were Haigh, the chancellor, John Healey,

inant driver of the UK’s economy”. The operation is led by his ally and enforcer Haigh, who is overseeing the No 10 operation in London, No 10 North in Manchester and parts of the Cabinet Office.

As part of the shift, Burnham has said No 10 North will take on responsibility for driving local growth, potentially weakening the power of the Treasury. However, Healey stressed on Friday that growth would be a “dual mission”.

Addressing the meeting, he said the government had “demonstrated across a range of fronts that we’re a government that just is getting on with getting things done and that includes on growth”.

“The determination to see good growth in every postcode. And that is central to the Treasury, as the government’s economics, as well as its finance ministry. But it is a dual mission between No 11 and No 10 North. And it’s a dual mission that has to become the shared endeavour of all departments in government and a shared endeavour between national, regional and local leaders.”

## Compulsory GCSE resits in England harm teenagers’ mental wellbeing, study finds

**UK:** Forcing teenagers who fail GCSEs into multiple resits has a negative impact on their mental health, according to research to be published as pupils receive their grades on Thursday. The study by academics at University College London (UCL) compared the mental wellbeing of students in England, Wales and Northern Ireland who failed to reach a grade 4 or equivalent in maths or English GCSEs – and found that only those in England, where resits are mandatory, showed significantly lower wellbeing.

Robbie Maris, a research fellow at UCL and one of the authors, said the dent to

teenagers’ self-confidence when faced with resits could be a contributing factor to the rise in young people not in education, employment or training, known as Neets.

Maris said: “Some [resitting] students will not turn up for their exams, they won’t enter them or they will drop out of education – these are the kids at highest risk of dropping out of education and becoming Neets.

“It could be leading to further disengagement, which is a worrying thing. People need to pay more attention to this, because if you demotivate or demoralise young people it puts them at risk of dropping out of the

education system entirely.” The resits policy in England was introduced in 2014 and requires students who have not achieved a grade 4 pass in English or maths GCSE at age 16 to continue to study those qualifications as a condition of their further education or college places being funded.

This year, about 180,000 students who sat GCSEs last year will retake GCSE English and about 175,000 are expected to retake maths, after record numbers of 16-year-olds last year received grades below 4. Maris said the comparison between students with similar academic records in

Wales and Northern Ireland and those in England, after adjusting for other factors, left the resits policy as a major difference between the two groups.

“We see no impact really at all for failing English and maths in Wales or Northern Ireland but in England there’s a relatively large negative impact. This is strong evidence that it’s something to do with England’s policy setting that is generating these impacts,” Maris said.

The study, to be published as a working paper by UCL’s centre for education policy and equalising opportunities, also found

considerable differences between girls and boys. The biggest impact on girls was on those who narrowly missed out on a grade 4 in maths, while for boys the biggest impact was among those who were “substantially below” the threshold for a passing grade in English. In contrast, boys who failed to get a 4 in maths, and girls who failed in English, showed little or no downturn in wellbeing.

“Girls already have low self-efficacy and anxiety in maths, on average, and we’ve got similar issues with boys doing English, anecdotally a lot of boys don’t like doing English.

# Scalp care has emerged as the new frontier in skin care, and it is essential that we prioritize our scalp



We tend to be quite meticulous about our skin-care routines. Engaging in a 7-step or even a 10-step regimen does not usually trouble us. However, in the process, we frequently overlook another area of our body. The scalp, for instance, is also a component of our skin! How many individuals truly prioritize scalp care or perform regular hygiene checks for this area? I have my doubts.

Basic scalp care is not just about shampooing it; it's actually much more than

this. While shampooing the scalp does remove dirt and dust particles and other environmental stressors, that is not sufficient. However, the tables have now turned, and people tend to care for their scalp as much as they care for their facial skin.

Anand Bhatia, Head of Training, Lakme Salon, tells HT Shop Now, "Today, consumers are becoming increasingly aware that concerns such as hair fall, hair thinning, oiliness, dryness, product build-up and scalp sensitivity often

originate at the scalp. As a result, they're looking beyond surface-level hair-care and seeking dedicated solutions that support long-term scalp health".

He further says that today there are multiple products that are designed to deeply cleanse, nourish and rebalance the scalp. These rituals create the ideal foundation for stronger, healthier-looking hair. "Just as skincare has become an essential part of everyday self-care, we believe scalp care is now

emerging as the new skin-care—because healthy hair truly begins with a healthy scalp", he mentions.

On similar lines, Dermatologist Dr Madhuri Agarwal, Founder & Medical Director, Yavana Aesthetics also says, "While hair has traditionally been the focus of our grooming routines, the scalp is actually the place of origin of healthy hair. A healthy, clean scalp—free from excess oil, irritation and infections is the foundation for strong, healthy hair, which is why scalp care should be viewed as an extension of skincare".

She also tells, "Just as we follow a consistent routine for our facial skin, the scalp too requires regular cleansing, hydration, exfoliation and protection from environmental damage. We are also seeing a growing interest in scalp-specific treatments such as scalp exfoliation, scalp peels, micro-needling, laser therapy and hydrating scalp treatments, reflecting the industry's shift towards preventive scalp health".

Dr Agarwal also says

that beyond topical products, scalp health is closely linked to internal health, making a balanced diet, adequate sleep and regular exercise equally important.

Choosing the shampoo as per your scalp type

Identify your scalp type

Start by figuring out whether your scalp is oily, dry, normal or combination.

Oily scalp: Look for shampoos that provide thorough cleansing and help remove excess oil and product build-up. Ingredients such as salicylic acid can be useful.

Dry scalp: Choose a gentle, moisturising shampoo that cleanses without stripping natural oils. Look for ingredients such as glycerin, panthenol or soothing botanical ingredients.

Normal scalp: A mild everyday shampoo with gentle cleansing agents is usually enough.

Combination scalp: If your roots become greasy while your lengths feel dry, focus the shampoo on the scalp and use conditioner mainly on the mid-lengths and ends.

# Experiment with this simple rice and coffee shampoo technique



An overloaded schedule can pose challenges in maintaining an intricate hair care routine. If you are in search of a quick DIY addition to your standard wash day, a simple combination of rice and coffee shampoo is one alternative that has recently gained traction as a home hair care hack.

The mixture combines washed rice and coffee with your regular shampoo. While these ingredients are often used in DIY beauty routines, it is important to keep expectations realistic: home remedies cannot guarantee faster hair growth or stop hair loss, which can have several underlying causes.

What You Need

To prepare the mixture, you will need:

- 1 teaspoon washed rice
- small sachet of coffee
- 1 tablespoon of your regular shampoo

Water, as required

How To Prepare The Shampoo Mix

Start by heating some water in a pan. Add the washed rice and coffee, but leave out the shampoo at

this stage.

Let the mixture simmer over low heat for around 8 to 10 minutes. Once done, switch off the heat and strain the liquid. Allow it to cool sufficiently before adding one tablespoon of shampoo.

Mix well until the shampoo is evenly incorporated and begins to lather. You can adjust the quantities depending on how much you need, but it is best to prepare a small, fresh batch rather than storing the mixture for long periods.

Rinse thoroughly with water, making sure no residue is left behind.

What Can Rice And Coffee Do For Hair?

Rice-based hair treatments are commonly used in home hair care routines, while coffee contains caffeine and naturally occurring compounds that have

also attracted interest in cosmetic hair products. However, a homemade rinse or shampoo should not be considered a proven treatment for hair loss or slow hair growth.

The biggest practical benefit of the hack may simply be adding an occasional DIY step to your regular cleansing routine. How your hair responds will depend on your scalp, hair type and the products you already use.

A Word Of Caution

Natural does not automatically mean suitable for every scalp. Coffee, fragrances shampoo or other ingredients may cause dryness or irritation in some people. Stop using the mixture if you notice itching, redness, burning or increased dryness.

Persistent or sudden hair fall should also not be treated solely with home remedies, as factors ranging from nutritional deficiencies and hormonal changes to stress and scalp conditions can contribute to hair loss. In such cases, consulting a dermatologist is a better approach.

# Quinoa Vs Brown Rice: Which One Is Healthier

Brown rice is more nutrient-dense than white rice, according to many health-conscious consumers. Is quinoa superior to that, though? Fiber

100 grams of cooked quinoa contains 2.8 grams of fiber. The same amount of cooked brown rice contains 1.6-1.8 grams of fiber.

So, quinoa is ahead in terms of fiber. Fiber is essential in daily diet because it not only helps to fill the stomach but also keeps the stomach clean. Fiber does not allow blood sugar levels to increase even when eating carbohydrate-rich foods. Protein

Compared to cooked



brown rice, which has between 2.3 and 2.7 grams of protein per 100 grams of cooked meal, quinoa has roughly 4.4 grams. Protein is necessary for everything from cell repair to muscle growth. All nine of the necessary amino acids are present in quinoa.

Other nutrients

Iron, folate, magnesium, and other minerals are abundant in quinoa. Conversely, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, and B vitamins are abundant in brown rice. High-fiber diets help keep the stomach full, according to a study. Brown rice is lower in protein and fibre than quinoa.

Quinoa can therefore take the lead in the contest for filling and nutrition.

Quinoa, brown rice

Your body type will determine which of quinoa and brown rice is healthier for you. Brown rice is preferable if you have trouble digesting quinoa. It is comparatively easy to digest because it contains less fibre and protein. In addition, the food's flavour is crucial. You are free to consume everything you want. In terms of nutritional value, quinoa is marginally superior, although brown rice is also quite good. It has fibre, carbs, and protein.

# Your hands, which are dry and chapped, require the nourishing benefits of these five hand creams

While we typically maintain an elaborate skincare regimen for our faces, our hands frequently do not receive equivalent care. Subjected to regular hand-washing and sanitizing, as well as exposure to sunlight, dust, cold temperatures, and various household cleaning agents, our hands endure significant stress daily. Consequently, this can result in the skin feeling dry, rough, and tight. This is where a good hand cream can make a noticeable difference. More than just a quick fix for dryness, hand cream can help moisturise the skin, support the skin barrier and keep your hands feeling soft and comfortable. What is hand cream?

Hand cream is a moisturising product formulated specifically for the skin on your hands. Compared with lighter body lotions, many hand creams have a richer texture because the hands are frequently exposed to external stressors and tend to lose moisture easily.

Depending on the formulation, hand creams may contain ingredients such as glycerin, ceramides, hyaluronic acid, shea butter, squalane, urea or natural oils. These ingredients can help attract moisture to the skin, reduce moisture loss and improve the feel of dry

or rough hands.

Benefits of using hand cream

1. **Helps combat dryness**
2. **Supports the skin barrier**
3. **Makes rough hands feel softer**
4. **Helps protect against environmental stressors**
5. **Can help care for cuti-**

cles

Dry cuticles can become rough and uncomfortable. Applying a little hand cream around the nails and cuticles can help soften this area and prevent it from feeling excessively dry.

6. **Keeps hands looking well cared for**

Well-moisturised hands tend to look smoother and healthier. While hand cream cannot stop the natural ageing process, maintaining good hydration can help minimise the appearance of dryness and rough texture.

How to use hand cream correctly

The best time to apply hand cream is immediately after washing your hands, while the skin is still slightly damp. Take a small amount and massage it into your palms, backs of your hands, fingers, knuckles and around the nails.

You can also keep a tube beside your bed and apply a richer hand cream before going to sleep. If your hands are extremely dry, wearing soft cotton gloves overnight after applying cream may help prevent the product from rubbing off.

When it comes to keeping your hands soft, smooth and comfortably moisturised, especially when frequent handwashing, dry weather or everyday activ-

ities leave the skin feeling tight and rough, choosing a nourishing hand cream can make a noticeable difference, and there are several excellent options to consider depending on how intensive your hand-care needs are. L'Occitane Shea Butter Hand Cream is a particularly appealing choice for anyone who wants a luxurious everyday moisturiser for dry hands, with its rich and comforting formula enriched with 20% organic shea butter to help replenish moisture and leave the skin feeling softer and smoother. Although it has a creamy, nourishing consistency, it absorbs well and does not leave the hands feeling excessively greasy, making it convenient for use throughout the day, whether after washing your hands or whenever the skin starts to feel dry. It is especially suited to people who appreciate a more indulgent hand-care experience while still wanting effective daily hydration. Aveeno Active Naturals Skin Relief Hand Cream, meanwhile, is designed for hands that feel particularly dry, uncomfortable or tight and offers a soothing approach to everyday moisturisation. Its nourishing formula helps restore moisture to dry skin while leaving the hands feeling soft, com-

fortable and conditioned, and its texture makes it a practical option for regular use during dry weather or after repeated hand-washing. For anyone who prefers straightforward, gentle-feeling skincare that can be incorporated easily into a daily routine, Aveeno's hand cream is a useful option, particularly when the hands need consistent moisture rather than an occasional intensive treatment. O'Keeffe's Working Hands Hand Cream takes a more intensive approach and is specifically designed for hands that experience significant dryness, roughness and everyday wear and tear. Its concentrated formula is intended to moisturise extremely dry skin and support the skin's natural moisture barrier, while the thick consistency means that only a small amount is needed at a time. Rather than being the first choice for someone whose hands simply need a light layer of hydration, this is the type of hand cream that can be especially useful when the skin feels exceptionally rough, dry or cracked and needs more intensive care. It can therefore be a particularly practical addition to a hand-care routine for people whose hands are frequently exposed to work, cleaning,

outdoor conditions or other activities that can leave the skin feeling stressed and depleted of moisture. Nivea Anti-Age Q10 Plus Hand Cream offers another approach by combining everyday hydration with ingredients intended to care for the appearance of ageing hands. Formulated with Q10, the cream helps moisturise dry skin while leaving the hands feeling smoother, softer and more supple, making it a convenient option for those who want their daily hand moisturiser to provide both hydration and skin-smoothing benefits. Because the hands can become increasingly dry and show visible signs of ageing over time, incorporating a moisturising product such as this into a regular routine can help keep them looking and feeling well cared for. It is a simple choice for anyone who wants a hand cream that fits easily into an everyday skincare routine without requiring a complicated regimen. Burt's Bees Thoroughly Therapeutic Honey & Grapeseed Oil Hand Cream is another nourishing option, particularly for those who enjoy hand-care products featuring recognisable conditioning ingredients. Its formula combines honey, which helps attract and retain

moisture, with grapeseed oil, which helps condition and soften the skin, creating a rich treatment that can be especially comforting when hands feel dry, rough or in need of additional nourishment. This type of formula can work particularly well after handwashing or as part of a nighttime routine when there is more time for a richer hand cream to sit on the skin and provide lasting comfort. Overall, each of these five hand creams has something different to offer: L'Occitane is an appealing choice for luxurious everyday nourishment, Aveeno is well suited to gentle and comforting moisture for dry hands, O'Keeffe's is the more intensive option



for extremely rough and hardworking hands, Nivea Q10 Plus combines hydration with care focused on the appearance of ageing skin, and Burt's Bees provides a rich, ingredient-focused treatment featuring honey and grapeseed oil. The best choice ultimately depends on how dry your hands are, how frequently you need to moisturise and whether your priority is lightweight everyday comfort, intensive hydration, skin-smoothing care or a more luxurious hand-care experience, but all five can be useful additions to a routine designed to keep dry hands feeling softer, smoother and more comfortable throughout the day.

# ENTERTAINMENT

## Ravi Kishan gives 'money follows' advice to friends gang in viral AI video

**Mumbai :** What happens when Friends' Joey, Chandler and Ross need some financial advice? Well, what if they called Ravi Kishan? A hilarious AI-edited Friends clip is now going viral which shows the Bollywood actor in the iconic sitcom. In the video, Ravi is seen sharing his now-viral "money follows" philosophy with the trio. Needless to say, the in-

ternet is having a field day.

The AI edit takes a scene from Friends where Phoebe, Rachel and Joey are arguing with Chandler, Ross and Monica about being mindful of their finances while making plans. The edit then adds Ravi Kishan into the conversation, with Joey asking him, "Ravi what would you choose paisa or pehachaan?" The scene cuts to

Ravi's viral moment from his interview with Raj Shamani, where he answers, "Pehchaan. Money follows my brother! Money will run after you and will find you."

Ravi Kishan has become a familiar face in the world of social media memes, with several of his moments finding a second life online. His "Jaldi The Late" remark turned into a popular meme,

while his "Home From Work" slip-up also sparked plenty of jokes and edits. In recent months, clips from his podcasts, including the viral "Money Follows My Brother" moment, have also been widely shared. His expressions, mannerisms, dialogues and even dance moves continue to inspire memes and reels across social media. He told News18, "I enjoy this

because this is me! I'm from AI Pacino to Mr. [Amitabh] Bachchan to Balraj Sahni to Shah Rukh Khan to Michael Jackson to Elvis Presley... Itni saare log mere sharir mein naachte gaate rehte hain. Toh main itni fusions deta rehta hoon ki yeh desh aisa deewana hee rehga. I'm the same guy jisne 20 saal pehle bola tha, 'Zindagi jhandwa, phir bhi ghamandwa.'"



## The odyssey surpasses deadpool & wolverine to become highest-grossing R-rated film



**Los Angeles :** Christopher Nolan's blockbuster epic film 'The Odyssey' has drawn in another record in its celebrated box office journey. As per Variety, the film has officially become the highest-grossing R-rated film of all time with USD 1.352 billion worldwide. With this, it has overtaken the benchmark set by 2024's 'Deadpool & Wolverine,' which collected USD 1.338 billion. 'The Odyssey,' opened in theatres on July 17 and collected a mighty USD 123 million in its domestic debut. Since then, the epic has earned USD

516 million domestically and USD 835 million internationally. Deadpool star Ryan Reynolds celebrated the milestone on social media and wrote, "Congratulations to the entire cast and crew of The Odyssey for becoming the highest grossing R-rated movie of all time. That is one helluva car."

This came days after 'The Odyssey' became the highest-grossing film of Nolan's career. The film has also become the highest-grossing movie of Matt Damon, Anne Hathaway, Robert Pattinson and Tom Hol-

land's respective careers. The film, based on Homer's ancient Greek poem, follows King Odysseus' (Matt Damon) dangerous voyage back to Ithaca after the Trojan War, including battles with mythical creatures, as he attempts to reunite with his wife, Penelope (Anne Hathaway), and son, Telemachus (Tom Holland). The film also stars Zendaya, Robert Pattinson, Charlize Theron, Lupita Nyong'o, John Leguizamo, Elliot Page, Mia Goth, Corey Hawkins, Jon Bernthal, Samantha Morton, Travis Scott and Benny Safdie.

## CINTAA chief Poonam dhillon hospitalised with dengue, recovering

**Mumbai :** Veteran actor Poonam Dhillon is currently receiving medical treatment in Mumbai. This comes amid the tensions happening at the Cine and TV Artists Association (CINTAA), which she heads as president. The film body remains embroiled in an internal dispute.

Poonam Dhillon has been admitted to Lilavati Hospital after being diagnosed with dengue. According to journalist Vickey Lalwani, the actor has been in the hospital for several days and is now recovering. Sharing the update on social media, Lalwani wrote, "Poonam Dhillon has been admitted to Lilavati Hospital, Mumbai. The senior actress has been diagnosed with dengue and has been in the hospital for quite some days now. This journalist texted her this morning, and she said she's recovering. Praying for her full recovery and hoping that she's back home soon."

Dhillon's hospitalisation comes at a time when CINTAA is facing an internal controversy. The actor has recently faced allegations

from the association's general secretary, Upasana Singh, who accused Dhillon and vice president Padmini Kolhapure of running the organisation in a dictatorial manner.

Speaking on a podcast, Singh claimed that several members had resigned from the committee and alleged that show-cause notices were being issued to those who disagreed with Dhillon and her group. The eight members who stepped down are Hemant Pandey, Mukesh Rishi, Sahila Chadha, Heta Parmar, Puneet Issar, Vinu Dara Singh, Vikas Verma and Deepak Parashar. Their resignations were submitted to CINTAA General Secretary Upasana Singh. In their letter, they alleged that Poonam Dhillon, Padmini Kolhapure and some Executive Committee members had increasingly taken control of key decisions.

The body, formed in 1958, is an official trade union for film and television actors and performers based in Mumbai, India, registered under the Indian Trade Union Act.



Upasana Singh told ANI that 11 members had stepped down from CINTAA, with eight of them being elected members of the Executive Committee. According to Singh, the eight members also submitted separate complaints along with their resignation letters, detailing the issues they had raised.

"Out of our 11 members, eight elected members have resigned and submitted their resignations to me. They have also submitted their complaints, stating that Padmini Kolhapure and Poonam Dhillon are misusing their positions," Singh said. Singh further questioned why personal email accounts were being used for official CINTAA matters. She said us-

ing the association's official email system would help ensure that communications remain transparent and that records are available to the organisation when required.

Meanwhile, Poonam Dhillon previously addressed the dispute in a conversation with ETimes. She said she did not want to engage in a public confrontation over the matter. "I don't want to indulge in any sort of mudslinging because it's very unclassy. Most of these allegations show the mindset and frustration of a person who wanted more importance than she received. We have always, at every platform, presented Upasana Singh as the general secretary," Dhillon told ETimes.

## Amid family feud, Krushna Abhishek backs cousin Yashvardhan for Bollywood debut



**Mumbai :** Comedian and actor Krushna Abhishek used social media to express his excitement about uncle Govinda's son Yashvardhan's film debut.

Krushna took to his official Instagram Stories and wrote, "Apne bhai ki picture aa rahi hain... so excited @ahuja\_yashwardan (sic)." He also tagged his aunt Sunita Ahuja, who

will also be making her Bollywood debut alongside her son Yashvardhan. Yashvardhan is all set to step into Bollywood with the forthcoming horror-comedy 'Hero Ki Horrorine'. Made under the direction of Sajid Khan, the project is expected to be out in the cinema halls on January 7, 2027. Yashvardhan has been paired opposite Nitanshi

Goel in his first Bollywood movie, with his mother Sunita also playing his on-screen mother.

In addition to this, Jamie Lever, Chunky Pandey, Brijendra Kala, and Simrat Kaur Randhawa are also expected to be a part of the movie's core cast. Further details regarding the film are still under wraps.

On the personal front, Sunita recently withdrew her divorce case against Govinda. Sunita was captured by the shutterbugs at the Bandra family court in Mumbai with her son, Yashvardhan. As IANS contacted Govinda's manager Shashi Sinha, he confirmed that Sunita had taken back the divorce petition filed against the actor. He told

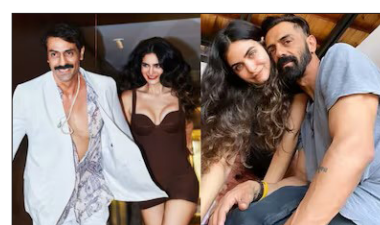
ANS, "The petition Sunita ji had filed in the court earlier; she had gone to withdraw it." Recently, Sunita had made some serious allegations against Govinda regarding his alleged relationship with the young actress Komal Rani Swarnkar.

In response, Govinda also uploaded a video on social media, warning Sunita to be mindful of her language. The 'Partner' actor asked her to refrain from making statements that could be harmful to his reputation. Govinda and Sunita tied the knot in March 1987. However, they kept their marriage under wraps until their daughter Tina was born in 1988.

## Inside Arjun Rampal & Gabriella demetriades' intimate goa court marriage

**Mumbai :** Arjun Rampal and girlfriend Gabriella Demetriades tied the knot in an intimate ceremony in Goa. The couple, who have been in a relationship for eight years, got engaged six years after dating each other and welcomed two sons during these eight years of their life together. As the two tied the knot in a cute ceremony, here's a look at their love story, age gap, children and more.

Arjun Rampal and Gabriella Demetriades have been together since 2018. Rampal was earlier married to Mehr Jesia. Following their separation, he got together with Gabriella, and since 2018, the two have been dating each other. In 2019, a year after being in a relationship, the couple welcomed their first son, Arik. Later, in 2023, they welcomed their second baby, Ariv. Although the two have been dating for quite a long time and have been open about their relationship, it was six years after dating each other



that Arjun announced his engagement to Gabriella in a podcast with Rhea Chakraborty.

Arjun Rampal, born on November 26, 1972, has often spoken about Gabriella and their bond. Gabriella was born in 1987. Arjun and Gabriella have an age gap of 15 years, but despite the difference, the couple has proved to be goals for many. Arjun Rampal, who separated from his first wife in 2018, got divorced from her in 2019. The ex-couple has two daughters, Mahikaa Rampal and Myra Rampal, and continue to co-parent amicably.

Gabriella Demetriades is a South

African model, fashion designer and entrepreneur who has carved a successful career for herself in the fashion and entertainment industries. Born in Gqeberha, formerly known as Port Elizabeth, she stepped into the world of modelling at a young age and began her professional career when she was just 16. Over the years, Gabriella has worked with several prominent brands and gradually expanded her professional journey beyond modelling. She later ventured into fashion design and entrepreneurship, establishing her own identity in the industry. Arjun Rampal and Gabriella reportedly reached the Mapusa Sub-Registrar's office at around 4 pm. Keeping the occasion low-key, both opted for casual outfits rather than turning the registration into an elaborate affair. Sub-Registrar Suraj Vernekar confirmed that their marriage was registered under Goa's Uniform Civil Code.

## Samantha Ruth Prabhu's action-drama maa inti bangaaram now available in Hindi on Sony LIV



**Hyderabad :** Maa Inti Bangaram an action-packed drama starring Samantha Ruth Prabhu, which made a strong impact at the box office, continues to receive appreciation from audiences. Now streaming in Hindi on Sony LIV, the film blends family, emotions, and buried secrets, following a fragile homecoming that takes an unexpected turn. As the film continues to resonate with fans, Samantha Ruth Prabhu

reflects on her journey with it.

Sharing her thoughts on the film and shoots, Samantha said, "Maa Inti Bangaaram wasn't just another film for me. We set out to make a fun, feel-good film, and the joy we had while making it has truly stayed with me. It's a warm and easy-to-enjoy story. I'm happy that it is now available in Hindi on Sony LIV. It's the kind of film you can watch with your fam-

ily over a relaxed Saturday afternoon and a good meal. So just sit back, have fun, and enjoy the ride." Directed by B.V. Nandini Reddy, the film stars superstar Samantha Ruth Prabhu in a powerful and layered titular role, alongside an accomplished ensemble cast featuring Gulshan Devaiah, Diganth Manchale, and Gautami. An action-packed ride Maa Inti Bangaaram, streaming now in Hindi on Sony LIV!

## Major changes for The Vvaan: film being reshot and re-edited under new direction

**Mumbai :** Filmfare has learnt that all is not well behind the scenes of The Vvaan, Sidharth Malhotra and Tamannaah Bhatia's much-hyped folklore fantasy that's been through more than its share of release-date shuffles already. As per sources close to the production, the film is currently undergoing a significant reshoot and re-edit, with the original direction team replaced.

Deepak Mishra, who has helmed the project since its inception, along with the film's original backers, TVF, have been removed from the driver's seat, our sources reveal. Niraj Kothari and Sahir Raza are now said to be overseeing the edit, working closely under the direction of Ektaa Kapoor, whose Balaji Motion Pictures has co-produced the film from the start. Sidharth Malhotra, sources say, personally pushed for 17 addi-



tional days of reshoots, with the actor keen on reworking both the climax and the film's action sequences. It's a request that speaks to the scale of the overhaul underway. What makes this development even more eyebrow-raising is the timeline: The Vvaan is currently locked for a September 25 release, meaning the makers have precious little room

to course-correct before it hits theatres.

The film, presented by Balaji Motion Pictures in association with TVF and 11:11 Productions, has already weathered multiple postponements — first from its original Chhath Puja 2025 window, then May 2026, then August 28, before finally settling on its current September date. Officially,

those delays were attributed to extended post-production and VFX work. Whether the latest shakeup adds further pressure to that timeline remains to be seen. Neither the makers, TVF, nor representatives for Sidharth Malhotra have issued an official statement on the reported changes. We will update this space as more details emerge.

## A Delhi taxi driver was murdered after being lured in by an offline reservation



**New Delhi, Aug 22:** According to authorities on Friday, a 22-year-old cab driver was allegedly abducted and killed after being tricked into taking an offline reservation for Jaipur. His corpse was then disposed of in a Rajasthani jungle. According to the Delhi Police, they have retrieved the victim's automobile from Rajasthan and detained six people, including a minor, in connection with the murder. Ashish Pal, a native of Auraiya, Uttar Pradesh, was identified as the victim. According to cops, on July 20, he was operating the cab when he took the reservation from Sarita Vihar to Jaipur. The incident was initially reported as a Zero FIR at the Mokham-pura police station in Jaipur Rural in Rajasthan and was subsequently transferred to the Sarita Vihar police station in Delhi, where an FIR was registered. According to the FIR, the accused have been charged under multiple sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. "During the journey, an altercation allegedly broke out between the accused and Pal over the fare. The accused assaulted him and subsequently strangled him before concealing his body in the vehicle," a senior police officer said. The body was later taken to Rajasthan and disposed of in a forested area near Mokhampura, he said. A team was formed, and an investigation was taken up. During the investigation, police analysed CCTV footage from the taxi booking point, highways, toll plazas and other locations. Technical surveillance was also used to reconstruct the movement of the vehicle and identify the suspected accused, he said. In order to locate sites and retrieve evidence, the crew also worked in tandem with Rajasthan Police. According to authorities, the inquiry resulted in the arrest of five people, including Anil Jat, Kalu Ram, Sumit, Mangal Deep alias Sanu, and Arjun Rinwa, as well as

the capture of a 16-year-old juvenile. The stolen car was traced to Rajasthan and recovered from the possession of Anil Jat and Kalu Ram by police. The victim's body was also recovered from Rajasthan and identified during the investigation. Police said sustained interrogation and investigation revealed that the accused had allegedly conspired to rob a vehicle after running short of money. After the alleged murder, they are accused of using Pal's mobile phone and cash and attempting to withdraw money using his ATM card. They also allegedly removed the vehicle's number plate and stayed in Ajmer. The investigation further revealed that after reaching Nagaur, the accused disclosed the incident to an acquaintance and attempted to stay away from the area. "One of the accused was subsequently apprehended by Delhi Police at Jaipur Railway Station. The respective roles of the accused are being corroborated through CCTV footage, technical evidence, disclosure statements, witness accounts and other material evidence," the officer said. Rinwa (22), a native of Marwad Mundwa in Rajasthan's Nagaur district, was one of the detained suspects. She had previously been connected to two crimes in the state. Marwad Mundwa is home to Mangal Deep alias Sanu (18), Sumit (20), and Anil Jat (23), according to the police. According to the police, Jat's father, Kalu Ram (29), a resident of Rol village in the Nagaur district, is likewise recorded as having bad character at the Marwar Mundwa police station in Nagaur. The sixteen-year-old was captured in Rajasthan and brought before the appropriate Juvenile Justice Board. According to authorities, he is being handled in compliance with the laws that apply to minors, and more investigation into the matter is in progress.

## India Eyes Series Sweep Against Sri Lanka, with Shubman Gill and Yashasvi Jaiswal Eyeing Big Knocks



**Galle:** In the second and final match against Sri Lanka, which begins in Colombo on Sunday, India will try to win their first foreign Test series in three years with significant innings from captain Shubman Gill and opener Yashasvi Jaiswal. In July 2023, India's most recent overseas Test rubber victory was against the West Indies. Since then, India has split the series away from home with South Africa and England after losing to Australia. Meanwhile, this Indian Test team's reputation was damaged by home losses to South Africa and New Zealand. But Gill's side regained some ground with a 165-run romp in the first Test at Galle, where Sri Lankan spinners often spun a web around visiting batters. Despite the inexperience in the Sri Lankan ranks, the result might have come as a relief for the team and head coach Gautam Gambhir after two shattering home defeats against New Zealand and South Africa. The Galle win has certainly released a pressure valve around the team. If India happen to complete a 2-0 clean sweep, they will have a chance to go up to the fourth spot in the World Test Championship (WTC) rankings with 57.58 percentage points. There is a high possibility that Bangladesh, who are currently fourth in WTC table with 66.67 percentage points post Darwin victory, will lose the second Test against Australia at McKay and drop down to fifth

spot with 55.56 percentage points. Amidst the general elation, India will certainly welcome some runs from Gill and Jaiswal. On the periphery, Gill appears in solid touch, having scored two hundreds in his last six innings. But scratch the cover, there is a tinge of weakness, a pattern-setting dismissals against spin, particularly the left-arm orthodox variation. True to that failure, Gill fell twice to Prabath Jayasuriya at Galle, and he will certainly like to set that unwanted record straight, a blemish on an otherwise impeccable run as team leader. As the skipper, Gill has managed to score 1100 runs in 10 Tests at an average of over 73, a remarkable leap from 1893 runs from 32 Tests at 35 before taking over the team's reins. Then there is also this little matter of registering the first overseas Test series win under his watch, a matter of pride and yardstick of success for any captain. If Gill can merge those two tasks, then India could be hard to stop at the Sinhalese Sports Club. Jaiswal offers a slightly deeper problem. After scoring a hundred against the West Indies at New Delhi last year, the opener has made just one fifty in his last eight innings. Similar to Gill's failings against spinners, Jaiswal has developed a worrying habit of getting dismissed while playing cut or chip against pace bowlers. After getting run out in the first innings at Galle, Jaiswal got out in that fashion in the second

essay. The left-hander tried to cut Asitha Fernando's short pitched delivery, only to feather it to stumper Niroshan Dickwella. It offered little surprise when Jaiswal spent an extended time at nets on Friday at the SSC to rectify that part of his game. India pacers and bowling coach Morne Morkel targeted that line outside the off-stump, trying to lure Jaiswal into that cut or chip over point. But the 24-year-old was equal to the task, letting the balls go past the stumps harmlessly. Now, if he can filter that restraint to the real match atmosphere then another big score might be there for his taking. Kuldeep Yadav is the third member of the eleven that struggled to make an impact at Galle. He had a disappointing outing, taking a solitary wicket from 25 overs across two innings despite the pitch offering considerable assistance. Kuldeep was also the most expensive among the bowlers, leaking over four runs an over in the opening Test. The temptation will be to replace the left-arm wrist spinner with off-spinner Saransh Jain, a strategic move considering the influx of left-arm batters in the Lankan line-up. But dropping a senior bowler after just one match might just give the wrong signals or will the management indeed take that harsh step? Kuldeep's absence from the nets on Friday could be linked to his possible omission from the eleven here, but a final call depends a lot on the pitch here, which was watered in the last two days to retain the hold. From a Sri Lankan perspective, their top-order needs to show a lot more nous to stay in the middle than just playing a plethora of shots and getting out. They will hope that inclusion of in-form Kamil Mishra and Sahan Arachchige will bring a positive turn here.

## Mikel Arteta praises Arsenal's ambition following a flawless start to the championship defense

**London:** Mikel Arteta said that Arsenal's convincing 3-0 victory against Coventry in Friday's Premier League season opener demonstrated the champions' continued desire for trophies. Thanks to goals from Kai Havertz, Bukayo Saka, and Martin Odegaard, Arteta's team easily defeated outclassed Coventry at the Emirates Stadium, continuing where they left off last season. The Gunners are the clear favorites to win the championship, and their dominant performance indicated that their opponents would find it difficult to compete this year. Arteta was encouraged by the way his players set about overwhelming promoted Coventry with their relentless pressing. "They look exactly the same (as last season) to me. What I did transmit to them was to show more desire and earn the right to be better than everyone else," Arteta said. "There was a lot to like from the performance. It was a great result but also the manner we started the game. "It was domination, clarity and understanding. It was really impressive." Arteta hailed the cohesion between his players as they carved open the Coventry defence time and again, with new winger Christos Tzolis impressing on his league debut after joining from Club Brugge. "We were so dominant, we had incredible connections, we were really accurate with the ball," Arteta said. "The players have to be decisive and they were today. They looked really connect-



ed and played with a lot of purpose." Asked if Arsenal's emphatic win -- on the day they signed Aston Villa defender Ezri Konsa -- showed they are stronger than any of their challengers, Arteta said: "No. Because when I look at the squads some of them are incredible and much bigger than ours. "We look to improve and do what we like is right for us and understand the players who can improve us and give us an edge. "Ezri is a player we really like in the defensive line. We recruited a great defender, a great personality, so I'm very pleased." - "Fight for it again" -Brazil midfielder Bruno Guimaraes, a close-season recruit from Newcastle, was sidelined by an injury, but Arteta does not expect him to be out for long. "We don't expect it to be weeks at all," he said. Odegaard hailed Arsenal's ideal opening to the new campaign. "The perfect start. Three goals and a clean sheet. It was really solid," the Gunners midfielder said. "The team's quality is unbelievable, we see that

every day in training. The level we compete at is unbelievable and we all push each other." On Arsenal's belief they can retain the title, Odegaard added: "We don't feel we have to defend anything. We want to do it again and that's the mindset. "Last year is finished now, we want to do it again and we want to attack it and fight for it again." Coventry needed sixty minutes to manage their first touch in the Arsenal penalty area, which is a clear sign of their lack of danger. After a 25-year hiatus, Frank Lampard's team is back in the top division, and the Sky Blues manager acknowledged that Arsenal had taught them a lesson. "Fantastic crew; our lads learned a valuable lesson about the levels. He remarked, "They played like champions." Although it was a challenging game for us, the stadium, the atmosphere at the beginning of the game, and their caliber were all certainly beneficial to us. We don't do well when we give up goals, and that's the truth."

## India is seen by the world as a bright spot of growth due to its political stability

**New Delhi, Aug 22:** On Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that his administration is committed to changes in every area and that India is still doing a number of actions to guaranty sustained development momentum. Speaking at the Economic Times World Leaders Forum, Prime Minister Modi added that the world views India as a beacon of hope and progress because of its political stability and consistency in its policies. India is still taking a number of actions to guaranty sustained development pace. Reforms are our commitment, and India is moving forward with them across all sectors," he stated. The prime minister stated that although the world is worried about development due to the weaponization of resources, India is viewed as a growth hotspot. He said that the NDA administration had a well-defined reform plan with a major emphasis on governance. Higher productivity is being rewarded by incentives



from our government," he stated. According to PM Modi, the past governments' strategy was to keep people in poverty so they would beg the government for even the most basic necessities. He said the licence raj of the previous governments used to add to the burden of unemployment, whereas his government's production-linked incentive model is creating opportunities. "We are not just changing regulations, we are changing the entire policy of regulations. Our government believes that

there should be no regulation for doing something that has not been explicitly prohibited under law," he said. The prime minister said his government is bringing next-generation reforms at the policy level and implementing reforms at the governance level and for ease of living. "We are moving from the 'prohibited-unless-permitted' approach to the 'permitted-unless-prohibited' model," he said. PM Modi said India has moved away from the PLP (Production Linked Punishment) mod-

## Brazil Unfazed By 'Boycott' Calls, Determined To Play Against India

**Kolkata:** For thousands of ardent football fans in India, watching the Brazil national football team and its best players play the Blue Tigers at home is definitely a dream come true. For Indian football, chances to play five-time World Cup champions are rare. A portion of the domestic football community, led by former national team captain Bhaichung Bhutia, is advocating for a "boycott" of the game, claiming that the large sums of money set aside for the prestigious exhibition match would be better used for long-term sports infrastructure and grassroots initiatives.

Sources close to the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) indicated that the governing body is not changing its plans for the October friendly and is still completely unaffected by the increasing rumors in India. On Thursday, a CBF delegation examined the playing field at Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata. Sources stated that the feedback was only a standard preventative step that had been exaggerated, despite later reports suggesting that the grass density on the pitch was low and needed rapid attention to avert potential injury risks to players. According to reports, the field's state will not affect the match's timetable in any way. The Brazilian federation also denied being affected by the calls for a boycott, suggesting that such reactions appear to be driven by local politics. Addressing India's decision to pull out of the inaugural FIFA-ASEAN



Cup in order to accommodate the marquee friendly against Brazil, sources stated that no changes are being considered regarding the fixture, as it has already been officially announced. As for the All India Football Federation's (AIFF) decision to withdraw from the regional tournament, the source added that the CBF was completely unaware of the move. In an official release, Brazil's team coordinator framed the upcoming visit to India as a sincere attempt by the national team to express gratitude to local fans for their long-standing devotion to the Selecao. "We will face Australia, who qualified from the group stage and were eliminated in the second round, but have shown great improvement. Against India, there's the technical aspect and a great deal of gratitude to the Indians, who showed enormous affection and support for the Brazilian National Team during the World Cup. So it's only fair that we go there as a way of thanking them, but also to put on a great performance," said Rodrigo Caetano, the Brazil national team coordinator.

## Andhra tensions as student groups fight on the road and strike each other with sticks

**Visakhapatnam, Aug 21:** A group of about 20 young people battled on Andhra Pradesh's Marikavalasa-Thimmapuram Master Plan Road in Visakhapatnam on Thursday, causing tension and leading to police involvement and the imprisonment of 17 people. The police said that a disagreement between two kids close to Chandram-palem School set off the altercation. After the young people split up into two groups and allegedly approached one another with sticks, what had started out as a fight subsequently became more heated. During the altercation, four persons were allegedly attacked. Police said some of them were suspected to have consumed alcohol before the incident. The situation became tense again later on Thursday night when some of those involved allegedly attempted to confront each other at Shivashakti Nagar on Thimmapuram Road. "A case has been registered against six youths in connection with the incident. Three of them are majors, and three are minors. We are investigating the role of each person involved," CI Balakrishna said. On receiving information about the renewed confrontation, police reached the spot. The young people reportedly fled after seeing the police. 17 of the 20 suspects connected to the event were later located and taken into custody by the police. In order to establish the chronology of events and identify the particular roles of individuals involved, police have registered six cases and are reviewing CCTV video, statements, and other available evidence. "Those who engage in violence or try to disrupt public order will face severe consequences. We urge young people to refrain from using violence to resolve personal conflicts or to take the law into their own hands," CI Balakrishna stated.

## Watch Neeraj Chopra's 88.05-meter throw fail to secure the top spot in the Lausanne Diamond League



**Lausanne:** Neeraj Chopra finished second in the Lausanne Diamond League on Saturday after making his best throw of the 2026 season but losing to Rumesh Pathirage of Sri Lanka once more. With an incredible throw of 88.05 meters on his second try, Chopra momentarily overtook him in the rankings. However, Pathirage reclaimed the lead and went on to win the tournament with a throw of 88.14 meters on his third try. Grenada's Anderson Peters finished third with a best throw of 86.69 meters. Chopra began his

campaign with a throw of 83.54 meters, which initially placed him in second position behind Pathirage. On his second try, the Indian put on his greatest performance of the evening, throwing the javelin 88.05 meters to take the lead. But Pathirage at once raised the standard by throwing 88.14 metres on his third attempt, while Chopra was only able to throw 83.72 metres with his next throw before committing a fault on his fourth. The athlete who had won two Olympic medals skipped his fifth try, and Pathirage also missed his

shot, which left the Indian with only one more chance to catch up with his competitor. However, Chopra was unable to achieve the necessary distance in his last throw, managing only a throw of just over 82 metres while Pathirage secured victory. This was the third instance during the 2026 season that Pathirage had finished above Chopra; the Sri Lankan had previously defeated the Indian with a throw of 88.68 metres before winning the gold medal ahead of Chopra, who took silver at the Commonwealth Games. Although he didn't win the match, Chopra's throw of 88.05 metres was a considerable advantage since it was his longest throw of the season. Only the top six competitors in the men's javelin standings are automatically eligible for the Diamond League Final at the conclusion of the season; additional slots are available through national or international wildcards, therefore the Lausanne meeting was also important for Chopra's effort to qualify.

# Women’s Hockey World Cup: India’s 0-2 Loss to Netherlands Hurts Their Semifinal Hopes

**New Delhi :** The Indian team produced yet another spirited defensive performance at the women’s hockey World Cup, but this time it wasn’t enough to stop the reigning Olympic champions, the Netherlands. The Indian eves were beaten 0-2 in Amstelveen, thanks to penalty corner goals from Yibbi Jansen and Frederique Matla. The loss meant India remain on one point in the group as the Netherlands all but confirmed their spot in the semi-finals. India will face Australia in their final phase two match on Sunday, August 23, which will now be a must-win game for Sjoerd Marijne and his side. First of all, it was a bit weird to see the team jerseys for this contest. India were in



their bright saffron/orange kits while Netherlands was wearing their light blue jerseys. Who would have thought this would happen in Amstelveen a few years ago? The next big talking point was how it was a battle between two best friends in Sjoerd Marijne and Raoul Ehren. Both men are business partners and were coming face-to-face for the

first time on the hockey field. But once the handshakes were done and the teams got underway, the gulf between them was evident. Netherlands are eyeing their third consecutive Women’s World Cup crown. They came into the contest with a perfect record and 15 goals to their name. 10 of them were penalty comers. Six of those goals came from Yibbi

Jansen. The Dutch were on the offensive from the get-go, and they got a penalty corner in the second minute. Yibbi Jansen didn’t make any mistakes and finished it off with ease to give the Dutch the early lead. The Indian team looked clearly rattled as the ball was lost in midfield and the Dutch launched an attack, that led to a second PC in the fifth minute. Jansen was on hand to execute another well-taken PC, but this time Bichu Devi was up to the task to prevent the goal. She was called into action once again as the Netherlands regained the ball in midfield as Freeke Moes unleashed another shot on goal. By this time, the Dutch had made five circle entries, with India having nothing to show.

# Vaughan’s Stark Verdict: Never Seen Pakistan So Timid After Crushing Headingley Rout Against England

**New Delhi:** Former England captain Michael Vaughan has warned that Pakistan are in a troubling position after their heavy first-Test defeat at Headingley, admitting he “really fears” for a side he felt looked more timid than any Pakistan team he had previously seen. England crushed Pakistan by an innings and 103 runs in a one-sided contest that lasted barely three days, with the hosts completing victory before tea despite losing more than half a day’s play to rain. Joe Root’s return as England’s permanent captain could hardly have begun better. England recovered from the turmoil surrounding their Test setup following the series defeat by New Zealand eight weeks ago, with Ben Stokes stepping

down as captain and Brendon McCullum relieved of his red-ball duties. After England added 43 runs to their overnight score to reach 409 and secure a first-innings lead of 238, their pace attack dismantled Pakistan for just 135 in 37.3 overs. Josh Tongue and Ollie Robinson claimed three wickets apiece in the second innings, while Jofra Archer finished with 3-50 to complete a commanding performance from England’s seamers. Pakistan’s batting never threatened to make a contest of the chase. Mohammad Rizwan top-scored with only 41, while Imam-ul-Haq fell without a run on the board for the second time in the match. The gulf between the sides prompted a bleak assessment from Vaughan,



who was speaking on BBC Test Match Special. “They’ve been absolutely blown away. They’ve been hammered. I’ve never seen them look so timid,” Vaughan said. “The tactical side wasn’t there. The skill level and the class between the sides, Pakistan look a long way short.” Vaughan’s concerns extend beyond one heavy defeat. Pakistan have

struggled for consistency in Test cricket, with their latest collapse raising fresh questions over the direction of the team. “I look at this side and feel quite sad watching them this week,” Vaughan said. “I’ve seen many Pakistan sides play and this side just seem to be lacking all that spirit and fight we’ve become accustomed to seeing.”

# FIFA Fines Argentina Rs 3.64 Crore, Bans Players After World Cup Final Chaos



**Mumbai :** FIFA has punished the Argentine Football Association (AFA) and several members of Argentina’s squad and coaching staff for disciplinary violations arising from the 2026 World Cup, including the confrontation that followed the final on July 19. The Argentine Football Association (AFA) has been ordered to pay \$321,000 in fines after FIFA

found multiple disciplinary violations during the World Cup. Among the incidents cited was a banner displayed by some Argentina players after their semi-final victory over England. The message read “Las Malvinas Son Argentinas”, translating to “The Falklands are Argentine”. Argentina will also be required to play their next home fixture with the stadium operating at

just 50 per cent of its normal capacity. FIFA has suspended a further stadium-capacity restriction, along with 100,000 USD of the financial penalty, for a probationary period. As part of the disciplinary measures, another 100,000 USD from the fine must be invested in an anti-discrimination programme. The governing body has separately punished four members of Argentina’s delegation for their involvement in the post-final altercations. A Spanish player has also received a disciplinary sanction in connection with the incident. Leandro Paredes has received the heaviest punishment among the Argentina players, with the midfielder suspended for 10 matches and fined USD 90,000.

# Michael Jordan’s High School Snub Fueled His Rise to Six NBA Championship Titles

**Mumbai :** Michael Jordan is remembered for many things: six NBA championships, game-winning shots, the Chicago Bulls dynasty and, of course, a competitive streak that seemed to follow him everywhere. But before all of that, there was a list. Jordan was a sophomore at Laney High School in Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1978 and hoped to make the varsity basketball team. When the names were posted, he realised his was missing, while that of his classmate Leroy Smith was on the list. For a teenager who hated losing, it stung deeply, and the story has since become one of the



most famous tales in basketball. Jordan was supposedly “cut” from the varsity team, went home, worked harder and eventually became Michael Jordan. Except, the real story is a little more complicated. Jordan did not make Laney’s varsity team

as a sophomore, but he was not removed from the basketball programme altogether. Instead, he was placed on the junior varsity squad, where most younger players competed. Laney was returning 14 of its 15 varsity players, while Jordan, who

was still relatively small for varsity basketball at around 5 feet 9 inches to 5 feet 11 inches according to different accounts, was competing for a severely limited number of spots. The final opening went to Smith, who stood 6 feet 7 inches. Still, facts and feelings can be two different things. Jordan later spoke about how much it bothered him to see the list without his name. He remembered being angry, particularly because Smith had made the team. The NBA’s own profile of Jordan states that he did not make the varsity squad as a skinny sophomore. However, he had grown to 6 feet 3

inches by the summer before his junior year and was beginning the climb that would eventually turn him into one of basketball’s biggest stars. So, did one missed varsity spot magically create the six-time NBA champion? Not really. That would make for a neat motivational poster, but it would also oversimplify what actually happened. Jordan was already fiercely competitive, and people who knew him before the NBA have described that trait as part of his personality long before he became famous. But the varsity disappointment gave that competitiveness something specific to hold on to.

# Mitchell Starc Smiles as Wife Alyssa Healy Interviews Him After Fiery Mackay Spell

**New Delhi:** Mitchell Starc had already put together a morning to remember in Mackay before his post-session interview took an unexpectedly familiar turn. After ripping through Bangladesh with 6/12, the Australian quick walked off the field to find former Australia women’s captain and his wife, Alyssa Healy, waiting with a microphone and a few questions of her own. Starc’s spell helped Australia bowl Bangladesh out for just 64, their fourth-lowest Test total, after their shock nine-wicket defeat in Darwin. Speaking to Fox Sports at lunch, Healy mixed the cricket with some familiar banter as Starc walked off the field with a huge smile. “Yeah, who would have thought they’d stitch this one up? I paid for dinner last night. Does that mean it’s now your turn?” Healy asked. “You’re paid the bigger bucks than I am,” Starc replied. Healy then turned to the cricket, asking whether winning the toss and choosing to bowl was exactly what Australia had hoped for.



“You said it before, you’ve played here more than the rest of us, but, yeah, I mean, we clearly weren’t at our best last week,” Starc said. “To get first use of that wicket, a lot of the Queenslanders here have said it’s a lot like the Gabba. So, yeah, to make first use of that in the first session, you can’t be too unhappy. Six in the first session, can’t beat that. Obviously a little bit of anger. It’s worked well so far, hopefully we can keep it up.” Starc had every reason to be pleased. He removed Shadman Islam with the first ball of the Test, completed his five-for in just 22 deliveries and then returned

to take the final Bangladesh wicket, dismissing Shoriful Islam to finish with 6/12. The spell was exactly the response Australia needed after their defeat in Darwin. Starc dismissed Shadman, Tanzid Hasan, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Mominul Haque, Litton Das and Shoriful as Bangladesh were bundled out for 64. His opening delivery also created Test history. Starc became the first bowler to take a wicket with the first ball of a Test on four occasions. His fifth wicket took him to 440 Test wickets, moving him past South African great Dale

Steyn’s 439 and into 10th place on the all-time list. Pat Cummins added 3/25, while Josh Hazlewood claimed the other wicket as Australia’s bowling attack completed the collapse. Starc’s comment about Healy having played at the venue more than most of his teammates was well founded. The former Australia women’s captain has enjoyed several productive outings at the Great Barrier Reef Arena. She scored 77 against India in an ODI in 2021 and smashed 70 from 44 balls for Australia A against India A in 2025. There was also some extra humour behind the interview. Healy had recently blind-ranked a group of elite fast bowlers and, rather brutally, placed her own husband at the bottom. six-wicket haul in Mackay was a fairly convincing response. Australia’s day did not remain completely one-sided, though. Bangladesh hit back with the ball and reduced the hosts to 50/3 by tea, leaving the second Test finely poised after Starc’s extraordinary opening spell.

# Continental Tour: Animesh Kujur, Gurindervir Singh Target Asian Games Boost Through Strong Performances

**New Delhi:** Last year, the Continental Tour felt like a celebration of the world of athletics coming to India. This year, however, despite the competition being bigger and better, the mood is different, with the meet largely being viewed as another important preparation event ahead of the Asian Games. Bhubaneswar will once again host the prestigious World Athletics Continental Tour on Saturday, August 22.

The meet has been upgraded to the Silver category this year, marking another step for the Athletics Federation of India as it looks to strengthen its standing on the global calendar and build towards several major meets India is set to host over the next few years. The competition will feature 187 elite track and field athletes from 27 nations, including 36 competitors ranked inside the top 50 in the World Athletics rankings. Leading the field is Nigeria’s World No. 10 shot put star Chukwue-



buka Enekwechi, a Commonwealth Games champion and Paris Olympics finalist. Zambia’s Muzala Samukonga, the World No. 6 and Paris 2024 Olympic Games men’s 400m bronze medalist, was initially named in the lineup but does not feature in the updated start list. The one-day meet will feature 18 disciplines, split equally between men and women. The men’s programme includes the 100m, 400m, 800m, 110m hurdles, high jump, long

jump, shot put and javelin throw, while the women’s events are the 100m, 400m, 1500m, 100m hurdles, high jump, long jump, javelin throw and discus throw. Along with crucial World Athletics ranking points, the top performers will compete for cash prizes of 1,600 USD for first place, 1,200 USD for second and 900 USD for third. This meet marks the start of a crucial final phase in India’s build-up to the Asian Games. Several athletes selected for the event will

compete here before joining a camp until September 8, followed by another camp in Japan to put the final touches on their preparation. Among the leading Indian names in action are Animesh Kujur, Gurindervir Singh, Vishal TK, Kartik Karkera, Murali Sreesankar and Jyothi Yarraji. The competition will also be tough in the field events. Two Commonwealth javelin finalists, Yashvir Singh and Rohit Yadav, will feature alongside Maharashtra’s Shivam Lokhare, who made a rapid rise last year. Animesh’s coach Martin Owens, who also oversees the Reliance High Performance Centre in Odisha, said the focus would be on producing fast times on Saturday. Neither Animesh nor Gurindervir, two of India’s fastest sprinters, managed to qualify for their respective finals at the Commonwealth Games this year. The Continental Tour gives both an opportunity to get their seasons back on track.

# Meet Mondo Duplantis: World Record-Setter by Day, Musician by Night

**New Delhi :** Armand “Mondo” Duplantis is adding another dimension to his sporting stardom. The Swedish pole vault sensation has unveiled a new song titled Gold, which will serve as the official anthem for World Athletics’ inaugural Ultimate Championship. The track was released on Friday ahead of the high-profile event in Budapest, scheduled from September 11 to 13. The competition will bring together Olympic champions, world champions and Diamond League winners, with athletes competing across three evening sessions. A total prize pool of \$10 million is on offer, while individual gold medal winners will pocket \$150,000. Music is not entirely new territory for the two-time Olympic champion. The 26-year-old has

explored the creative side for several years and made his musical debut in 2025 with the single Bop. Despite holding multiple world records in pole vault, Duplantis has previously spoken about harbouring ambitions beyond athletics, revealing that winning a Grammy remains one of his dreams. According to World Athletics, Gold was co-written by Duplantis alongside Carl Silvergran and Oscar Chase, with Chase also taking charge of production duties. “I wrote the song around representing something that’s a lot bigger than yourself,” Duplantis said in the announcement, as quoted by AP. “I think that’s what we all do when we’re on the track. We represent our family, our team, our coaches, and I love that concept. Music and sports are the two



things that bring people together in the best way, and Gold’ is an expression of that.” The song’s music video was shot in Budapest and blends present-day

footage with clips from Duplantis’ early years in the sport, offering a glimpse into his journey from promising youngster to global superstar.

Speaking previously to the Olympics channel, Duplantis explained that making music provides a valuable escape from the pressures of competition and serves as a creative outlet away from athletics. World Athletics said the anthem will feature prominently throughout the Ultimate Championship, becoming part of both the television broadcast and the in-stadium entertainment experience. Duplantis is also set to perform the song live during the event’s closing ceremony. “The Ultimate is purposefully designed to showcase the talents and passions of our sport’s biggest stars, on and off the track,” World Athletics President Sebastian Coe said. “Mondo is one of our most recognizable and accomplished athletes, and we could not

be more excited that he is the one who created the Ultimate Anthem.” The Ultimate Championship is expected to be held once every two years as part of World Athletics’ long-term plans for the competition. Swedish pole vault champion Armand Mondo Duplantis has released ‘Gold,’ the official anthem for World Athletics’ inaugural Ultimate Championship in Budapest (Sept 11-13). The event features top athletes competing for a \$10 million prize pool. Duplantis, a two-time Olympic champ and world record holder, co-wrote and produced the song, blending his sports journey with music, his creative outlet beyond athletics. He will perform live at the closing ceremony, highlighting the event’s aim to showcase athletes’ talents on and off the track.