

Meghalaya Rejects Assam Blame Over Guwahati Floods; Nagaland Denies Upper Assam Role

Shillong, Aug 01: Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister Prestone Tynsong has rejected Assam's repeated allegations linking Guwahati's flash floods to hill-cutting and construction activities in Meghalaya, asserting that the neighbouring state cannot be held responsible for Assam's flooding merely because of geographical differences. Tynsong said Meghalaya is situated at a higher elevation while Assam has large low-lying areas, making downstream water flow a natural geographical

phenomenon. He stressed that Meghalaya cannot be expected to alter its geography and said the state should not be singled out whenever Assam faces flooding. The remarks come amid repeated criticism from Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who has linked Guwahati's flash floods to hill-cutting and construction in Meghalaya's Ri-Bhoi district, particularly around the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM). Tynsong also pointed to the

need for better infrastructure within Assam to address the problem. Referring to the proposed six-lane ring road near Guwahati, he said adequate drainage systems and properly designed culverts would be essential to ensure that the project does not obstruct the natural flow of water. He maintained that both Assam and Meghalaya must take responsibility for issues within their respective jurisdictions instead of shifting blame across the border. The Meghalaya Deputy CM also highlighted the unpre-



dictable nature of extreme weather events, saying the intensity of flash floods can sometimes exceed what

can be anticipated through immediate forecasting. Meanwhile, the Konyak Union (KU) has strong-

ly rejected allegations that recent flooding in parts of Assam was caused by a hydroelectric dam or illegal mining activities in Nagaland's Mon district. In a statement, the union described the allegations as "baseless, misleading and without any factual foundation". It was responding to claims circulating on social media and reports quoting Assam MLA Akhil Gogoi and Assamese Youth Forum general secretary Akash Saikia, who allegedly linked the floods to water released

from a purported "Dikhu Hydro Electric Project" and illegal mining in Naginimora. The KU clarified that no hydroelectric dam or reservoir exists in Mon district. It said the proposed Dikhu Hydro Electric Project is only a proposal listed by the Central Electricity Authority and has neither been constructed nor commissioned. The union also dismissed claims that illegal gold mining in Naginimora contributed to the flooding, saying its field assessment found no evidence to sub-

stantiate the allegations. According to the KU, the flooding originated in the higher hill ranges of Mon district after exceptionally heavy rainfall and cloud-burst-like downpours. The intense rainfall triggered landslides, flash floods and overflowing rivers before affecting areas including Naginimora and Tizit. The union said the July 19-20 disaster claimed 11 lives and displaced more than 650 families, while homes, schools, agricultural fields and infrastructure were damaged.

Nagaland bars new structures along highways

Kohima, Aug 01: The Nagaland government has prohibited the construction or operation of any new dhaba, eatery or commercial structure within the Right of Way (RoW) of all National Highways with immediate effect. In a notification, the Department of Works and Housing (Works Branch) said the directive was issued in compliance with the Supreme Court's orders dated April 13 and July 13, 2026, in Suo Moto Writ Petition (Civil) No. 9 of 2025 (Phalodi accident vs National Highways Authority of India and others). The department directed all Deputy Commissioners to strictly enforce the demolition and removal of all new or existing unauthorised structures located within the Right



of Way of National Highways in accordance with the Supreme Court's judgment. It said the enforcement process would be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the CNH Act and the Standard Op-

erating Procedure (SOP) dated August 7, 2025. The directive follows Supreme Court orders issued in April after fatal highway accidents in Rajasthan and Telangana. Observing that national high-

ways account for nearly 30 per cent of road fatalities despite constituting only about 2 per cent of India's road network, the apex court ordered the removal of unauthorised dhabs and commercial structures within highway

Right of Way (RoW), prohibited new constructions in highway safety zones, and directed strict enforcement by highway authorities and state administrations to improve road safety. Nagaland's Works and Housing Department reiterated that the directive is not only a legal obligation but also a moral responsibility to safeguard lives. By prohibiting new establishments and removing existing unauthorised structures, the government aims to ensure unobstructed traffic flow, minimize accident risks, and create safer travel conditions for commuters. The department further assured that enforcement will be carried out in a fair and transparent manner, with due process followed under the CNH Act.

Assam Cabinet approves compressed biogas policy 2026

Guwahati, Aug 01: The State Cabinet on Friday approved the Assam Compressed Biogas (CBG) Policy, 2026, aimed at promoting clean energy and creating a comprehensive framework for the development of the sector in the state. The policy was formulated in alignment with the national Model State CBG Policy, for a comprehensive framework designed to convert the state's organic waste into clean energy. The Commissionerate of Industries and Commerce is designated as the state nodal agency, and it is responsible for notifying the policy and managing the single window portal for time-bound project execution. Comprehensive incentive framework under the policy will provide a capital subsidy of Rs. 0.50 crore per TPD of



installed capacity, subject to a ceiling of Rs. 20 crore per project and power tariff support of Rs. 2 per unit for 5 years. Land support measures including Land allotment through dedicated land bank, concessional lease of government land, facilitation of panchayat

land lease, exemption from stamp duty, registration fee and land conversion charges apart from fiscal support measures including reimbursement of up to 100 per cent of net SGST for 5 years and Interest subsidy on term loans will also be extended.

Assam Agriculture Minister launches paddy seedling nursery for flood-hit farmers

Guwahati, Aug 01: Assam Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation and Parliamentary Affairs, Pijush Hazarika, on Friday visited the flood-affected Demow and Nazira Legislative Assembly Constituencies (LACs) of Sivasagar district to review the relief and rehabilitation measures being undertaken by the district administration. He also reviewed the initiatives taken by the Agriculture Department to assist flood-affected farmers. Earlier in the day, the Minister, accompanied by Cabinet Minister Sushanta Borgohain, visited 2 No. Bhatgaj Gaon under Demow LAC and inaugurated a community paddy seedling nursery

established for flood-affected farmers. The nursery has been set up to ensure the timely availability of quality paddy seedlings to farmers whose crops have been damaged by the recent floods. Interacting with farmers and departmental officials, Hazarika reiterated the State Government's commitment to restoring agricultural activities at the earliest. He said that community nurseries have been established across the flood-affected areas so that farmers receive quality paddy seedlings in time and are able to resume cultivation without delay. Later, the Minister, along with Guardian Minister of Sivasagar Bimal Borah,

visited Nazira and chaired a review meeting on the prevailing flood situation at the Office of the Co-District Commissioner. The meeting was attended by MLA of Nazira LAC Shri Mayur Borgohain, the Director of Agriculture, Assam, the District Commissioner of Sivasagar, officials of the Nazira Co-District Administration, senior officers of the Agriculture Department and other line departments. During the meeting, Hazarika reviewed the overall flood situation, the progress of rescue and relief operations, and the measures being taken for the rehabilitation of flood-affected people. Stressing that rehabilitation



is now the Government's highest priority, he directed the officials concerned to immediately initiate the reconstruction of houses that had

been damaged or completely destroyed in the floods. The Minister said that they would ensure the timely availability of es-

sential construction materials, including bamboo and CGI sheets, so that affected families could rebuild their homes at the earliest. He also emphasised the need to restore normalcy in the flood-affected areas as quickly as possible and ensure that relief and assistance reach every affected family without delay. He further directed the Health Department and the Public Health Engineering Department to accord the highest priority to safeguarding public health and ensuring the supply of safe drinking water in the flood-hit areas. Hazarika observed that Nazira Legislative Assembly Constituency has been the

worst affected by the recent floods. He said that rehabilitation efforts in the constituency would receive the highest priority. In particular, he stated that rebuilding houses for families rendered homeless by the floods, ensuring adequate healthcare, and providing safe drinking water and sanitation facilities would be the Government's immediate focus. He also directed the district administration to take immediate steps to clean school buildings so that educational activities could resume at the earliest. The Minister further reviewed the preparedness of other departments and instructed the officials concerned to take all necessary

measures for speedy restoration. The Minister also reviewed the Agriculture Department's preparedness for post-flood restoration of agricultural activities, including the supply of paddy seedlings through community nurseries, assessment of crop losses and other interventions aimed at supporting flood-affected farmers. The Minister also reviewed the Agriculture Department's preparedness for post-flood restoration of agricultural activities, including the supply of paddy seedlings through community nurseries, assessment of crop losses and other interventions aimed at supporting flood-affected farmers.

Four Militants Arrested in Separate Operations Across Manipur

Imphal, Aug 01: Four alleged militants linked to three proscribed outfits were arrested during separate operations in Imphal West, Imphal East and Tengnoupal districts of Manipur. A cadre of the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), identified as Khunthoklemba Oinam (30), was arrested in Imphal West on Friday in connection with an alleged hand grenade attack on a house at Yumnam Leikai on July 28, an official said. In a separate operation on the same day, security forces arrested a cadre of PREPAK (PRO), identified as Ningthoujam Nanao Meitei (41), from Imphal East district. Meanwhile, two alleged members of the proscribed People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) were apprehended near the India-Myanmar border in Tengnoupal district on Thursday, police said. Further investigation into the arrests and the activities of the accused is underway. The operations underscore the commitment of law en-



forcement agencies to maintaining peace and stability in Manipur, a state that has long grappled with insurgency-related challenges. Authorities reiterated that the government remains focused on combining enforcement with dialogue, rehabilitation, and development initiatives to address the root causes of militancy. Officials emphasized that further investigation into the arrests and the activities of the accused is underway. The detainees are being interrogated to ascertain their roles in recent incidents of violence and to uncover potential links to wider organizational strate-

gies. Security agencies believe that the arrests will help disrupt militant networks and reduce the risk of planned attacks in sensitive areas. The operations underscore the commitment of law enforcement agencies to maintaining peace and stability in Manipur, a state that has long grappled with insurgency-related challenges. Authorities reiterated that the government remains focused on combining enforcement with dialogue, rehabilitation, and development initiatives to address the root causes of militancy. Meanwhile, in Tengnoupal district near the India-Myanmar border,

Centre Sanctions ₹379.35 Crore for Assam as Advance Flood Relief under SDRF

Guwahati, Aug 01: Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah has approved the advance release of Rs 2,117.85 crore from the Central share of the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to support the States affected by floods during the ongoing southwest monsoon of 2026. Of that amount, Assam has been sanctioned Rs 379.35 crore as advance release of the first instalment. Shah said that since the onset of the monsoon, the Government of India has been continuously monitoring the flood situation in close coordination with the State Governments. The Central Government has extended all possible assistance, including pre-deployment of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams and logistical support from the Ministry of Defence, wherever required. Inter-Ministerial Central Teams (IMCTs) have already been deputed to Arunachal Pradesh and Assam to assess the damages. Two IMCT vis-



its have been undertaken in Assam in view of the severity of the flood situation.

On the request of the Government of Nagaland, an IMCT is also being constituted for the State. Out of the seven affected States, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha and Nagaland have already received the first

instalment of SDRF for the financial year 2026-27. In order to ensure timely availability of funds for relief operations, the Union Home Minister has approved the advance release of the second instalment of the Central share of SDRF to Himachal Pradesh and Odisha. Further, considering

the urgent need for resources for relief measures, advance release of an advance amount of first instalment of the Central share of SDRF has also been approved for Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat and Maharashtra by relaxing the documentary requirements under the applicable guidelines. The

assistance approved for the affected States includes Rs 44.55 crore to Arunachal Pradesh as advance release of the first instalment of the Central share of SDRF for the financial year 2026-27. Gujarat has been approved Rs 500 crore as advance release of the first instalment. Himachal Pradesh, which has already received the first instalment of SDRF for 2026-27, has been sanctioned Rs 193.95 crore as advance release of the second instalment of the Central share. Maharashtra has been approved Rs 500 crore as advance release of the first instalment. Odisha, which had already received the first instalment, has been sanctioned Rs 500 crore as advance release of the second instalment. With this approval, a total of Rs 2,117.85 crore has been made available to the flood-affected States to strengthen their ongoing relief and response measures.

Shree Cement Hearing Ends Amid Protests, Violence in East Jaintia Hills

Shillong, Aug 01: A public hearing on Shree Cement Limited's proposed limestone mining project at Lum Syrman in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district concluded amid heavy security, protests and allegations of restricted public participation, deepening opposition to the proposed mining venture.

The hearing, conducted by the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board (MSPCB) and district administration, was held at 8 am, two hours ahead of the originally scheduled 10 am start. Officials later described the proceedings as successful, while local pressure groups and affected residents questioned the legitimacy of the consultation, alleging that several opponents and landowners were prevented from reaching the venue.

The proposed Lum Syrman Limestone Block-A covers about 217.394 hectares and involves limestone production along with associated crushing facilities. The project has faced sustained opposition over land rights, environmental concerns and the participation of affected communities. Earlier proceedings in May were also disrupted by unrest, forcing authorities to call off the hearing at that stage.

Members of the Jaintia Students' Union (JSU), Khasi Students' Union (KSU), Hynniewtrep Na-



tional Youth Federation (HNYF) and Jaintia National Council (JNC) alleged that access to the venue was obstructed from the early morning. They claimed portions of roads had been dug up and trenches created, preventing vehicles carrying protesters and residents from reaching the hearing site.

Residents and landowners from Shnongrim, identified as one of the areas likely to be affected by the proposed mining activity, also alleged that they were denied entry despite producing official communications identifying them as affected parties.

Tensions had already escalated on Thursday night when an ambulance sent

by the JSU to assist people affected by tear gas was allegedly attacked with stones near Cement Bazar. The organisation claimed the vehicle was damaged and that its driver and medical attendants were injured. The JSU said it would lodge a First Information Report over the incident.

The situation was further heightened by the detention of several JNC leaders on Thursday night, including president Sambormi Lyngdoh and general secretary Wanshwa Suting. The Jaintia Students' Movement subsequently issued a 24-hour ultimatum to the district administration, demanding their uncondition-

al release and warning of intensified agitation.

At the hearing venue, security remained tight as Additional District Magistrate Alertson Nongbri and MSPCB Environmental Engineer YFH Laloo chaired the proceedings. Supporters of the project, including the Dolloi of Elaka Nongkhlieh and village representatives, maintained that the proposed development could create employment and strengthen the local economy, provided that statutory requirements and environmental safeguards were followed.

After the proceedings, ADM Nongbri expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the hearing, stating

that it had "went well."

Opposition groups, however, disputed that assessment. A JSU representative questioned how the exercise could be considered a public hearing if opponents were allegedly unable to attend. Protesters also alleged that police failed to prevent attacks involving stones and accused the authorities of allowing conditions that restricted participation.

Leaders and residents who could not reach the venue later gathered at Umpleng, where they reiterated their opposition to the project and demanded action against those allegedly responsible for blocking access and attacking protesters.

The dispute follows months of opposition to the Shree Cement proposal. The Meghalaya government has maintained that the project must comply with statutory and environmental procedures, while the company's proposed mining operation has become a focal point for concerns over land ownership, environmental protection, community participation and the future of agricultural areas in East Jaintia Hills.

The latest confrontation has widened the divide between the project's supporters and local community organisations, raising the prospect of further protests and legal and administrative challenges over the proposed mining project.

Arunachal Launches Statewide Pharmacy Inspection Drive

Itanagar, Aug 01: Health authorities in Arunachal Pradesh have launched a statewide inspection drive targeting retail pharmacies and pharmaceutical outlets to strengthen compliance with drug safety regulations and curb violations of licensing, storage and dispensing norms.

The enforcement campaign was ordered by Gebomb Taying, Assistant Drugs Controller and Controlling Authority under the Drugs Control Administration of the Directorate of Health Services. Zonal licensing authorities and drug control officers across the state have been directed to begin immediate inspections following complaints of unauthorised operations, improper

medicine storage and the absence of qualified pharmacists during business hours.

The inspections are being conducted under the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. Enforcement teams will examine drug licences and other mandatory records, verify purchase invoices and stock registers, and inspect storage facilities, including cold-chain arrangements required for medicines that need controlled temperatures.

Officials will also check pharmacy inventories for expired, sub-standard, counterfeit or unauthorised medicines and assess whether the establishments meet prescribed infrastructure requirements. Particular attention will be

given to the qualifications and physical presence of registered pharmacists responsible for dispensing medicines.

District medical officers have been instructed to extend logistical support to the inspection teams to facilitate the statewide exercise. All officers conducting the inspections have been directed to submit detailed audit and compliance reports by August 14.

The drive is aimed at tightening regulatory oversight of pharmaceutical outlets across Arunachal Pradesh, preventing the sale of unsafe or unauthorised medicines and ensuring that drugs are stored and dispensed in accordance with prescribed safety standards by qualified professionals.

Government Land Eviction Sparks Tension

Agartala, Aug 01: Tension surfaced in Bishalgarh subdivision of Tripura's Sepahijala district after a government drive to reclaim allegedly encroached land met with protests from residents of Muslim Para under Deendayal Gram Panchayat.

The Bishalgarh sub-divisional administration visited the area following a written complaint submitted to the District Magistrate by local residents and elected representatives, seeking verification of alleged occupation of government land. During the on-site inspection, 12 families were asked to produce valid documents establishing their ownership or legal right over the land they occupied.

According to the administration, the families could not produce valid land ownership documents during the inspection. The land in question has been identified as government khas land, on which houses have allegedly been constructed.

Following the verification, Deputy Collector and Magistrate Prosenjit Das, acting on the instructions of the Sepahijala District Magistrate, served notices on the 12 families. They have been directed to appear before the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Bishalgarh, on the scheduled hearing date and submit all relevant documents, including land deeds and other records supporting their claims.

The administrative team subsequently returned from the area after serving the notices as residents protested against the proposed eviction action. Das warned that failure to establish a valid legal claim over the occupied land could result in further action under the law. "If they fail to do so, action will be taken against them in accordance with the law," he said.

The administration's move is part of efforts to verify and reclaim government land allegedly under unauthorised occupation. The next hearing is expected to determine whether the families possess valid documents establishing their rights over the properties.

Relief Reaches Flood Hit Families in Golaghat

Guwahati, Aug 01: Relief efforts have intensified in flood-affected areas of Golaghat district as receding waters leave behind damaged farmland, destroyed agricultural stocks and growing sanitation concerns in several villages.

The Pioneer Foundation, in collaboration with Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL), distributed essential supplies among flood-hit residents of Koliapani Gaon Panchayat under the Dergaon constituency to help families cope with the immediate impact of the flooding.

Although water levels have started falling across the affected areas, hundreds of bighas of agricultural land remain submerged, causing significant losses for farming communities. Paddy stocks have also been damaged,



leaving many agricultural households facing difficulties in restoring their livelihoods.

The prolonged presence of stagnant water has further raised concerns over sanitation and public health. Inundated villages have reported foul odours and unhygienic conditions, increasing the risk of disease in the aftermath of the flooding. As part of the relief initiative, families received food grains, phenyl, bleaching powder, soaps, clothing and other essen-

tial household supplies. The family of Farkating Mozamil Hussain also contributed food items and garments through the foundation for distribution among affected residents.

Government agencies and non-governmental organisations continue to coordinate relief and rehabilitation measures across flood-affected parts of Golaghat, with efforts focused on meeting immediate needs and supporting communities as floodwaters recede.

Meghalaya Panel Seeks Action on Rs 29-Crore Industrial Loan, Power Irregularities

Shillong, Aug 01: The Committee on Public Undertakings (COPU) of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly has directed state authorities to intensify recovery efforts for nearly ₹29 crore outstanding from Byrnihat-based CMJ Breweries Pvt. Ltd. and sought a detailed response from the Power Department over financial and procedural lapses flagged in the implementation of rural electrification schemes.

The decisions were taken during a review meeting chaired by legislator Charles Marngar, where the committee examined the performance of public sector undertakings and audit observations of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) for the financial year ended March 31, 2022.

Officials informed the

committee that CMJ Breweries had originally borrowed ₹61.94 crore from the Meghalaya Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC). The company has repaid ₹23.98 crore, while around ₹29 crore remains outstanding ahead of the final repayment deadline in August 2026. MIDC has stepped up recovery proceedings, with COPU directing that the matter remain under close monitoring until the dues are fully recovered.

The committee also reviewed outstanding loans involving Greystone Smelters and Greystone Strips Limited. Although the MIDC Board of Directors wrote off the loan balances in September 2025, the panel clarified that an accounting write-off does not amount to a legal waiver of



the companies' liabilities. The management was instructed to continue recovery proceedings and direct both companies to settle their outstanding dues within seven days.

Meanwhile, the loan count of Aura Hotels and Resorts Pvt. Ltd. was reported to have been fully settled following repayment of ₹51 crore. Dues linked to Badhok Nongmalieh Ford Dealer at Mawiong Rim were

also resolved through the transfer of a 43.22-lakh-square-foot property at Kawa Sing in Ri-Bhoi district.

The committee subsequently examined CAG observations concerning the implementation of the Saubhagya and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY). Members raised concerns over payments being released without verification of mandato-

ry insurance documents.

Power Department representatives assured the panel that responsibility would be fixed and appropriate action taken against officials found accountable for the lapses. The department has been directed to submit a comprehensive compliance report within one month.

The committee also called on the state's energy authorities to address shortages of distribution transformers in the region, warning that inadequate availability could contribute to interruptions in electricity supply.

The review highlighted the panel's focus on recovering public funds, enforcing accountability for audit-related irregularities and strengthening infrastructure needed to maintain reliable power distribution across Meghalaya.

Steel Bridge Restores Key Border Link in Kurung Kumey

Itanagar, Aug 01: The Border Roads Task Force (BRTF) under Project Arunank has completed the structural launching of a new steel bridge over the Kumey River at Huri in Arunachal Pradesh's Kurung Kumey district, restoring a vital connectivity link to frontier settlements and security posts near the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The bridge has been constructed under the direction of BRTF Officer Commanding Sandeep Tiwari in coordination with the Kurung Kumey district administration. The strategic Damin-Huri road link was cut off on July 13 after torrential rainfall triggered

flash floods that swept away a 66-metre Bailey hanging bridge.

The collapse of the bridge temporarily isolated Huri village and nearby security outposts in the Damin circle, disrupting the movement of essential supplies, medical assistance and civilians along the strategically important route.

Following the damage, emergency teams established temporary log crossings to facilitate pedestrian movement and the transportation of urgent medical supplies. BRTF engineering personnel subsequently deployed heavy equipment to construct a permanent replacement bridge and restore



vehicular connectivity.

Officials said the main structural launching has been completed, while ap-

proach works and finishing activities are expected to be completed within three to four days. Once these works

are finished, the Damin-Huri road will be reopened for heavy vehicles and all-weather traffic.

Kurung Kumey Deputy Commissioner Cheechung Chukhu said the bridge is expected to become fully operational during the first week of August.

The restoration is considered strategically important for maintaining uninterrupted logistical supply lines to defence personnel and supporting civilian communities living along the international border. The new bridge is also expected to strengthen the resilience of the Damin-Huri route against disruptions caused by extreme weather.

VPP Plans Secretariat March, Warns of Stronger Agitation

Shillong, Aug 01: The opposition Voice of the People Party (VPP) has announced a peaceful march to the Meghalaya Secretariat on August 6 to press the state government to address issues affecting students, teachers and the wider public, while warning that agitation could be intensified if its demands remain unresolved.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the party's State Executive Committee. VPP president Ardent Miller Basaiawmoit said the proposed demonstration would highlight several public concerns and follow awareness campaigns conducted by the party across Meghalaya to mobilise support at the grassroots level.

Basaiawmoit said the march would remain peaceful and clarified that party members had no intention of attempting



to enter or storm the Secretariat. He also appealed to Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma to remain in Shillong on August 6 and witness the public response to the party's campaign.

The VPP president warned that the party would oppose any attempt to interfere with the planned route or disrupt the demonstration. He said the party would not accept responsibility for any actions undertaken by individuals or

groups seeking to create disturbances outside the organisers' programme.

The party has also urged residents to participate in large numbers and support its demand for government action on the issues raised. The proposed march is expected to put further pressure on the state administration as the VPP seeks concrete responses to concerns it says affect students, educators and the broader public.

VPP warns of increased agitation and plans a nonviolent march to the Meghalaya Secretariat on August 6

Shillong, Aug 01: On August 6, the opposition Voice of the People Party (VPP) declared that it will peacefully march to the Meghalaya Secretariat in order to put pressure on the state government to address what it considered to be important public issues. If its demands are not met, it threatened to escalate protests. The State Executive Committee of the party met to make the decision. Ardent Miller Basaiaimoit, president of the VPP, stated that the march will draw attention to issues that affect students, educators, and the general public.



He also mentioned that the party has already run awareness campaigns throughout the state to rally support. Basaiaimoit confirmed that the party did not want to storm the Secretariat

and stated that the protest will continue to be peaceful. In order to see public involvement on the day of the march, he pleaded with Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma to stay in Shillong. The leader of the VPP issued a warning, stating that the party would not accept any attempt to interfere with the program and that it would not be held accountable for anyone who caused disruptions during the march. In order to put pressure on the government to address the concerns brought up by the party, he also asked people to participate in the demonstration.

PM Modi opens Andhra Pradesh's Rs 5,000 crore Bhogapuram Airport

New Delhi, Aug 01: Aluri Sitarama Raju International Airport was officially opened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday in Bhogapuram, Vizianagaram district.

The GMR Group's almost Rs 5,000 crore Bhogapuram Airport is seen by the Andhra Pradesh government as a transformative asset for the entire North Andhra area rather than just an infrastructure project.

It was intended to serve as a catalyst for the expansion of industry, the creation of jobs, exports, the improvement of skills, and research. The airport has a master



plan to increase its capacity to 40 million people per year, although it was initially built to serve six million passengers yearly. The airport's commercial opera-

tions would start on August 17. The PM was briefed on the airport's key features by Union Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu and Andhra Pradesh Chief Min-

ister N Chandrababu Naidu. PM Modi would lay the groundwork for and officially open projects in the southern state valued at about Rs 18,000 crore later that day.

PMK applauds Tennessee's choice to take the Cauvery water dispute to the Supreme Court

New Delhi, Aug 01: Anbumani Ramadoss, the president of the PMK in Chennai, praised the Tamil Nadu government's decision on Saturday to petition the Supreme Court to obtain the state's legitimate portion of Cauvery water. Pursuing action is still the only right course of action, he said in a statement here, stressing that the move comes after Karnataka closed the doors on planned bilateral talks. The PMK leader pointed out that the Tamil Nadu government had previously announced that Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay would travel to Bengaluru to hold talks with his counterpart D K Shivakumar regarding Cauvery water sharing and the Mekedatu dam issue. However, the neighboring state's chief minister declared that the en-

vironment was not favorable for bilateral talks in response to strong opposition in Tamil Nadu and growing protests in Karnataka. Stating that TN Law Minister R Nirmal Kumar subsequently announced that Tamil Nadu would approach the apex Court to demand the immediate release of its due share of Cauvery water, with officials stating the petition will be filed after August 5, he said "while the Tamil Nadu government initially took the wrong path, it is reassuring that they have finally corrected their course". "Moving forward, the state government must adopt a firm policy decision never to engage in talks with the Karnataka government on Cauvery water sharing or the Mekedatu dam issue", he said. "Being new to politics, chief minister

States are urged by the Supreme Court to prevent animals from wandering on roads and to compensate accident victims



New Delhi, Aug 01: On Friday, the Supreme Court requested that states and Union territories change their legislation to prohibit stray cattle on roadways and create plans to compensate drivers and pedestrians who have been killed or injured in bovine assaults and collisions. "It is common to see reports in newspapers regarding bovine-related incidents and accidents...

accidents with a direct and proximate bovine cause are not few and far away," stated a bench consisting of Justices Sanjay Karol and N Kotiswar Singh.

The bench ordered the state to provide the widow a lump sum payment of ₹15 lakh in response to a 2007 event in Sangrur, Punjab, where a stray bull attacked a man who suffered head injuries and subsequently died.

The panel said that the order would not be regarded as a precedent.

The bench said, "While this case presents a particular instance before us, we are of the view that the larger issue of these incidents must also be addressed," offering several suggestions for the Centre and states to act upon. "Necessary amendments may be carried out or rules promulgated, as is deemed fit by the competent authority, to develop a mechanism for payment of compensation in accidents caused as a result of bovine/cattle, in both categories of cases i.e., pedestrian or vehicular," the bench said. The court noted that the presence of cattle on roads and highways must be prevented, adding that this

is only possible if states enact laws or enforce existing regulations to hold owners accountable when cattle are left to graze in the open. Justice Karol, authoring the judgment, said, "We live in a deeply flawed, human world. Perhaps it is a feature of this flawed world that, on the one end, we let them (cattle) roam about without caring for their safety, and, on the other, find it deeply offensive if an individual uses them to secure a full stomach for himself or his family."

The court requested that all 24 states that have passed legislation pertaining to the preservation and protection of cows take action to guarantee that the law is fully and promptly implemented

in letter and spirit. The bench took note of the victim's predicament in the matter before the court.

The victim had been hurt by the bull and had filed a police complaint. He demanded ₹1 crore in compensation in a letter to the Sangrur Municipal Council while he was still living. In response, the council stated that it did not get any funding for this kind of compensation. He subsequently appealed to the Punjab and Haryana High Court, where a single judge determined compensation in 2019 under the Motor Vehicles Act's method. However, a division bench of the high court set aside this decision in November 2025, directing the widow to file a suit before a civil court.

In three years, Punjab recorded 154 cases of immigration fraud, yet no one was prosecuted

New Delhi, Aug 01: According to data presented by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in Parliament on Friday, Punjab has seen a dramatic increase in complaints against illegal immigration agents, yet during the previous three years, not a single prosecution sanction has been issued against the guilty. Punjab reported 80 complaints against illicit immigration agents in 2025, a sharp rise from 18 complaints in 2024. The MEA told the Lok Sabha. In 2023, the state received 56 complaints, suggesting an increase in suspected immigration fraud. Only Andhra Pradesh (448), Kerala (238), Delhi (153), Telangana (111), Tamil Nadu (99), and Rajasthan (97) had more complaints than Punjab. However, despite the growing number of complaints, no request for prosecution sanction was either sought or granted in Punjab between 2023 and 2025, effectively leaving all cases without the next legal step required for prosecution under the relevant provisions. When compared to a number of other states, the difference is striking.

In 11 cases in 2024 and 13 cases in 2025, Delhi requested prosecution sanction; all of these requests were approved. Kerala also started the prosecution process, requesting sanctions in seven cases in 2023 and fifteen cases in 2024; seven and one sanctions were approved, respectively. During the same time period, prosecution-related

actions were also recorded in Karnataka, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu. The numbers coincide with ongoing worries about illicit migration networks functioning in Punjab, a state where many families still have a strong desire to migrate outside.

According to the data, there is an increase in complaints against alleged immigration scammers, but turning those complaints into criminal prosecutions is still very difficult.

The latest figures highlight the widening gap between the number of immigration fraud complaints and legal action in Punjab, a state that has remained at the centre of India's overseas migration landscape for decades.

A thriving network of immigration and visa advisors has been supported by the prospect of employment and permanent residency overseas, but it has also provided an ideal environment for dishonest businesspeople. The Doaba region's districts, particularly Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, and Kapurthala, continue to account for a significant portion of these instances, indicating the region's strong ties to migration. Complaints have also increased in other cities, such as Mohali, Ludhiana, and Amritsar. The deportation of numerous Indians from the United States, many of whom were said to have entered the country illegally, has brought the topic back into the spotlight in recent months.

India-China Border Trade Resumes Through Nathu La in Sikkim: The Silk Route Reopens

New Delhi, Aug 01: Beginning on Saturday, India and China will resume border trade via the historic Silk Route at Nathu La. After a six-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, border trade between China and India via the historic Nathu La Pass in East Sikkim has resumed. The revival of bilateral relations between China and India is encouraging. Beginning on July 6, 2006, border trade through Nathu La was halted during the COVID-19 pandemic. In accordance with mutually agreed-upon Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), trade will continue for six months, from May to November. Both nations will continue to trade the current list of 36 permitted items from Monday through Thursday. Infrastructure at the Nathu La Integrated Check Post, which had deteriorated during the prolonged closure and harsh Himalayan winters, has been refurbished and made operational. For the reopening, security



has also been reinforced. To support border trade activities, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) will send more troops to Nathu La, including an all-women platoon for the first time.

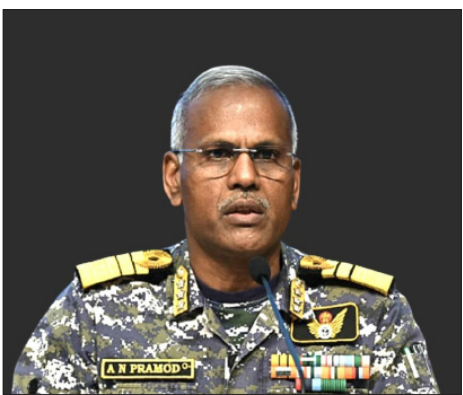
After the 1962 India-China War, the route was closed for 44 years before reopening in July 2006. Many saw the resurrection as a confidence-boosting initiative meant to improve livelihoods in border areas and deepen economic relations. But after the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, trade and the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra across Nathu La were halted. The re-

opening comes just weeks after the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra through Nathu La, raising hopes that cross-border exchanges between the two countries are gradually returning to normal. 36 recognized goods, such as handicrafts, handloom goods, blankets, agricultural tools, processed foods, dry vegetables, spices, ready-made clothing, utensils, and traditional religious objects, can be exported from India under the current agreement. Ready-made clothing, shoes, yak products, butter, borax, goats, quilts, and other authorized goods are among the Tibetan side's imports.

Only a small number of passes have been approved thus far, according to officials, despite the fact that up to 400 dealers may be granted permits throughout a trading season. Following confirmation by the State Intelligence Branch and district authorities, more are anticipated.

Vice Admiral AN Pramod, the planner of Operation Sindoor, was appointed Navy deputy chief

New Delhi, Aug 01: Vice Admiral AN Pramod, who spearheaded the Indian Navy's response during the West Asia crisis and was instrumental in organizing Operation Sindoor, took over as Deputy Chief of Naval Staff on Saturday, according to the navy. From December 2023 to July 2026, he was the Director General Naval Operations (DGNO). The Indian Navy stated on Saturday that "as DGNO, he was closely involved in the planning, preparedness, and operational readiness of the Indian Navy during Operation Sindoor and conduct of maritime security operations during the ongoing West Asia crisis." India launched Operation Sindoor in the early hours of May 7,



2025, striking terror and military installations

in Pakistan and PoK following the Pahalgam terror strike that killed 26 people. Pramod was among the top officials who briefed the media after the four-day military clash. Had the Indian Navy swung into action during Operation Sindoor, Pakistan would have been split into four parts, defence minister Rajnath Singh said after the operation, adding that the navy will draw first blood should Pakistan choose to repeat its misdeeds and direct terror against India. An alumnus of the 38th Integrated Cadet Course, Naval Academy, Goa, Pramod was commissioned into the Indian Navy in July 1990. A Communication and Electronic Warfare Specialist, he is an alumnus of the De-

fence Services Staff College, Wellington, and the Naval Higher Command Course at the Naval War College, Goa. He has held a variety of command, operational, instructional, and staff positions over the course of a remarkable career spanning more than 36 years, both ashore and at sea, according to the navy. The Executive Officer of INS Rajput, a Guided Missile Destroyer, and leadership of INS Abhay, an Anti-Submarine Warfare Patrol Vessel, INS Shardul, a Landing Ship Tank (Large), and INS Satpura, a Guided Missile Frigate, are among his most notable postings while at sea. In addition, he was the Western Fleet's Fleet Operations Officer during Operation Snow Leopard,

which took place after the Galwan conflict in eastern Ladakh. He took part in both Operation Parakram in 2001 and Operation Vijay in 1999. Pramod was instrumental in planning Operation Urja Suraksha, where the navy escorted 18 merchant vessels valued at over ₹9,000 crore amid the West Asia conflict. Meanwhile, IAF deputy chief Air Marshal AK Bharti, who played a key role in Operation Sindoor and retired recently, oversaw air strikes on two terror sites in Pakistan. The IAF targeted several military locations on May 9-10, resulting in the loss of 12 to 13 Pakistani aircraft, including F-16s and JF-17s, due to precision strikes during the military conflict.

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Out of the red tape: ISRO’s next big leap

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi said earlier this month, the successful orbital launch of Vikram-L, India’s first privately developed launch vehicle, is “a historic new frontier for India’s space journey”. This milestone signals a new chapter in India’s space programme, based on the foundation laid by ISRO but with fewer bureaucratic constraints and more room for private enterprise.

Before looking at how India can build on this momentum, it is worth revisiting the country’s space journey over the past several decades. What began as the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR), founded by Dr Vikram Sarabhai in 1962, evolved over time into the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in 1969. India’s first step into outer space was the launch of the Aryabhata satellite in 1975. Three decades later, Chandrayaan-1 added value to lunar exploration by discovering water molecules on the Moon. In 2014, India became the first country to reach Mars on its maiden attempt with the Mars Orbiter Mission, Mangalyaan. ISRO further solidified its scientific prowess with Chandrayaan-3, Aditya-L1 and the SPADEX space docking experiment. Behind many of these recent successes was ISRO’s long effort to develop its own launch capabilities. ISRO began developing the solid-fuelled Satellite Launch Vehicle-3 (SLV-3) in 1973 under its then project director, and later President of India, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. In 1980, it launched the 40 kg remote sensing satellite Rohini, making India the seventh country to demonstrate the capability to launch a satellite and place it in orbit. The development of the Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV) in the late 1980s and the launch of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) in October 1994—which placed the 870 kg Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) P2 satellite into Low Earth Orbit (LEO) at an altitude of 825 km—were ample proof of India’s self-reliance. The Indian space agency also developed the technological capability for outer space exploration through the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV), designed to

place heavier payloads into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit using cryogenic rocket engines. Desperately in need of this technology, India signed a USD 120 million deal with Glavkosmos of the Soviet Union in January 1991 for the supply of two KVD-1 cryogenic engines and the transfer of technology.

As the India-Russia agreement was being put in place, the US, in July 1993, arm-twisted both countries by imposing sanctions on ISRO and Glavkosmos, stalling the engine supply on the grounds that it violated the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). ISRO responded by launching its ambitious indigenous Cryogenic Upper Stage (CUS) project in 1995 and eventually mastered the ultra-low-temperature technology. Due to the untiring efforts and monumental research of ISRO’s scientists, and the vision of successive governments, India’s space programme over the decades has leapt forward on three major fronts: technological capacity building, strengthening self-reliance, and laying the foundations for public-private partnerships in space-related commercial ventures through R&D and innovation.

ISRO’s space-based innovations, projects, launches and applications are now supporting governance, commercial payment systems and banking, healthcare, education, disaster management and livelihoods in India, while also providing support to countries in the region. GSAT-9, conceived as the SAARC satellite and launched as the South Asia Satellite in 2017 after Pakistan opted out, is a Rs 450 crore geostationary communication satellite equipped with 12 Ku-band transponders. It provides Fixed Satellite Services (FSS), including television broadcasting, DTH, VSAT connectivity, tele-education, telemedicine, as well as delivering critical communication links and real-time coordination during natural disasters such as cyclones, earthquakes and floods. Against this backdrop, it is sad and frustrating that the government’s premier institution for pioneering research in outer space should experience a massive talent exodus.

Poor governance systems for testing about eight million candidates for admission into college the second largest examination process after China can be traced to the 2018 ambition to scale up quickly, like a start-up, on-the-cheap. The consequence? A handful of permanent employees in a registered society called the National Testing Agency (NTA) under the Union ministry of education. Add a layered multiplicity of state-level agencies for physically conducting the examinations, to keep costs low and yet tick the “inclusive governance” box. All this in a society where jugaad and hustling is a dominant skill waiting to exploit loopholes. The outcome is a porous system, unevenly empowered to monitor, detect or protect against fraud and collusion a powder keg waiting to explode.

It took eight years for the accumulated faults and errors to discredit it in the eyes of the users the candidates and their families. Paper leaks, cancellations and re-examinations and errors in tabulating scores, reduced it to a farce from a marvel of scaled up public digital rails for higher education. To be fair, the objectives remain laudable reducing candidate stress from the earlier fractured system of appearing in multiple tests for admission to a specific university-level study programme. So, what forced the government to accept (a) the resignation of the Union minister in charge of education; (b) reform of NTA by proposing a high-powered committee headed by India’s celebrated, socially conscious, tech bro -- Nandan Nilekani – the man who mothered Aadhaar and subsequently the ONDC, a widely held, not-for-profit Section 8 company, competing with Amazon and Flipkart; (c) agree to compensate the families of students who committed suicide because of systemic NTA faults; and (d) to ignore the minor violations of the protesters gathered at Jantar Mantar, a designated spot in New Delhi for protests after permission from the government.



The thirty-six-day long protest and a three week-long hunger strike was a novel agitation by Gen Z in Delhi and subsequently in a few other urban locations across the country. The never-before element was the leadership of an external saviour, very much in keeping with a globalised India Abhijeet Dipke an Indian student who jetted in from Boston University, carrying the Indian Constitution reminiscent of the Congress Party’s less successful strategy in Parliament to corner the BJP. Prior mobilisation on social media had already evoked a rapturous response and several million followers. Unsurprisingly, the physical response was less fulsome, with only a few thousands gathering at the protest site over the next month. Possibly, the sweltering, extreme heat of June dissuaded many. The Cockroach Janta Party is, for now, a social movement and not a registered entity. It focuses on student issues but more generally asserts liberal principles -- the right to mobilise to be heard di-

rectly by the government. It reeled in social media support by simultaneously partying even as a select few went on a hunger-strike. It welcomes strategic collaboration. Sonam Wangchuk a prominent, principled influencer and activist from Ladakh made common cause and led the hunger-strike, raising the stakes higher.

Why has the government heard and negotiated with it so readily versus its reluctance during the agitation against the proposed farm legislation? The politically inclined point to the urban middle class, social base of the Gen Z protesters, which overlaps with the BJP’s core supporters, versus farmers in rural areas, where the BJP is less entrenched historically. More substantively, the CJP demands were pitched so low that they were worth considering change of the minister in charge, a standard demand when administrative lapses occur. Protection for the protesters from police retribution: a no-brainer because they were more sinned against than sin-

ners. Compensation for the families of about a dozen students who committed suicide versus about 2,200 suicide cases, attributed to exam failure in 2022. In comparison, the year-long farmers agitation in 2020-21 sought to reverse new legislation for structural change via commercialised farming. They won because of the overwhelming numbers affected by the proposed changes. Should students expect an overhauled, secure system for admission examinations? Given the proposed formation of an “A team” for this purpose, there is reason for hope.

Was it a mistake then to use an “out of government” model of a registered society in the first place? The gold standard for cooperatives has been the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), better known by its brand name Amul. It remains the most successful scaled-up model of operations benefiting more than three million individual milk-producing members. The difference is that it is answerable to its beneficiaries

and its institutionalisation largely due to Dr Verghese Kurien, whose pioneering work in professionalising rural management and ensuring that profits flow to the members, laid the foundations for transparency and performance efficiency. The right lesson to draw from the NTA fiasco is that the agency suffered from insufficient institutionalisation per best-in-class similar public service entities, leaving open opportunities for inefficiency and corruption. The Kurian model advocates building a team of inspirational professionals- beyond the academic world -- to handhold the NTA through a late institutionalisation. This is an unglamorous task with no positive metrics at the end, except the lack of complaints -- much like efficient police work. It also requires diligent public investigations with adequate Right to Information provisions, to identify and root out systemic loopholes for corruption and fraud and bring the perpetrators to justice. Merely enhancing the punishment for transgressors, as proposed, is an ineffective eye-wash. Another option is to convert NTA into a Section 8 company where regular and timely accounting and more rigorous disclosures and auditing than currently prescribed for societies, could be voluntarily followed, thereby creating a new benchmark for wider compliance. Integrating the NTA into the government is a non-starter. Other than the ossifying impact of government procedures and practices, it invites competitive politicisation, with the ebb and flow of governments. The good news is that a nascent, social media based, vigilante force now exists amongst the final users – the Gen Z examinees – to keep the NTA honest, even as they keep millions of social media watchers captive, with direct to viewers reporting and evocative, satirical themes like “Police wale babu...” set to a catchy, slow beat, heavy thump, rhythm, typical of techno dance music and reminiscent of new wave civil protest. If the government falters, look forward to more such music.

To stand up to trump, Burnham must turn to Europe

There is an orange cloud in the sky. I’m not referring to the wildfires ravaging parts of Europe and East Anglia, though they are connected. I mean the looming pall from across the Atlantic that threatens to spoil the sunny start to the premiership of Andy Burnham – and whose name is Donald Trump. Burnham’s first 10 days or so in office have gone about as well as he or any of his team could have dared hope. His net approval rating has risen by 17 points, according to one early poll, gaining ground with every category of voter except supporters of Reform UK, though they too like some of what they see. His easy manner, no-notes speech-making and agility on social media have won plaudits, including from a usually sceptical press. But the new prime minister will know that all this could be upended at a stroke, with a single move by the man in the White House. Keir Starmer watched as the earliest green shoots of economic growth emerged earlier this year, only to be crushed by Trump’s decision to combine with Israel and

attack Iran. What can Burnham do to ensure he does not suffer that same fate? As it happens, the answer to that question answers another: what might constitute a Burnham foreign policy that would match the spirit and ethos of the agenda he has set out at home? So far most of the discussion in this area has concentrated on how the new PM should handle his counterpart in Washington. Some suggest his best bet is to emulate Starmer: swallow your pride, ladle on the flattery, avoid overt confrontation. Maybe tickle Trump’s tummy by promising to drill in the North Sea, even as Suffolk is engulfed in the flames of the climate breakdown. Others say the US president is a bully who only respects strength: therefore, stand up to him, even if that means a row. All this owes more to the realm of animal psychology than political analysis. Different world leaders have tried both approaches – nice guy and tough guy – and both have failed. And sometimes succeeded. Trump has an attention span measured in seconds; he is erratic and impulse driven; he changes his mind

without warning, logic or consistency. Those at the sharp end have come to understand this, which helps explain the muted reaction to Trump’s announcement late on Thursday of a breakthrough in Gaza. “There is scepticism and cautiousness among Palestinians,” reported Al Jazeera after Trump said Hamas was ready to disarm in return for an Israeli withdrawal from the territory. As anyone who has followed his zigzagging engagement with the Middle East has come to learn, the safest response to any development heralded by the US president is: don’t hold your breath. Faced with such a man, it’s foolish to imagine a British prime minister can have much impact on American decisions. Even senior US administration officials have been known to admit privately that they have next to no sway over Trump, so why would a British PM fare any better? Brits do have access – I’m told that national security adviser Jonathan Powell is in regular contact with Trump’s personal envoy and golfing buddy Steve Witkoff – but that is not the same as influence.

India’s foresters need action, not praise: the real duty of wild conservation

Elected representatives, project proponents, and even seasoned bureaucrats see foresters as impediments to development. Foresters often ask themselves why not walk the easier path. Here is why they don’t. But first, why maintain forests? Forests provide ecosystem services that man-made systems cannot: climate regulation, watershed preservation, and air quality maintenance. They underpin food systems, support livelihoods and economic growth. Diverting forests for development precludes these benefits. The Constitution mandates maintenance of forests. The National Forest Policy 1988 recognises forest lands as national assets to be safeguarded for

the benefit of the entire community. Even the Supreme Court holds forest conservation as fundamental to human well-being.

Now, the forester. A forester regards forests as irreplaceable ecological capital accumulated over centuries and knows that suggesting actions to mitigate the effects of diverting forests is politically correct but socio-ecologically inadequate. Foresters recognise the fallacy of ecological substitution a man-made forest cannot replicate the ecological value of an old-growth forest. They recognise that while the benefits of diverting forests for other purposes are quantifiable and immediate, the ecological losses are diffuse and de-

ferred. Accordingly, their position rests on the principle of intergenerational equity, articulated in the definition of sustainable development as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Foresters understand that ecological systems exhibit non-linear dynamics, and incremental degradation can cascade into ecosystem collapse. Ascertaining ecosystem tipping thresholds is near-impossible, so foresters adopt a precautionary approach of conservation rather than diversion. Foresters undergo a rigorous two-year training programme that emphasises ecological science, forest governance, conservation

ethics and high levels of physical fitness. This establishes a “framework for their collective conduct”; sociologist Émile Durkheim calls it “professional conscience”. Foresters recognise their profound fiduciary duty to forests – a moral and legal obligation to safeguard them in trust for future generations.

Historically, forest working plans have aimed at sustainable yield and conservation rather than wanton exploitation. When one understands how forests influence rainfall, how corridor forests sustain tiger metapopulations, or how a mangrove system buffers coastal communities against cyclones, indifference to their diversion becomes morally unten-

able. Foresters are obligated to avoid what ecologist Garrett Hardin termed the “tragedy of the commons”. They are public trustees of forests mandated to conserve them. Their adherence to forest protection is an act of silent public service, involving personal stress and risk, yet carried out with grit. In an era of accelerating environmental crises, when forests are our most critical buffers, Foresters resist short-termism. Their steadfastness is a noble counterweight to relentless pressures that prioritise transient economic gains at the expense of sustainability. A forester’s approach is forged through decades of intimate acquaintance with forests, shaped by law, science, and

ethics, and by an almost visceral understanding of what forests truly represent. It is not anti-development; rather, it enables sustainable development. Foresters stand in the way of unsustainability for the well-being of neonle and the planet.



GST Collections Cross Rs 2.11 Lakh Crore in July, Rise 15.4%



New Delhi: India's gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections climbed 15.4 per cent year-on-year to ₹2,11,205 crore in July, supported by steady domestic economic activity and a sharp rise in revenue from imports, according to government data released on Saturday.

July marked the second consecutive month of the current financial year in which monthly GST collections exceeded the ₹2 lakh crore threshold. Gross collections had stood at ₹1.95 lakh crore in June, indicating continued strength in tax receipts during the opening months of the fiscal year.

The July mop-up included ₹39,835 crore from Central GST (CGST), ₹47,881 crore from State GST (SGST) and more than ₹1.23 lakh crore through Integrated GST (IGST), reflecting substantial revenue generated from inter-state transactions and

imported goods.

Domestic gross GST revenue increased 10.1 per cent to ₹1.45 lakh crore in July from ₹1.31 lakh crore during the same month last year. Import-related GST collections recorded a considerably stronger increase, rising 28.8 per cent to ₹66,511 crore and providing a significant boost to overall receipts.

After the government issued refunds totalling ₹29,968 crore during the month, net GST collections stood at ₹1.81 lakh crore. Net revenue was 15.8 per cent higher than the corresponding period a year earlier, even as total refunds rose 13.1 per cent year-on-year.

Among major states, Haryana recorded the strongest annual growth in GST collections at 25 per cent. Gujarat and Telangana followed with 19 per cent growth each, while Punjab and Kerala registered in-

Behind every text message lies a choice as NPCI urges users to stay scam-free

Kohima: As millions of Indians embrace digital payments for everyday transactions, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has launched a consumer awareness campaign highlighting how a single text message can determine whether a digital transaction remains safe or turns into financial fraud.

NPCI said cybercriminals are increasingly relying on social engineering rather than sophisticated technology, sending fake SMS messages that exploit fear, urgency or curiosity to manipulate users into acting without verification. Posing as banks, government agencies, telecom operators or delivery companies, scammers

attempt to persuade people to click fraudulent links, call fake customer care numbers, download malicious applications, reveal confidential information such as OTPs, UPI PINs and passwords, or transfer money after receiving misleading payment notifications.

Recognising that awareness is the strongest defence, NPCI has advised consumers to read every message carefully, verify requests through official websites, apps or customer care channels, install applications only from trusted app stores, avoid suspicious links, review app permissions, and confirm payment credits by checking their bank account statements. It has also

encouraged users to save screenshots and message records and report suspicious numbers through the national cybercrime helpline 1930 or the Department of Telecommunications' Sanchar Saathi platform.

As the organisation behind India's retail payment infrastructure, NPCI continues to strengthen trust in digital transactions through platforms such as UPI, RuPay, IMPS, NACH, AePS and e-RUPI. The campaign reflects its broader commitment to ensuring that the benefits of India's digital payment revolution are matched by greater consumer awareness, confidence and financial security.

Commercial LPG Prices Cut by Over Rs 200

Mumbai: State-owned oil marketing companies have reduced the prices of 19-kg commercial Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders by more than ₹200, offering relief to restaurants, hotels, eateries and other businesses that rely heavily on commercial cooking fuel. Under the revised rates announced by Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation, the price of a 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder in New Delhi has been lowered by ₹203.50 to ₹1,480.50.

The reduction has also been implemented in other major metropolitan centres. In Kolkata, the price

has fallen by ₹201 from ₹1,793 to ₹1,592 per cylinder. Mumbai has recorded a ₹204 reduction, bringing the revised price to ₹1,432, while Chennai has seen a ₹203 cut, taking the rate to ₹1,643.50.

The latest reduction follows several price increases in recent months amid fluctuations in international fuel benchmarks. Commercial LPG prices are revised on the first day of every month, with changes influenced by international energy prices and movements in foreign exchange rates.

The latest cut is expected to reduce operating costs for commercial establishments, particularly restaurants and

hospitality businesses where LPG constitutes a significant part of kitchen expenses. The impact could also provide some relief to food-service operators facing pressure from other input and operating costs.

Prices of 14.2-kg domestic LPG cylinders used by households, however, have remained unchanged across the country.

The contrasting movement in commercial and domestic LPG prices reflects the separate pricing structures followed for the two categories, with commercial rates more directly influenced by international market conditions and periodic monthly revisions.

Adani Energy Weighs Fresh QIP After Strong Investor Demand

Mumbai: Adani Energy Solutions is considering another qualified institutional placement (QIP) toward the end of the current financial year or early in the next fiscal year after strong investor demand helped the power transmission company complete a ₹3,500-crore share sale this week.

The latest QIP attracted bids worth about three times the amount on offer, encouraging the company to consider returning to the institutional market to raise the remaining funds available under an existing shareholder mandate. Shareholders have

approved equity fundraising of up to ₹10,000 crore through one or more tranches.

The potential fundraise is part of a broader capital mobilisation drive across the Adani Group as its companies seek to finance expansion plans and strengthen their balance sheets. Group entities have raised around \$4.75 billion through QIPs and rights issues over the past eight months.

Adani Enterprises, the group's flagship company, raised \$1.58 billion through a QIP earlier in July and secured a further \$2.8 bil-



lion through a rights issue. Adani Power has separately announced plans to raise as much as \$1.57 billion.

The recent fundraising activity represents the group's most extensive consolidated capital-raising

programme since allegations by a short seller triggered a sharp decline in valuations across Adani companies in early 2023.

Adani Energy Solutions, India's largest private-sector power transmission operator, has also benefited from increased institutional interest. Its shares have gained more than 60 per cent so far in 2026, supported by buying from domestic mutual funds and insurance companies.

The company's consideration of another QIP highlights the strong appetite for its equity among institutional investors and comes as the group continues to mobilise capital for expansion while seeking to maintain financial flexibility.

The distinction is significant because the public issue framework imposes substantially broader disclosure and regulatory obligations on companies raising capital from the public.

Sebi also reaffirmed the treatment of QIBs under private placement rules. Qualified institutional buyers are excluded from the calculation of the 200-person threshold, meaning their participation in eligible transactions does not count towards the statutory limit applicable to other purchasers.

The regulator further addressed the role of contractual arrangements governing the transfer of shares.

Forcas Studio Brings Fashion to Flipkart Minutes



Mumbai: Fashion and lifestyle company Forcas Studio has expanded into quick commerce by launching its FTX fashion line on Flipkart Minutes, enabling customers in select locations to receive eligible apparel orders in as little as 20 minutes.

The move marks the company's entry into a rapidly developing segment of India's retail market, where consumers are increasingly seeking faster delivery and greater convenience beyond groceries and household essentials.

Under the partnership, selected FTX casualwear, essentials and other fashion products will be made available through Flipkart Minutes' micro-fulfilment network. By

positioning inventory closer to customers, the arrangement is expected to significantly reduce delivery times compared with conventional e-commerce shipments.

The partnership is part of Forcas Studio's broader strategy to strengthen its presence across digital commerce channels as consumer preferences increasingly shift towards convenience-led and faster shopping. The company sees quick commerce and instant fashion delivery as emerging opportunities to connect its products with younger, digitally focused consumers seeking rapid access to everyday clothing.

Flipkart Minutes has also been expanding its

quick-commerce infrastructure, crossing 1,000 micro-fulfilment centres across more than 130 cities and 8,000-plus PIN codes in June. The platform's expansion into lifestyle and fashion categories reflects the wider evolution of quick commerce beyond traditional grocery and household products.

The shift also highlights the growing demand for impulse purchases and immediate access to fashion items. Forcas Studio Managing Director Sailesh Agarwal has emphasised that speed and convenience are becoming increasingly important factors in fashion shopping, with technology-enabled fulfilment helping brands respond to changing consumer expectations.

The partnership is expected to strengthen Forcas Studio's reach among young, digital-first customers while giving shoppers quicker access to selected apparel products. It also reinforces the growing convergence between fashion retail and quick commerce as brands and platforms seek to shorten delivery timelines and enhance convenience.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor Sales Climb 5% to 30,516 Units

Mumbaisssss: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) recorded a 5 per cent year-on-year increase in domestic vehicle sales in July 2026, with sales rising to 30,516 units from 29,159 units in the corresponding month last year, reflecting continued demand for the company's passenger vehicle portfolio.

Including exports, TKM reported total sales of 32,516 units during the month. The July performance extended the automaker's positive sales momentum through the current financial year, with demand remaining steady across several key segments of its product range.

The company's domestic performance also remained strong during the opening four months of financial year 2026-27. Between April and July, cumulative domestic sales increased 8 per cent to 1,28,746 units, compared with 1,19,669 units sold during the same period of the previous fi-



nancial year.

TKM's sales growth was stronger when measured over the first seven months of the calendar year. Domestic sales between January and July 2026 reached 2,33,854 units, marking a 13 per cent increase from the 2,07,497 units recorded during the corresponding period of 2025.

The figures indicate that the company has maintained a consistent growth trajectory across both financial-year and calendar-year

periods. The increase in cumulative sales also highlights sustained consumer demand for Toyota vehicles despite changing market conditions and competition across India's passenger vehicle sector.

The July performance added to the company's broader sales momentum during 2026, with the automaker continuing to focus on its range of passenger vehicles across different price and usage categories. Steady domestic sales, com-

Sebi Clarifies Rules for Off Market Sales of Unlisted Shares



Mumbai: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has clarified that secondary transfers of unlisted equity shares through off-market transactions will not be treated as deemed public issues when carried out by existing shareholders, provided the number of purchasers remains within the statutory ceiling of 200 persons in a financial year.

The regulatory clarification was issued through an informal guidance letter to IDBI Bank, which had approached Sebi in May seeking clarity on a proposed divestment of its unlisted equity investments. The bank had sought to sell the holdings to investors who are not classified as qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) through negotiated off-market transactions.

The regulator's interpretation provides greater certainty over the regulatory treatment of privately negotiated sales of unlisted securities. Sebi clarified that when an existing security holder transfers shares to identified purchasers, the transaction does not amount to an offer or invitation by the issuing company to subscribe to its securities.

Consequently, such secondary transactions would not attract the disclosure and compliance framework applicable to a public issue, as long as the number of purchasers remains within the prescribed limit of 200 persons during a financial year.

The distinction is significant because the public issue framework imposes substantially broader disclosure and regulatory obligations on companies raising capital from the public.

Sebi also reaffirmed the treatment of QIBs under private placement rules. Qualified institutional buyers are excluded from the calculation of the 200-person threshold, meaning their participation in eligible transactions does not count towards the statutory limit applicable to other purchasers.

The regulator further addressed the role of contractual arrangements governing the transfer of shares.

Existing rights between shareholders, including a promoter's Right of First Refusal, can continue to be exercised during the execution of secondary equity transfers. Such contractual rights can therefore be honoured without changing the basic regulatory character of the transaction.

The clarification is particularly relevant for banks, financial institutions and corporate entities holding unlisted equity investments that may seek to exit those positions through privately negotiated transactions rather than public offerings. It provides a clearer framework for sellers to approach identified investors without inadvertently triggering public issue requirements.

Unlike a fresh issue of shares, where securities are issued by a company to raise new capital, a secondary transaction involves an existing shareholder transferring securities already held by it. Sebi's clarification reinforces this distinction and indicates that the nature of the transaction, along with the number and category of purchasers, remains important in determining the applicable regulatory requirements.

The guidance could provide greater flexibility to institutional and corporate investors seeking to monetise unlisted holdings while maintaining compliance with securities regulations. It also offers additional certainty to prospective buyers and sellers involved in negotiated off-market transactions.

The clarification, however, does not remove the requirement to comply with other applicable laws, contractual obligations and regulatory conditions governing the transfer of unlisted securities. Transactions must continue to remain within the prescribed purchaser threshold and satisfy the relevant requirements for private placements and secondary transfers.

Sebi's position is expected to assist financial institutions and other shareholders in structuring private divestments more efficiently while maintaining a clear separation between secondary share transfers and public offers made by issuing companies.

Wildfires: the rationale behind the prohibition of disposable BBQs in certain parks and beaches

London: There’s something almost comic about the modern British summer ritual: as soon as the mercury climbs, we head to the nearest park, sit cross-legged on scorched grass, and hunch over a flimsy foil tray to sear sausages over an open flame.

But these disposable BBQs are now active wildfire risks. This summer, the UK has been experiencing what some fire scientists are calling a “firewave” – when heatwaves create the perfect conditions for wildfires, especially within cities.

As a result, some councils have banned the use of disposable BBQs on council-owned parks, beaches and other public spaces.

It comes as London is on high alert for wildfires following four successive heatwaves so far this summer and minimal rainfall. The current fire danger forecast for the UK is set at “very extreme”.

This coincides with record fires in France, Spain and Greece, forcing evacuations of major cities including Bordeaux. While wildfires are a common occurrence, their frequency and intensity is increasing with climate change.

At any given moment, thousands are being recorded across the globe by satellites and can be viewed in real time.

The devastating news of the fires in mainland Europe may make it seem like the problem is across the channel, but the UK statistics back up the unease. Over the weekend, the London Fire Brigade responded to over 1,300 incidents.

With temperatures expected to remain high and the skies clear of rain, the risk is only increasing. Most of England currently classifies as very high risk under the Fire Safety Index.

Meanwhile, South Wales Fire and Rescue has been battling flames in the Blaenavon area since July 20. This has been affecting air quality in the Cardiff area, despite the Welsh capital being 30km away from the blaze.

Almost all UK wildfires are being started by people. So given the hot summer we’re in, wouldn’t a crisp salad and a piece of fresh fruit make more sense than crouching over hot coals?

Disposable BBQs are a major preventable ignition source. The



coals inside them are separated from the surface by only a thin aluminium tray that becomes extremely hot. This directly heats the surface below, rather than dispersing into open air the way it might around a fixed barbecue stand.

Charcoal embers can also easily blow from the BBQ onto the

ground and ignite dry grass, leaf litter, heathland or peat in sustained dry conditions.

On exposed coastlines, particularly where cliffs are capped with dry peat or gorse, wind can carry embers further and faster than on a still inland afternoon. Peat is exceptionally carbon rich. Found in bogs, fens and

marshy uplands, it is formed very much the same way as coal and contains the partially decomposed remains of ancient plants and animals.

This organic matter can smoulder underground for days and even weeks after it looks like a fire has been put out, presenting additional challenges for the fire

services.

Even after charcoal appears extinguished, BBQ trays can stay hot for hours after the last sausage comes off the grill. And binning a warm BBQ creates a second danger, since barbecues discarded before cooling have started bin fires.

For these reasons, disposable BBQs are one of the first items that fire services request people avoid. For those at the throng, discarded cigarettes and vapes with faulty batteries add another source of ignition to the same dry conditions.

Then there’s the rubbish. A disposable BBQ picnic doesn’t just leave behind food packaging. There is the packaging for the BBQ itself, as well as the spent grill and ash, plus disposable plates and cutlery: three waste streams where a carefully packed lunch can produce far less.

Half-cooked meat and leftovers often end up in general rubbish bins rather than food waste bins, if they reach a bin at all. Often picnickers’ rubbish bags are too large to put in general park bins, and are often left beside an overflowing bin. Un-

fortunately it doesn’t necessarily stay there.

Bagged waste is often scattered by foxes and gulls before collection crews arrive, turning good intentions into more litter on the ground.

Here’s the reframe worth sitting with: if you think of yourself as a climate aware, nature-loving type, cooking over open flame on parched grassland isn’t actually a wholesome outdoorsy choice.

It risks the landscape you’re claiming to enjoy, triples the rubbish of an ordinary picnic and burns fossil-fuel-derived charcoal to heat food you could just as happily eat cold.

The simplest, healthiest and most environmental option is also the easiest one: pack a fresh, plant-based meal in a container that seals, and use that same container for anything you don’t finish. No flame, no ash, no coals, no fire risk and no extra rubbish.

Skipping the disposable BBQ used to mean giving something up. But given the risk, the mess and the heat we’re now living with, packing a salad is simply the better option.

Hilton systems down: Customers have difficulties checking in at hotels due to website and app problems

Several people took to social media to voice their frustrations as customers faced problems checking in.

Customers complain about Hilton services amid outage

“Yes everything is down in the @hilton universe,” one wrote on X. Another described the scene at a Hilton hotel amid the network outage.

“If you are checking into @Hilton tonight just know that their systems are down and they will not be able to check you in, lobbies are full, been down since 3pm CST. Good luck out there. Feels like they could at least let people know somehow, but radio silence, even on here,” they said.

People also took to the comment section of Down-detector to let their frustra-



tions be known. “I have had problem with the website all day. I could not check out my reservation. Now, I cannot even login anymore,”

one wrote. Another added “Check in software is down and tons of people in the lobby waiting. They can’t even let us in our room. Pitiful.”

On X others sounded warnings for people staying at Hilton hotels. “For those traveling to Newark tonight or NYC and staying at a Hil-

ton please know the network is down and you may have a wait to check in,” one said. Another noted this issue was across the country. “Hilton Hotel reservations are down across the country. @Hilton any eta?,” they asked.

Others also shared how their travel experience and day’s plans had been impacted. “@Hilton when will the system outage be resolved? Should I just go to another hotel? I’m waiting for over 30 mins and the front desk staff says the entire system is down,” one wrote, while another added “You guys need to send your properties/check in desk the offline procedures to get guests in rooms. We are sitting in the lobby with birthday weekend plans ruined.”

Supreme court says Palestine Action co-founder can challenge ban

UK: The co-founder of Palestine Action has won permission to challenge the ban against the group at the UK’s highest court.

The direct action group was proscribed as a terrorist organisation in July last year but its co-founder, Huda Ammori, has been fighting to have the ban overturned amid a mass civil disobedience campaign.

In February, the high court ruled that the ban was disproportionate and unlawful but its decision was overturned by the court of appeal last month.

On Thursday, the supreme court said Ammori could appeal against the court of appeal’s decision and that the case would be heard in the final quarter of this year.

It means the fate of more than 3,500 people who have been arrested for alleged support of Palestine Action since the ban remains in limbo as their cases are on hold until the legality of proscription has been definitely resolved.

Ammori welcomed the supreme court’s decision, saying: “The proscription of Palestine Action has become a vehicle for a far broader crackdown on expressions of solidarity with the Palestinian people.

“This unprecedented attack on free speech and the right to protest in this country is already having a chilling effect at a time when speaking out about Israel’s crimes could not be more urgent.”

She appealed directly to the supreme court to hear the case after the court of appeal’s decision refused permission to appeal against its own decision within hours of the application.

The court of appeal review was comprised of five judges, which is unusual as it normally consists of two or three. It included the country’s two most senior judges: the lady chief justice, Sue Carr, and the master of the rolls, Geoffrey Vos.

The supreme court said it was arguable that the ban represented a disproportionate interference with articles 10 and 11 of the European convention on human rights, which protect the rights of freedom of speech and protest respectively.

Ammori has pledged to challenge the ban, which has been widely condemned by civil liberties groups, as well as by UN experts and politicians from across the divide, at the European court of human rights if it is upheld by the UK courts.

As the supreme court’s de-

cision was published, dozens more people were arrested for allegedly supporting, being a member of and/or encouraging others to join Palestine Action.

In a demonstration outside Westminster magistrates court in central London, protesters took turns to stand up and declare their support for or membership of Palestine Action.

Many of the mainly elderly protesters lay down after speaking and were carried away by officers. Among those arrested was an 87-year-old woman in a wheelchair.

Sir Jonathon Porritt was one of those arrested for showing support for Palestine Action, according to the activist group Defend Our Juries.

Porritt, 76, is a former director of Friends of the Earth and was an adviser to the Prince of Wales – now King Charles – for more than 30 years.

He said: “There’s a genocide in which the British government is deeply implicated by its diplomatic efforts and the continuing supply of weapons to Israel, and the attempt to suppress legitimate protests by the wielding of anti-terrorism laws is simply unacceptable. It’s an assault on free speech.”

Saudi Arabia Moves to Form International Maritime Coalition Against Houthi



Riyadh: Saudi Arabia is preparing to establish an international maritime coalition to safeguard commercial shipping in the Red Sea. The initiative aims to protect maritime traffic from attacks carried out by Yemen’s Houthi rebels on commercial vessels.

According to the Saudi Ministry of Defence, 14 countries have so far expressed support for the proposal. These include Türkiye, Pakistan, Egypt, Sudan and Djibouti, among others. Saudi Arabia has reportedly invited nearly 50 countries to join the proposed coalition.

Saudi officials said the

Red Sea is a strategically vital maritime corridor for global trade and energy supplies. They noted that the growing security challenges in the region could significantly disrupt international shipping and global supply chains.

Regional tensions have escalated in recent months following a series of attacks by Houthi rebels targeting vessels in the Red Sea. Saudi Arabia’s initiative is being viewed as an effort to strengthen maritime security and ensure the uninterrupted safety of one of the world’s most critical commercial shipping routes.

Diane Abbott and Joani Reid readmitted as Labour MPs



UK: MPs Diane Abbott and Joani Reid have been readmitted into Labour and had the parliamentary whip restored, just under two weeks into Andy Burnham’s premiership.

The party confirmed that this followed separate independent disciplinary processes, although Labour said the leadership played no role in either decision.

Abbott, 72, the mother of the House of Commons, was suspended for a second time last summer after saying she did not regret comments about racism that had led to her initial loss of the whip in 2023.

Reid, the MP for East Kilbride and Strathaven who was elected in 2024, voluntarily relinquished the whip in March this year. Her husband had been arrested on suspicion of assisting a foreign intelligence service in a case linked to China. Reid has never been accused of wrongdoing.

The Guardian understands from Labour party sources that Reid has never been party to the police investigations into alleged Chinese spying. Abbott has apologised after the investigation concluded. It is understood the disciplinary process resulted in her receiving a formal warning from the party.

A Labour party spokesperson said: “The Labour party expects the highest standards from our elected representatives and party members. The party assesses any alleged breaches of such standards independently of the leadership and political interference.

“Following a process conducted under Labour party rules and approved by the independent review

board, Diane Abbott and Joani Reid have been readmitted to the Labour party and have had the Labour whip restored in the House of Commons.

“Diane Abbott has also apologised following the independent process coming to an end. All Labour elected representatives must be mindful at all times of their platform and the responsibilities that come with that privilege.”

It is understood both investigations were carried out in accordance with the Labour rulebook and approved by the party’s independent review board.

Abbott was first stripped of the Labour whip in April 2023 after writing a letter to the Observer in which she argued that Jewish, Irish and Traveller people experienced prejudice rather than racism. She apologised and withdrew the remarks, saying an earlier draft had mistakenly been submitted for publication.

Following a long investigation – which ended after dozens of MPs, Labour members and even some celebrities called for her to be reinstated because she apologised – Abbott had the whip restored just before the 2024 general election. The Hackney North and Stoke Newington MP completed antisemitism awareness training and received a formal warning.

But she was suspended for a second time last July after she told the BBC: “Clearly, there must be a difference between racism which is about colour and other types of racism because you can see a Traveller or a Jewish person walking down the street,

you don’t know.

“I just think that it’s silly to try to claim that racism which is about skin colour is the same as other types of racism. I don’t know why people would say that.”

Her second suspension last summer was seen as the latest sign that the then prime minister Keir Starmer intended to take a tougher approach to party discipline, after being forced to U-turn over controversial welfare cuts because of a massive rebellion by his MPs. Reid, 39, stepped aside from the Labour party in March after her husband, David Taylor, was arrested by counter-terrorism police.

At the time, she said she was not under investigation, had done nothing wrong, and was voluntarily relinquishing the whip to avoid becoming a distraction while Labour carried out its own inquiries.

Burnham has told Labour MPs he will change disciplinary culture and allow MPs to speak about their disagreements without fearing retribution from party whips.

A government source told the Guardian that Abbott’s readmission had nothing to do with Burnham’s regime change, and that if she repeats these comments, or makes antisemitic remarks, “she’ll have to go again”.

In a statement posted to her X account on Thursday, Abbott said: “Today, following a process conducted in line with party rules and approved by the independent review process, I have been readmitted to the Labour party.

“I have been issued with a formal warning for a tweet I previously posted. By inadvertently referring to the Israeli Defence Force as the ‘Jewish Defence Force’, I used wording that conflates the actions of the state of Israel with the Jewish community.

“I am deeply sorry for any hurt caused by that conflation and apologise for any hurt caused by it.

“I have been and remain a lifelong anti-racist and remain deeply committed to opposing racism in all its forms.”

Consider these five recommendations if you wear contact lenses throughout the monsoon season



Each year, with the arrival of the initial monsoon rains, a familiar caution is issued to contact lens users: exercise caution, as the risk of infections increases, and avoid allowing rainwater to come into contact with your eyes. Patients acknowledge this advice, assure their commitment to being cautious, and sub-

sequently return to their eye care professionals a few weeks later with a red, teary eye that is revealed to be significantly more serious than merely an “infection.” What almost nobody tells them is this: the lens itself is often the real problem. Not the rain. Not the humidity. The lens. We speak to Dr Sripriya P, Consultant Ophthalmologist, Dr Agarwals Eye Hospital, Kanakapura, who explains that for people who wear lenses during the rainy months, precaution and prevention is the name of the game. A Barrier That Works Both Ways

They think of contact lenses as sitting on the eye. In reality, they sit against the eye, held there by a razor-thin film of tears. That’s the whole design, and it’s exactly what makes them dangerous the moment something contaminated gets underneath. A pair of spectacles, however unglamorous, keeps the world at arm’s length. Rain hits the lens, not the eye. A contact lens does the opposite. If a splash of rainwater, or tap water, or water from an old contaminated lens case gets past it, the lens doesn’t let that moisture drain away. It holds it there, pinned against the cornea, for hours. This is the paradox that many ophthalmologists try to explain to every lens wearer: the very thing that makes contact lenses convenient, close, continuous contact with the eye’s surface, is the same thing that turns a stray organism into a corneal infection. Why This Matters More in the Monsoon

The cornea is not designed to be waterlogged. Under normal conditions, blinking and tear flow wash away most debris and microbes before they can do damage. A contact lens interrupts that mechanism. It creates a sealed, moist microenvironment right where you least want one, over the eye’s most vulnerable, avascular tissue. Add monsoon conditions to this: higher humidity encouraging bacterial and fungal growth in lens cases and solution bottles; water splashing into eyes during commutes; and lenses worn a little longer because glasses fog up, and you have ideal circumstances for organisms like Pseudomonas, various fungi, and Acanthamoeba to get trapped against a cornea that already has microscopic surface abrasions from lens wear. It is this such combinations

that lead to microbial keratitis, one of the few genuine ophthalmic emergencies that most people will have to deal with regularly, and one that can scar the cornea or threaten vision within days if left untreated. Pay heed to these warnings. Most eye doctors won’t tell their patients to stop wearing lenses. For most people, with sensible precautions, lenses remain safe and comfortable even in the rains. However, people who wear lenses must respect what it actually is: a foreign object held in intimate, sustained contact with a living, breathing tissue and treat it accordingly. Here’s what to do in the monsoon. Wash and dry hands thoroughly before handling lenses. No shortcuts, especially when you’ve just come in from the rain.

Never rinse lenses or cases with tap water. Use fresh solution only, and never top up old solution in the case. Avoid wearing lenses while swimming, showering, or sleeping, even for a nap. Replace lenses and cases exactly as prescribed. Extending “just a few more days” is where a lot of trouble starts. If your eye becomes red, painful, watery, light-sensitive, or your vision blurs, take the lens out immediately and don’t put it back in. See an ophthalmologist the same day, not after trying eye drops from the pharmacy. Contact lenses are not inherently dangerous. But they are unforgiving of carelessness in a way glasses simply aren’t, and the monsoon is when that gap shows up most clearly.

Are you familiar with the trend of latte makeup

Recently, if you have been browsing social media, it is likely that you have encountered the latte makeup trend. This beauty trend, inspired by the warm and creamy hues of a latte, emphasizes the creation of a sun-kissed, bronzed complexion utilizing shades such as caramel, mocha, chocolate, and soft brown. In contrast to vibrant and colorful makeup styles, latte makeup embraces neutral tones that accentuate your natural features while imparting a radiant glow to your skin. The trend became hugely popular after beauty influencers and celebrities shared their own versions of the look, making it one of the most sought-after makeup styles for both everyday wear and special occasions. Latte makeup proves that neutral tones never go out of style. Its warm bronzed finish, glowing complexion and effortless elegance make it a trend worth trying. Whether you are heading to work, meeting friends or attending a celebration, this versatile makeup look delivers a polished appearance with minimal effort. With just a few warm-toned products and careful blending, you can recreate this viral trend and enjoy a timeless, naturally radiant look. Here are some tips to ace your latte makeup glow



What is latte makeup? Latte makeup is all about using warm brown and bronze shades across the face to create a soft, cohesive appearance. Instead of relying on pink blushes or bold eyeshadows, this trend uses earthy colours that mimic the rich shades of coffee and milk. The overall finish is luminous, fresh and naturally sculpted. It works well on almost every skin tone because warm browns come in a variety of depths, allowing you to customise the look according to your complexion. Why is latte makeup so popular? One of the biggest reasons behind the popularity of latte makeup is its versatility. The look suits daytime outings, office meetings, brunches and evening events alike. It also complements both casual and glamorous outfits. Another reason is that the trend focuses on enhancing natural beauty rather than covering it. With glowing skin and soft definition, latte makeup creates an effortless appearance that is easy to achieve with products many people already own. How to create the latte makeup look Creating this viral makeup trend does not require professional skills. Follow these simple steps:

1. Prep your skin Start with a moisturised face and apply a lightweight primer. Use a natural-finish foundation or skin tint to even out your complexion without making it look heavy.
 2. Add warmth with bronzer Bronzer is the star of this look. Apply it generously along the cheeks, temples, jawline and forehead to create a naturally sun-kissed effect.
 3. Choose warm-toned eyeshadows Use shades like caramel, bronze, cinnamon or chocolate brown across the eyelids. Blend well to achieve a soft, seamless finish. Add a darker brown to the outer corners for extra depth if desired.
 4. Define the eyes Apply brown eyeliner instead of black for a softer look. Finish with a few coats of mascara to make the lashes stand out.
 5. Keep the cheeks subtle Instead of bright blushes, opt for a warm peach or terracotta shade that blends naturally with the bronzer.
 6. Finish with glossy nude lips Choose a nude lipstick in warm beige or brown tones and top it with a clear or caramel-coloured gloss for the signature latte-inspired finish.
- Who can wear latte makeup? The beauty of this trend is that it suits almost everyone. Fair skin tones can opt for lighter caramel shades, while medium and deeper complexions can experiment with richer bronzes and chocolate hues. The key is selecting shades that complement your natural undertones rather than overpowering them.

These athleisure staples that every Gen Zer can’t get enough of will help you update your summer wardrobe

Contemporary Gen Z fashion is characterized by a departure from adhering to a singular style, trend, or fashion. Instead, it emphasizes the selection of versatile pieces that reflect individual identity. Outfits that seamlessly transition from work to coffee outings, travel, and impromptu gatherings are currently favored by Gen Z. A shared element in this approach is the prioritization of comfort without sacrificing personal expression. Nihal Rajan, CMO of Jockey India, has highlighted key staple outfits that are emerging as essential for the summer season.

1. Racerback styled tank top A racerback tank is the kind of piece that performs throughout the day, across occasions; moving from a workout to a coffee run, to a day at the beach, all without needing a change of outfit. Nihal Rajan said, “The slim fit and racerback styling keep the shoulders free and the silhouette sporty, while the soft stretch fabric holds its shape through long days.” Worn solo with shorts, tucked into a skort, or layered under an open shirt, it works just as well dressed down as it does dressed up for an evening out.



2. Oversized graphic printed t-shirt Drawing from the easy appeal of basketball jerseys, oversized graphic tee brings a sporty edge to everyday dressing. According to Nihal Rajan, the bold print and relaxed silhouette give it plenty of character. You can pair it with cargos to lean into the streetwear influence, biker shorts for a sportier look, or denims when the day calls for something more laid-back.

3. Skort The skort earns its place as the ultimate hybrid piece, built for anyone who wants the ease of shorts in the summer with the polish of a skirt. Side zipper pockets keep essentials within reach without breaking the clean silhouette, making it practical for a day of back-to-back plans as it is for lounging. Paired with an oversized tee for balance or a fitted tank for a sharper look, it’s an easy way to look effortlessly polished.

4. Oversized polo t-shirt The oversized polo gives a relaxed, oversized cut that still holds onto the collar’s classic appeal. It’s the kind of piece that elevates a simple pair of joggers or shorts, making it just as suited to a casual outing as it is to a low-key day of travel.

5. Oversized cargo utility pants Utility-inspired dressing has found a permanent place in GenZ style, and cargo pants lean fully into that with an oversized fit and pockets that go beyond the usual two. Side, back, and cargo utility pockets add a functional, street-ready edge, while the button fastening and inner drawstrings make it easy to adjust the fit through a long day out.

Styled with a fitted tank for contrast or an oversized tee for a fuller silhouette, they carry easily from daytime errands into evening plans without feeling like a deliberate outfit change.

ing primer. Reach for a lightweight skin tint or a luminous foundation, then layer on a cream blush and a liquid highlighter to achieve that signature lit-from-within finish. If you’re looking to invest, products like the Charlotte Tilbury Hollywood Flawless Filter, Armani Luminous Silk Foundation, Rare Beauty Soft Pinch Liquid Blush and Saie Glowly Super Gel would be our favourite picks. For budget-friendly alternatives, try the e.l.f. Halo Glow Liquid Filter, Maybelline Fit Me Dewy + Smooth Foundation, Kay Beauty Creme Blush, Swiss Beauty Liquid Highlighter or MARS Glow O’Clock Primer & Strobe Cream. Meet Cloud Skin If glass skin is all about shine, cloud skin takes a softer route. It offers the same healthy-looking complexion, but with a blurred, airbrushed finish instead of a glossy one. It sits comfortably between matte and dewy, giving your skin a smooth, velvety appearance without looking flat. To recreate the trend, prep your skin with a lightweight moisturiser and a pore-blurring primer. Opt for a satin-finish foundation or skin tint, lightly set the T-zone with a finely milled translucent powder and lock everything in with a setting spray. The goal isn’t to erase your glow, it’s to soften it. For a



While glass skin continues to reign supreme in the skincare space, cloud skin is quickly becoming the go-to makeup finish for those who prefer a polished yet natural look. One of the biggest reasons? Versatility. Cloud skin holds up better in humid weather, photographs beautifully and doesn’t demand constant touch-ups throughout the day. It also works across different skin types and occasions, making it an easy favourite among makeup artists. Which One Should You Choose? If you love a radiant, glow-from-within finish and don’t mind embracing a little extra shine, glass skin is still very much worth trying. It’s especially flattering for dry and normal skin types and works beautifully for evening events or occasions where you want your complexion to look luminous. Cloud skin, on the other hand, is perfect if you gravitate towards soft, natural-looking makeup. Whether you’re heading to work, brunch or a festive celebration, the velvety finish feels fresh, lightweight and effortlessly chic. While glass skin continues to hold its own as the ultimate glowing complexion, cloud skin is proving that soft beauty deserves just as much attention. In the end, the best finish is the one that works for your skin, your routine and the look you want to create.



ENTERTAINMENT

Box office success: Christopher Nolan's 'the odyssey' crosses ₹165 crore mark in India

New Delhi : Filmmaker Christopher Nolan's "The Odyssey" has earned over Rs 150 crore gross in India at the box office. Featuring Matt Damon as Odysseus, Tom Holland as Telemachus, Zendaya as Athena, Robert Pattinson as Antinous, Lupita Nyong'o as Helen of Troy and Clytemnestra, Anne Hathaway

as Penelope and Charlize Theron as Calypso, among others, the film released globally on July 17.

The film went on to earn over Rs 70 crore in India during the opening weekend and also turned another release for the filmmaker to earn over Rs 100 crore at the box office after "Oppenheimer". According to the

estimates of the trade tracking website Sacnilk, the total collection of the film stands at Rs 165.85 crore gross at the box office. "The Odyssey" revolves around the Greek King Odysseus (essayed by Damon) on a perilous 10-year journey home after the Trojan War. Beset by vengeful gods, sea monsters, and enchantress-

es, he fights to reunite with his wife, Penelope (Hathaway), and son, Telemachus (Holland).

It is produced under Syncope Inc and distributed by Universal Pictures. Actors Jon Bernthal, John Leguizamo and Travis Scott, among others, round off the cast of the film. They feature as Menelaus, the King of Spar-

ta, Eumaeus and bard, respectively. The film is based on Homer's ancient Greek poem, which has been previously adapted several times. In 1954, "Ulysses", an Italian-American co-production, featured actor Kirk Douglas as the Greek hero. "O Brother, Where Art Thou?", released in 2000, and was a loose, satirical

adaptation directed by the Coen Brothers. "The Odyssey" in 1997 was directed by Andrei Konchalovsky and was broadcast as a two-part miniseries. It starred Armand Assante as the Greek king and Greta Scacchi as Penelope, and followed Odysseus's perilous ten-year journey home after the Trojan War.



Rachel Shelley shares unseen lagaan BTS

Chennai : British actress Rachel Shelley, who essayed the role of Elizabeth Russell in Aamir Khan's iconic film Lagaan, took a trip down memory lane on Friday.

The actress shared unseen behind-the-scenes pictures featuring herself from the making of the Oscar-nominated classic. Taking to her social media account, Rachel posted two rare pictures from the film's shoot. One picture shows the actress dressed in traditional Indian attire with colourful bangles, and the second picture captures her posing joyfully beside a decorated elephant in her signature Victorian-era costume from the film. For the uninitiated, in Lagaan, Rachel essayed the role of Elizabeth Russell, the compassionate sister of the ruthless British officer Captain Andrew Russell, played by Paul Blackthorne. Unlike her brother, Elizabeth is empathetic towards the villagers of Champaner and secretly teaches them the game of cricket to help them in challenging the British in the historic match.

During the course of the story, Elizabeth gradually falls in love with Bhuvan, played by Aamir Khan. She is later heartbroken after realising that Bhuvan is deeply in love with Gauri, portrayed by Gracy Singh. Written and directed by Ashutosh Gowariker and produced by Aamir Khan under Aamir Khan Productions, Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India was released on June 15, 2001. The movie starred Aamir Khan, Gracy Singh, Rachel Shelley, Paul Blackthorne, Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Suhasini Mulay, Raghubir Yadav, Rajesh Vivek, Yashpal Sharma, Raj Zutshi, Akhilendra Mishra, Daya Shankar Pandey and many others in very important roles. The music was composed by A.R. Rahman, with lyrics by Javed Akhtar. Earlier in the month of June this year, the cast and crew of Lagaan reunited to celebrate the film's 25th anniversary with a special script-reading session of the movie.

Karishma Tanna welcomes baby after going into labor straight from Neha Dhupia's show



Mumbai : Actress Neha Dhupia revealed that actress Karishma Tanna and her husband Varun Bangera headed straight to the hospital to welcome their first child immediately after wrapping up the shoot for her podcast, "Double Date", which she hosts alongside husband Angad Bedi.

Neha took to her social media account and shared a fun



behind-the-scenes video from the day. The clip opened with the text, "When the baby says 'it's go time'". It showed a visibly pregnant Karishma Tanna hurrying out of the house, while Neha, Angad Bedi and Varun Bangera followed closely behind carrying the hospital bag and other essentials before leaving for the hospital. The podcast episode

featuring Karishma and Varun was shot on July 28 and released just a day before the couple embraced parenthood. During the conversation, the two had opened up about their relationship, pregnancy journey and excitement over becoming first-time parents. On July 29, Karishma and Varun announced the arrival of their son with a heartfelt joint post.

The couple wrote, "Our little miracle. Our greatest blessing. It's a Baby Boy." The announcement was accompanied by a black and white illustration as they revealed that they had welcomed their first child on the auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima. For the uninitiated, Karishma, 42, tied the knot with Mum-

bai-based businessman Varun Bangera on February 5, 2022, in an intimate ceremony attended by family members and close friends. The couple has announced their pregnancy in April this year with the caption, "A little miracle, our greatest gift, August 2026." On the work front, Karishma Tanna began her career with television before becoming a household name through shows such as Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi, Naagin 3 and reality shows including Bigg Boss and Khatron Ke Khiladi. She has also featured in films such as Sanju, and went on to earn widespread acclaim for her performance in Hansal Mehta's Netflix series Scoop.

Sandeep Reddy Vanga hails Ranbir Kapoor's 'Ramayana' trailer



Mumbai : The Ranbir Kapoor starrer Ramayana is one of the most highly anticipated movies of the year. The film has been the talk of the town ever since its trailer dropped online. Ranbir Kapoor will essay the role of Lord Rama in the film.

Director Sandeep Red-

dy Vanga, who previously collaborated with Ranbir Kapoor on Animal, seems thoroughly impressed with the trailer of Ramayana. He shared his review with his fans and followers on social media.

Directed by Nitesh Tiwari and produced by Namit

Malhotra, Ramayana is inspired by the ancient epic of the same name. It follows the journey of Rama from his life as the prince of Ayodhya through his exile to his epic battle against Ravana. The film boasts an ensemble cast including Ranbir Kapoor, Sai Pallavi, Yash, Sunny Deol, and Ravie Dubey. The music is composed by Hans Zimmer and A.R. Rahman. Ramayana: Part 1 is scheduled to hit theaters during Diwali 2026.

Meanwhile, Sandeep Reddy Vanga is currently working on the Prabhas starrer Spirit, which will be released in theatres in March 2027.

Shagun Sharma cccuses Gaurav Khanna of bullying her on khatron ke khiladi 15

Chennai : Weeks after his wife revealed that they are heading for a separation, television actor Gaurav Khanna has landed in another trouble. Actress Shagun Sharma, who will also be seen in Khatron Ke Khiladi 15 soon, has now accused Khanna of bullying her during the filming of Rohit Shetty's show in Cape Town, South Africa. Ahead of the reality show's premiere, Shagun claimed in an interview that she was "bullied a lot" by Gaurav on set. While this has triggered massive reactions online, fans are also curious to know more about Shagun. Let's find out who she is.

Shagun Sharma is a television actress who began her acting career in 2015 with



Kuch Toh Hai Tere Mere Darmiyaan. Over the years, she has established herself as a familiar face on Hindi television, appearing in both lead and supporting roles across several popular daily soaps. Shagun first gained recognition with supporting roles in shows like Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise Bhi, Gangaa, Iss Pyaar Ko Kya Naam Doon 3 and Tu Aashiqui. Her breakthrough came in 2021 when she played Sonali "Sonu" Malhotra in Ishk Par Zor

Nahi.

She later bagged leading roles in Sasural Genda Phool 2 as Tanya 'Tidi' Awasthi and Harphoul Mohini, where she portrayed Mohini Chaudhary. From 2023 to 2024, she headlined Yeh Hai Chahatein as IAS officer Kashvi Sabharwal, a role that further boosted her popularity. She is currently seen playing Paridhi Virani in Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi 2. During a conversation with Filmgyan, Shagun was asked if there was anyone from Khatron Ke Khiladi 15 she would prefer not to stay in touch with after the show. Without much hesitation, she replied, "I think Gaurav Khanna is one person I would not want to meet."

Ram Gopal Varma speaks out on rising accountability in Bollywood

Mumbai : Filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma believes Bollywood became disciplined only after the COVID pandemic. He shared his thoughts in a recent interview. According to him, repeated box office failures forced Hindi cinema to change. South Indian films had dominated the national landscape for years.

Bollywood adopted a corporate model to survive. Budgets are now locked before production starts. Directors face personal liability for cost overruns. This system creates strict accountability and finan-

cial control. Since corporate companies are publicly traded, single failures rarely destroy businesses. The financial risk is shared across the company. Varma compared this structure with Telugu cinema. He noted that Telugu films follow a producer-driven model. Independent producers bear the full financial burden of failures. Neither directors nor lead actors face penalties for delays or extra costs. Projects often take years and spend huge sums without guaranteed returns.

Varma stated that accountability in Bollywood



is now much stronger. He praised the Hindi film industry for keeping production costs in check. Meanwhile, he pointed out that Telugu cinema struggles

with money issues. He blamed the lack of spending limits and individual accountability for these ongoing problems in the Telugu industry.

Janhvi Kapoor and Ishaan Khatter reunite on-screen in viral 'marriage' video

Mumbai : Janhvi Kapoor and Ishaan Khatter's 'wedding video' has gone viral across social media platforms, sparking nostalgia among fans. In the video, Janhvi and Ishaan discuss how to know whether your partner is "the one", making a beautiful couple dressed in decadent ethnic wear. Janhvi stunned in a deep red lehenga while Ishaan looked dapper in ivory.

Janhvi is asked, "When do you know he is the one?"

She replies, "I think you know he's the one when he's always there waiting for you." Ishaan mentions that you know "she is the one" when "she's worth the wait". Ishaan patiently waits to get a first look at Janhvi as a bride, and looks at her lovingly when he descends from a staircase. Ishaan steps forward to hold Janhvi close and walks hand-in-hand with her. However, the catch is that the video is for an ad-



vertisement campaign. This video has sparked nostalgia among fans as Janhvi

and Ishaan played lovers in Dhadak, their debut film. Directed by Shashank

Khaitan and produced by Karan Johar's Dharma Productions, Dhadak was a Hindi adaptation of Nagraj Manjule's acclaimed Marathi film Sairat.

The film explored issues of casteism and honour killing and went on to perform well at the box office. Many believed that Ishaan and Janhvi were also romantically involved after the film. However, this was only speculation with no confirmation. Both actors

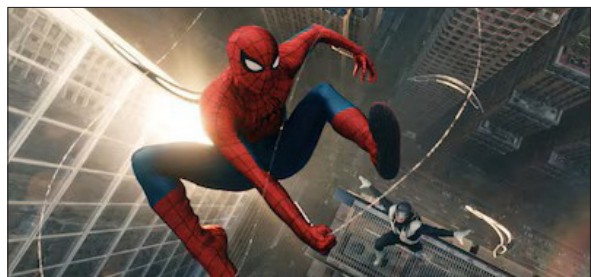
worked together again in Homebound, and ahead of the film's release, Ishaan reflected on his reunion with Janhvi.

In an interview with Zoom, the actor shared, "On Dhadak's set, Janhvi and I could lean onto each other." He explained, "My character is going through a lot of conflict. He is trying to be a man for her, but he is not able to. He is dealing with his own issues. He has been uprooted from

his family. You can see the cracks in him, his vulnerability. He is trying to be supportive, but inevitably he's dealing with his own demons."

The chemistry between Janhvi and Ishaan in Dhadak was widely appreciated and made them one of the most talked-about fresh on-screen pairings of the year. Their new campaign video has left fans asking the two actors to work together on more projects.

Tom Holland's Spider-Man: brand new day hits ₹100 cr in 2 days



Mumbai : Spider-Man is swinging high, and the Indian box office is loving every bit of it. Spider-Man: Brand New Day has zoomed past the Rs 100 crore mark in just two days, leaving behind the opening pace of films like Dhurandhar and Dunki. In just two days, the Tom Holland-starrer earned a massive Rs 109 crore in India. Just on Saturday, July 31, Spider-Man managed to

mint a whopping Rs 50 crore! Notably, this is Tom Holland's fourth solo outing as Spider-Man. In the Indian box office, the film earned Rs 60 crore on its opening day, hence creating history as the best ever by a Hollywood film. Interestingly, this superhero film even broke the previous best record held by Marvel's tentpole Avengers: Endgame in 2019. On Friday,

Spider-Man added Rs 49 crore net to its collection taking the total to Rs 109 crore in India alone. The film's two-day total has already surpassed the opening collections of several major Indian releases. While Dhurandhar earned around Rs 60 crore in its first two days, Dunki collected under Rs 50 crore during the same period, making Spider-Man: Brand New Day the clear frontrunner.

Directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, Spider-Man: Brand New Day picks up the narrative 4 years after the events of Spider-Man: No Way Home (2021). The official synopsis outlines a new phase in Peter Parker's journey, stating: "It's a brand new day for Peter

Parker. Fighting crime full-time as Spider-Man in a world that doesn't remember him—and the pressure of seeing his old friends move on without him—sparks a change in Peter he may not have the power to control. But that transformation might also be the only thing that can stop a shocking new threat to the city and those he loves—a powerful villain no one can even see." Directed by Destin Daniel Cretton and written by Chris McKenna and Erik Sommers, the film stars Tom Holland as Peter Parker/Spider-Man, alongside Zendaya, Sadie Sink, Jacob Batalon, Jon Bernthal, Florence Pugh, Tramell Tillman, Marisa Tomei and Mark Ruffalo.

Toxic trailer date revealed: Yash shares new poster ahead of August 8 release

Mumbai : Yash has officially begun the countdown to the trailer of Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups. The actor shared a monochrome poster from the upcoming gangster drama on Instagram, confirming that the full trailer will be unveiled on August 8, 2026.

The film is scheduled to arrive in cinemas worldwide on August 26, giving the makers a little over two weeks to build momentum after the trailer launch. The newly released poster shows Yash standing alone on a rain-soaked street at night, holding what appears to be a weapon in one hand. Dressed in a long coat and hat, the actor is seen facing away from the camera as heavy rain falls around him.

The black-and-white visual leans into the film's dark, noir-inspired world and offers another glimpse of Yash's mysterious character without revealing much about the plot. He also reiterated the film's theatrical release date, writing, "Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups



in cinemas worldwide from 26-08-2026." The post was accompanied by the film's title track credited to Shruti Haasan, further adding to the brooding tone of the announcement.

Directed by Geetu Mohandas, Toxic brings together Yash with one of the most prominent female ensembles assembled for a recent Indian film. The cast includes Nayanthara, Kiara Advani, Huma Qureshi, Tara Sutaria and Rukmi-

ni Vasanth. Kiara plays Nadia, a character she has described as one of the most creatively fulfilling roles of her career. The film's women have remained central to conversations around the project. While sections of social media previously questioned how its female characters were being presented in promotional material, Kiara has maintained that each actor brings a distinct identity to the film.

“I Am Just 15, Forgive Me” A girl who was arrested for assaulting PM Modi at a protest expresses regret

New Delhi, Aug 01: Social media users have seen a footage of the girl who was arrested for using derogatory words against Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a student demonstration apologizing for her comments. She is seen speaking with her hands folded and sporting a striped T-shirt in the now-viral footage. In the video, she claims, “I was influenced by some people at the protest and said a lot of negative things against the Prime Minister.” The girl says she is “just 15 years old” in the apologies video, despite the fact that the FIR said she is 25. I’m just fifteen years old. I was not deserving of pardon for whatever I did. I’ve spoken a lot of negative stuff.” She calls it her “first and last mistake” and says, “I apologize to the entire nation.” I feel very embarrassed. I am unable to even look at myself. Please pardon me. cannot independently confirm the video’s legitimacy. The girl’s comments on the Prime Minister prompted a police station in Noida to file a case against her on Wednesday. A Zero FIR was registered by Noida Police and subsequently moved to New Delhi’s Parliament Street Police Station. The complainant stated that her comments insulted the dignity of the Prime Minister’s office and could spread disharmony and disturb public peace. The apology video emerged just a few



hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s latest Instagram video appealing for restraint and forgiveness following abusive slogans directed at him during student protests. In the video posted on Friday night, PM Modi said that “abuses never solve anything” and urged society to guide, rather than punish, those who had gone astray. “What happened at Jantar Mantar has been seen by the country and the world,” he said. “Some misguided youngsters used language that has no place in any civilised society. I was abused, and even my late mother was abused.” Describing those who abused him as “misguided”, the Prime Minister said he did not believe the answer lay in “anger or retaliation”. “Mistakes are made in

childhood, and childhood also provides an opportunity to correct those mistakes. That is what being young is about,” he said in the video. “I am aware that there is anger in society. But now is the moment to welcome these kids and guide them in the correct direction. They are misinformed kids. It is our responsibility to guide them; punishing them, dragging them through the legal system, and harassing them won’t make things better. The prime minister expressed his desire to pardon those at fault and urged the public to follow suit. I’d want to pardon them. He continued, “I ask society to accept what I am saying as well.” “Abuse is never a solution. Let’s help people who are lost. Let’s collaborate. Let’s work for Bharat.

Mirabai Chanu is “overjoyed” that India will host the next Commonwealth Games

Southampton: Mirabai Chanu, an Indian weightlifter, said she was thrilled to see so many other Indians in the Ahmedabad center and was pleased with the kind welcome she received. “I am truly delighted,” Chanu remarked in an interview with ANI. I was surprised to see so many Indians here. Ahmedabad as a whole seems to have gathered here. She also stated she was getting ready to provide her best performance and expressed excitement about India hosting the next Commonwealth Games. “India is set to host the next Commonwealth Games. We’ve been watching the preparations unfold over the past year. I am overjoyed that India will be hosting these games, and I am fully preparing myself to deliver my best performance across all sports disciplines,” she said. Meanwhile, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Ayush and Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Prataprao Ganpatrao Jadhav, has written to the Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Mansukh Mandaviya, on his own initiative, urging that India’s celebrated weightlifter and Olympic medalist, Mirabai Chanu, be considered for the prestigious Arjuna Award this year, according to an official press release. In his letter, Prataprao Jadhav highlighted Mirabai Chanu’s exceptional achievements and her remarkable contribution to Indian weightlifting. The Minister



noted that the athlete from Manipur has created history through her outstanding performances at the Commonwealth Games, bringing immense pride to the nation. Prataprao Jadhav highlighted Chanu’s remarkable record of winning gold medals at successive editions of the Commonwealth Games and her distinction of being the athlete who won India’s first gold medal on each of these occasions. The Minister also highlighted her exceptional performances in the 48 kg category, including her record-breaking lifts in the snatch, clean and jerk and total lift categories. Jadhav further highlighted that Mirabai Chanu has already been honoured with several of the country’s highest sporting recognitions, including the Major Dhyani Chand Khel

Ratna Award and the Padma, besides winning an Olympic medal. However, her childhood dream of receiving the Arjuna Award, which she had nurtured since her early days of training in her village in Manipur, remains unfulfilled. Urging the Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports to consider her nomination, Jadhav expressed that honouring Mirabai Chanu with the Arjuna Award would be a fitting recognition of her outstanding performances, exceptional talent and invaluable contribution to Indian sport. Prataprao Jadhav further emphasized that millions of young Indians are inspired by Chanu’s remarkable journey from a small Manipur town to become one of India’s most successful weightlifters, which is a testimonial to her tenacity, perseverance, and commitment.

A Pakistani cricket player gets hugged by Jemimah Rodrigues in the hundred The video became viral

New Delhi: Following a match between their teams in The Hundred on Thursday, Pakistani all-rounder Fatima Sana and Indian women’s cricket team star Jemimah Rodrigues hugged. Following the conclusion of the Southern Brave vs. Birmingham Phoenix game, the two cricket players were seen talking in a video that went popular on social media. Since the Pahalgam terror attack in 2025, Indian cricket players have continued to refuse to shake hands with their Pakistani counterparts.



matches while Phoenix remained without a single win. Batting first, Brave posted a total of 140/3 with Lizelle Lee scoring 43 and Maia Bouchier scoring 45. Rodrigues provided the late fireworks with her unbeaten 28 to take the hosts to a competitive total. Fatima conceded 33 runs in her 15-ball spell while Alana King and Alice Capsey took one wicket each for their side. In reply, Phoenix were off to a great start thanks to a 73-run

partnership between Tammy Beaumont and Davina Perrin. While Perrin scored 52 off 43 balls, Beaumont contributed with 22. However, their dismissals proved to be the turning point. Sarah Glenn dismissed Perrin and Lauren Bell went on to take the wicket of Alice Capsey. Sophie Molineux took two late wickets as Phoenix could only manage to score 116/5. Ellyse Perry remained unbeaten on 16 with Fatima on 5.

Two dozen Indians are still in the Russian Army, and efforts are on to free them Center



New Delhi, Aug 01: About 20 Indian nationals are still serving in the Russian Army, India announced on Friday, and attempts are being made to obtain their release. New Delhi has been pleading with Russia to free all Indians working with Russian military troops as support personnel, including chefs and assistants. Randhir Jaiswal, a spokesman for the external affairs ministry, urged Indians to avoid accepting employment offers that are “fraught” with dan-

gers. He stated that 139 Indian people had been freed thus far as a result of government efforts. In order to secure the release of the remaining Indian nationals with the Russian army, we have been following up with the Russian side. 139 Indian people have been freed as a result of our efforts thus far,” Jaiswal stated at his customary press conference. “We continue to pursue the release of around two dozen Indian nationals who reportedly joined and still remain

with the Russian army,” he said. “We once again caution our people against job offers that are fraught with risks and made by unscrupulous individuals or agencies.”

Over 30 Indians have died so far while serving with the Russian military on the frontlines of the conflict in Ukraine. In a related development, the Supreme Court on Friday directed the Centre to appoint a nodal officer in the external affairs ministry to coordinate with the families of those who have died, gone missing, or suffered injuries while fighting in the Russia-Ukraine war. A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joy-malya Bagchi and V Mohana was hearing a plea pertaining to Indian nationals recruited into the Russian military after being allegedly duped by travel agents.

ic officials to act with ruthlessness.” The court was hearing a bunch of petitions raising concerns about pollution, persistent foul odour, gas emissions and health risks for residents in the vicinity of Kanjurmarg dumping ground in the eastern part of the metropolis. “We have to sensitise our citizens. Here, a person will throw garbage on the road without batting an eyelid, but these same people, when abroad, will strictly avoid such behaviour. Even a small chocolate wrapper they will throw in the dustbin,” the High Court said. Is this the price of liberty and democracy? the court remarked. Referring to large amounts of

“Fearing Protests,” TISS Delays Convocation The Chief Guest was to be the Chief Justice

Mumbai, Aug 01: The 86th annual convocation event at Mumbai’s Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) has been suddenly postponed from August 2. Two days prior to the ceremony, on Thursday, just after midnight, the institute’s registrar sent graduating students an email informing them of the postponement, claiming “unforeseen circumstances.”

Acting major Justice of the Bombay High Court Ravindra Ghuge was to be the guest of honor, while Chief Justice of India Surya Kant was to be the major guest. Institute officials and student representatives said the postponement stemmed from campus security concerns and intelligence inputs regarding potential student protests targeting the dignitaries. The administration reportedly feared that protests linked to the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)



movement could break out during the event. In a statement issued to the media on Friday evening, the institute administration said, “The Institute assessed that the ceremony could not be held in a conducive environment and that proceeding

as scheduled could have affected the wellbeing of students, faculty, staff, dignitaries, guests, and campus life.” “The Institute had to take the difficult decision to postpone the Convocation in the best and long term interest of the Institute

as well as preserving the wellbeing of students, faculty, dignitaries, guests, and campus life. The Institute stands with you at this difficult moment and also seeks your cooperation in carrying forward the legacy of the Institute with dignity and respect,” the TISS notice stated. Hundreds of graduating students and their families, who had already booked flights, trains, and hotels, were very irritated by the decision. In a later official statement, TISS said that requests for financial aid resulting from the last-minute cancellation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and regretted the serious difficulty given to families. Students were reassured by the administration that provisional diplomas would be given to those who needed them right now and that a new date for the ceremony would be announced shortly.

Tanvi Sharma and Unnati Hooda advance to the Taipei Open semifinals



Taipei Arena: Unnati Hooda and Tanvi Sharma of India advanced to the semifinals of the Taipei Open badminton competition on Friday after winning their respective women’s singles bouts. However, Kiran George was defeated 21-12 21-10 in 33 minutes by Japan’s fourth-seeded Yudai Okimoto in his men’s singles quarterfinal encounter. Tanvi defeated Thailand’s Supanida Katethong 21-15 18-21 21-14 in a demand-

ing 54-minute quarterfinal match, while Hooda defeated fellow countryman Devika Sihag 23-21 21-16 to get to the round of four. Earlier in the day, the all-Indian quarterfinal contest between Hooda and Sihag started with a fiercely contested first game, where the former held her nerve to win it 23-21. Hooda was off to a great start, racing to an 11-3 lead before Sihag staged a spirited comeback to level the scores at 21-21. However,

Hooda held her composure in the closing stages, winning the next two points to clinch the opening game. In the second game, the third seeded Hooda maintained her momentum and capitalised on her leads to wrap up the match 21-16 against eighth seed Sihag in 42 minutes. The 18-year-old Hooda will next face the winner of the quarterfinal between Chinese Taipei’s Chiu Pin-chian and Vietnam’s Nguyen Thuy Linh.

Sacrilege Row Consumes Bhagwant Mann Government Following Akali Dal

Chandigarh, Aug 01: For a long time, Punjab’s political parties have been plagued with sacrilege. The issue has periodically changed the political landscape of the state, from helping to terminate Shiromani Akali Dal’s control following the 2015 occurrences to being a recurrent electoral litmus test for succeeding governments.

With Sri Akal Takht Sahib rejecting the Bhagwant Mann government’s response to the proposed anti-sacrilege law and giving Sikh MLAs unprecedented instructions ahead of the Assembly session, the question facing the AAP is whether it has become the most recent government to be ensnared by a problem that has plagued Punjab’s previous ruling administrations. The latest confrontation has transformed what began as a legislative exercise into a political and religious flashpoint. By describing the government’s response as “unsatisfactory”, forming its own committee to negotiate amendments and directing Sikh MLAs not to participate in any discussion on the Bill until a consensus is reached, the Akal Takht has significantly raised the political stakes. Its advice to Sikh legislators to distance themselves from Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann inside the assembly underlines the depth of the standoff. For the Mann government, the challenge goes beyond defending a piece of legislation. AAP came to power in 2022 promising justice in sacrilege cases and a decisive break

from the perceived failures of previous governments. The debate has now shifted to whether the government has adequately accommodated the concerns raised by the highest temporal seat of Sikh authority. Even if the government argues that the proposed law must satisfy legal and constitutional requirements, the optics of a public disagreement with the Akal Takht are politically significant in Punjab. The controversy also comes at a time AAP has broadened its outreach to Hindu voters through initiatives such as “Ek Shaam Shiv Ke Naam” while simultaneously trying to retain its support among Sikh voters. The party has consistently maintained that its programmes are inclusive and aimed at all communities. Its opponents, however, are expected to argue that the simultaneous confrontation with the Akal Takht risks creating a perception that the government is losing its footing on one of Punjab’s most emotionally charged issues. For the opposition, the issue offers fertile political ground. The Shiromani Akali Dal is likely to project itself as the defender of Sikh religious institutions, while the Congress is expected to question the government’s handling of an issue that has dominated Punjab’s politics for over a decade. The BJP, too, is likely to target AAP over its handling of both governance and religious sensitivities. The immediate political test will come in the assembly session beginning August 3.

“Price Of Liberty” Court Regarding the “Litter Here, Cleanliness Abroad” Act for Indians

Mumbai, Aug 01: The Bombay High Court questioned whether this was the price one paid for freedom and democracy and voiced severe displeasure of those who litter in India while abiding by the laws elsewhere and only dropping trash in approved locations. On Friday, a bench made up of Justices G. S. Kulkarni and Aarti Sathe urged residents and local officials to become more aware of the need to prevent trash from piling up on public areas and roadways. A person has a fundamental obligation to society to preserve cleanliness if they desire a clean environment. The court declared, “We want the civ-

plastic waste lying in public places, the court said even beaches in the city are flooded with plastic and questioned if “we are living in a civilised society”. The court noted that the city faces tremendous hazards daily from garbage dumped on the main roads and bylanes, and the serious health and hygiene issues arising from these. Referring to the ‘Swachh Mumbai, Sundar Mumbai, Aapli Mumbai, Sundar Mumbai’ logo of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, the bench said the intention is clear, but the same is being collectively defeated by citizens and by the civic machinery’s inaction.

Jemimah Rodrigues Embraces Pakistan’s Fatima Sana in The Hundred, Video Trends Online

New Delhi: Jemimah Rodrigues and Pakistan captain Fatima Sana shared a brief hug after Southern Brave defeated Birmingham Phoenix by 12 runs in the Women’s Hundred 2026, with the video quickly going viral on social media. Following the match, the India and Pakistan players exchanged a brief embrace before joining their respective teammates, and the clip was widely shared across social media platforms. The interaction came against the backdrop of recent on-field tensions involving India and Pakistan cricketers. Meetings between the two sides have drawn increased attention in recent months amid the political situation between the neighbouring countries, with player interactions closely watched by fans. Against that backdrop, Rodrigues’ exchange with Sana became one of the major talking points after the contest. Rodrigues made another valuable contribution with the bat, scoring an unbeaten 28 off 18 balls after Maia Bouchier (45) and Lizelle Lee (43) had laid the foundation for Southern Brave’s total. The India batter provided late acceleration to help her side post a competitive score and later chipped in with a catch as Brave registered their second win of the season. It was a difficult outing,



however, for Fatima on her Women’s Hundred debut. The Pakistan captain finished without a wicket after conceding 33 runs from her 15-ball spell, with Southern Brave’s batters capitalising on her overs in the closing stages of the innings. She later remained unbeaten on 5 during Birmingham Phoenix’s chase, but her side ultimately fell short of the target. Rodrigues has enjoyed an encouraging start since joining Southern Brave for the 2026 edition of The Hundred. The India batter had earlier produced

a Player of the Match performance in Brave’s one-run victory over MI London and has continued to make important contributions in the middle order. In four matches this season, Rodrigues has scored 106 runs at an average of 53 and a strike-rate of 134.17. The 25-year-old has once again underlined her value in the competition after an impressive stint with Northern Superchargers during the inaugural 2021 season, when she finished among the team’s leading run-scorers.

Roston Chase Wants West Indies to Build Home Fortress Ahead of Second Test Against Pakistan



Port of Spain: West Indies Test captain Roston Chase said the team is determined to build on its improved home record and make the Caribbean a “fortress” for visiting sides as they prepare to face Pakistan in the second Test, according to Cricinfo. Speaking to reporters

at the Queen’s Park Oval on Friday, Chase said the team had set clear goals after a difficult 2025 season, when West Indies won just one of their nine Tests. “After having the year last year [West Indies won one and lost eight], we sat down with the plan and said that this is where

we want to be. And as I said, we’re exactly where we want to be. We want to level up,” Chase said, as quoted by Cricinfo. The West Indies skipper urged his players not to take anything for granted in the second Test and stressed the importance of executing the plans they had discussed. “We want to just come into this second Test, not take anything for granted, just go through the processes that we’ve sat down and talked about. We want to come and execute them to the best of our ability. And look to get that second victory,” he added. Chase also expressed satisfaction with the team’s performances on home soil and said the West Indies want to establish a strong home advantage by making it difficult for visiting teams to win in the Caribbean. “We’re very blessed and very hap-

py for the results that we’ve been having at home so far. But I want to make home our fortress, where we make it very difficult for teams to come to the Caribbean and beat us. Because it’s our own conditions, we know them inside out, and better than the opposition,” he said, as quoted by Cricinfo. “So I think we want to really make home advantage count, and we’ve been doing that well so far. So, as I said, we’re lucky to continue in the vein of form that we’ve been in, and to take victory in this second game,” the West Indies captain added. Meanwhile, Shan Masood will miss the second Test against West Indies due to a finger injury, delivering a massive blow to Pakistan’s chances to level the series. Masood suffered the injury during the first Test against the Caribbean side in Trinidad when he was struck.

Javelin: Is the Neeraj Chopra Era Nearing Its End After Recent Challenges and Setbacks?



Glasgow: Neeraj Chopra won a silver in the Commonwealth Games javelin on Friday, July 31. He threw a season-best of 85.83m in gruelling, windy, chilly conditions in Glasgow. It was only his second competition since a back injury flared up at the World Championships last year, where he finished eighth and ended a streak

of 2,566 days of podium finishes. It was his first podium finish of the year after a fourth-place showing at the Doha Diamond League. His second Commonwealth Games medal, to go with the gold in 2018. A stacked, Olympic-level field, and he still walked away with silver. That’s one way to look at it. Neeraj was back, and back

on the podium, 10 months after one of the worst nights of his career. But Neeraj carries a curse he helped build himself. When he won silver at the Paris Olympics two years ago, beaten by Pakistan’s Arshad Nadeem and his two 90m-plus throws, including the Olympic record of 92.97m, it should have been treated as a huge achievement. No Indian had ever won a medal in a field event at the Games before Neeraj. Instead, a country that had spent decades starved of Olympic greatness felt disappointed. That’s what seven years of habit does. Neeraj never finished a competition off the podium for seven straight years, thirty-three tournaments without being pushed out of the top three. He didn’t just win.

Diksha Fires 69, Secures Top-10 Position After Opening Round at Women’s Open

Lytham St Annes : Diksha Dagar overcame an early bogey to play a steady opening round and post 2-under 69 at the 2026 Women’s Open at Lytham St Annes. Diksha, who has been having a good season but has been without a win, was placed in Top-10 at tied-eighth. India’s other player in the field Aditi Ashok (74) was Tied-75th needing a good second round to make the 36-hole cut in the last Major for women this season. TrendingVideos Diksha, who is making her seventh start at the Women’s Open has a best of T-21 in 2023 and she was T-46 last year. Aditi is making her 39th Major start, a record for any Indian - male or female - and is playing the ninth time in the Open. She has made the cut only twice at the Women’s Open and has a best of T-22 in 2018. Diksha opened par-par before she dropped her first and only shot of the day on the third. She got the stroke back on the fifth and then began a series of six pars till the 13th. Two birdies on the 13th and the 16th put her in a good position and she closed with two pars for a 69 on the Par-71 course. Aditi got her only birdie of the day on the second and then dropped shots on the fourth, fifth, 15th and the 18th. The world number two, Thitikul was on excellent form on day one



rolling in three birdies on the trot on holes four, five and six. Thitikul added another birdie on eight before further birdies on 11, 13 and 15 to seal her round of seven-under-par and lead by two strokes. Thitikul, a five-time LET winner, has great memories of this golf course after she won the Smyth Salver during the 2018 edition of the Women’s Open. I should be better than when I was 15 years old! It played the same, I think there’s still bunkers in the way and when you play good you keep the momentum going. My strategy is to beat my score from when I was 15,” Thitikul continued. “I had really good memories on the first hole. I remember the first day from 2018 and on the first hole, I hit it [very] close to the pin. That’s the best memories. Then making the cut was also a good memory, but I think I finished last so I was to keep improving on what I did last time.” Two-

time Major champion Haeran Ryu and Japan’s Shiho Kuwaki share second place on five-under-par. Ryu, who won the Women’s PGA Championship and Amundi Evian Championship back-to-back, began her day with a birdie at the first and added further birdies on the fourth, sixth and seventh holes. Despite a bogey on 15, the world number three bounced back with birdies on 16 and 18 to seal an opening round of five-under-par. Kuwaki only had one dropped shot on her scorecard and rolled in birdies on the fourth, fifth, sixth, 11th, 16th and 18th holes. History American Yealimi Noh and France’s Celine Boutier ended the opening day in a tie for fourth place on four-under-par. Boutier was bogey-free after making an eagle on the sixth hole and birdies on nine and 13 for her 67 (-4). Japan’s Chizze Iwai and Thailand’s Chanetee Wannasarn share sixth

place on three-under-par with nine players one shot further back including English duo Lottie Woad and Charley Hull, Singapore’s Shannon Tan, India’s Diksha Dagar and Spanish amateur Paula Martin Sampedro. 2025 LET Order of Merit winner Tan made a solid start with her opening 69 (-2) which included five birdies, one bogey and one double bogey. Indian golfer Diksha Dagar produced a confident opening-round performance at the Women’s Open, carding a 69 to place herself inside the top-10 leaderboard after the first day of action. The left-handed golfer displayed composure and accuracy throughout her round, putting together a strong start against a challenging field featuring some of the world’s best players. Diksha’s three-under-par effort reflected her improved consistency and ability to handle pressure on one of golf’s biggest stages. Her disciplined approach, accurate ball striking and controlled putting helped her remain among the early contenders at the prestigious championship. The Indian golfer began her round with a positive mindset and avoided major mistakes, allowing her to build momentum as the day progressed. Her performance was highlighted by several well-executed shots, especially on cision was crucial.

Mary Kom’s Story Inspired Pakistan’s First Female CWG Boxing Medallist Fatima

Glasgow : India’s MC Mary Kom has inspired generations of homegrown boxers, but the six-time world champion’s influence has travelled well beyond the country’s borders, reaching Pakistan’s first female Commonwealth Games medallist, Fatima Zahra. IndiaNews Portal The 22-year-old signed off with a historic bronze medal in the women’s 60kg event here, becoming the first Pakistani woman boxer to stand on a Commonwealth Games podium. Growing up in Sargodha in Pakistan’s Punjab province, Fatima had few female boxing role models to look up to in her own country. She instead found one across the border in Mary Kom. “I am inspired by India’s Mary Kom,” Fatima told PTI after securing her bronze medal. For Fatima, it was not just Mary Kom’s achievements but the story behind them that resonated. Born into a poor farming family in rural Manipur, Mary Kom overcame financial hardship, social resistance and limited resources to become one of the greatest boxers of all time. GeographicReference She secretly pursued boxing in her early years, balancing training with work in the fields before going on to win six world championship titles, an Olympic bronze medal, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games golds, and five Asian Championships. The 2014 Bollywood biopic based on Mary Kom’s life left a lasting impression on a then 10-year-old Fatima. “I used to watch the film made on her life. When I started boxing I used to watch that movie and train. I have a lot of respect for her and inshallah one day I will become like her. I hope I can meet her,” Fatima said. Like Mary Kom, Fatima also had to battle opposition at home before she could chase her dreams. “My background is not that strong. My



basic coach taught me everything,” she said. “My family was against boxing. They would not let me go for training but I fought with them and continued training.” Years later, the resistance has turned into unwavering support. “And now they are more tense than me for my fight and competition,” she said with a smile. Fatima hopes her breakthrough medal can encourage more Pakistani girls to challenge stereotypes and take up sport instead of being confined to household responsibilities. “I was also just another girl. I joined boxing, trained and worked hard. I want other girls who are told to work at home to come out like me. “I have struggled and worked so hard. I want others to get boosted by my performance and get inspired.” Training at the Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS), Inunganbi has benefited from an integrated high-performance environment that supported every stage of her comeback. Following her surgery in June 2024, IIS played a key role in her rehabilitation and return-to-sport programme, providing access to coaching, strength and conditioning, physiotherapy, recovery, sports science and nutrition support. “Coming back after two serious knee injuries taught me to appreciate every training session and every opportunity to compete. There

were moments when the road back felt uncertain, but I never stopped believing I could return stronger. The support I received at the Inspire Institute of Sport throughout my rehabilitation made a huge difference. From my recovery to getting back on the mat, I always had the right people around me, and that gave me the confidence to focus completely on becoming the best version of myself.” Her remarkable comeback reached a new milestone earlier this year when she claimed bronze at the Asian Judo Championships in Ordos, becoming the first Indian to win a medal at the competition since 2013. For Inunganbi, the achievement reaffirmed that persistence and consistency eventually bring results. “Winning the Asian Championships bronze was a special moment because it reminded me that all the hard work during rehabilitation was worth it. Every competition teaches you something, and my focus now is to keep improving, trust the process and perform to the best of my ability whenever I step onto the mat.” Baye Diawara, Inunganbi’s coach at the Inspire Institute of Sport, believes her greatest strength has been the determination she showed throughout her recovery. “Inunganbi’s biggest quality is her resilience.