

Dragon Fruit Project Announced at Horticulture Fair

Aizawl, Jun 18: Mizoram Horticulture Minister C. Lalsawivunga on Wednesday inaugurated the 13th Horticulture Fair at Lam-mual in Aizawl, emphasizing the need to strengthen agricultural and horticultural activities to achieve greater economic self-reliance in the state.

The annual event brought together farmers, horticulture experts, government officials, and stakeholders, serving as a platform to showcase local produce and promote sustainable agricultural development.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Minister of State Prof. Lalnilawma, MIFCO Chairman Lalthazuala, and several senior officials from the horticulture sector. Addressing the gathering, Lalsawivunga described the fair as an important opportunity for farmers to directly market their products to consumers, thereby improving market access and enhancing income opportunities for growers.

The minister urged residents of Aizawl and surrounding areas to support local farmers by purchasing agricultural products dis-

Expressing concern over Mizoram's continued dependence on imported agricultural commodities despite decades of

events such as the horticulture fair can play a significant role in promoting economic independence and sustainable growth.



played at the fair. He stressed that strengthening local markets is essential for boosting rural livelihoods and encouraging increased production within the state.

statehood, Lalsawivunga said the situation underscores the urgent need to expand domestic production and reduce reliance on external supplies. He noted that

Highlighting the growing demand for Mizoram's agricultural produce across India, the minister credited the state's reputation to its largely organic farming prac-

tices. He encouraged farmers to continue adopting chemical-free cultivation methods and to explore niche crops that are less commonly grown elsewhere, which could offer greater profitability and market advantages.

In a significant announcement, Lalsawivunga revealed that the state government is preparing to launch a pilot project on dragon fruit cultivation.

The initiative aims to diversify horticultural production, create new income opportunities, and further strengthen the sector's contribution to the state economy.

The event also recognized outstanding contributions to agriculture through the presentation of the Best Horticulture Farmer Award to selected farmers from each district. The awards celebrated innovation, dedication, and excellence in horticultural practices, reinforcing the state's commitment to supporting its farming community.

Mohan's Transfer to Jaipur Under Legal Scrutiny

Guwahati, Jun 18: The Office of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW), Assam, has confirmed that a captive elephant named Mohan from Lakhimpur was illegally transported to Jaipur using forged documents and a falsified signature of the Assam Chief Wildlife Warden.

The revelation has triggered legal proceedings in both Assam and Rajasthan, with wildlife authorities intensifying investigations into the alleged illegal interstate transfer. According to officials, the matter came to light after the Assam Forest Department received a report from the Rajasthan Chief Wildlife Warden regarding irregularities in the elephant's transfer documents. Acting on the findings, the Rajasthan Forest Department seized the elephant and arrested individuals allegedly involved in the illegal transportation. Mohan currently remains in the custody of the Rajasthan Forest Department while legal proceedings continue. Authorities stated that a case has been registered before the Court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM), Jaipur, and the matter is presently under judicial scrutiny in the Rajasthan High Court. Simultaneously, Assam authorities have initiated parallel legal action. A case has been registered at the CJM Court in Lakhimpur, and an investigating officer has been appointed to examine the circumstances surrounding the transfer.

Additionally, an FIR has been lodged at Dispur Police Station in Guwahati concerning the alleged forgery of official signatures and related documents. The development comes amid growing concerns raised by wildlife conservationist and environmental journalist Mubina Akhtar, a member of the Kaziranga Wildlife Society. In a letter addressed to Assam's Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden on June 12, Akhtar sought detailed information regarding the reported transfer of captive elephants from Assam to Rajasthan and southern India. She specifically requested records related to Mohan's movement from Lakhimpur to Jaipur and the proposed transfer of another captive elephant, Ram Prasad, from Golaghat. Akhtar also emphasized the need for strict compliance with the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and the Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024, which mandate thorough verification and documentation before interstate transfers are approved.

Meanwhile, the Forest Department clarified that there is currently no verified information regarding any illegal transportation attempt involving Ram Prasad. Wildlife authorities have reiterated their commitment to taking strict legal action against those involved in illegal wildlife transportation and document forgery, while investigations into the Mohan case continue.

Historic Medical Museum in Dibrugarh Finally Set to Open

Dibrugarh, Jun 18: After years of delays and missed deadlines, the much-awaited Dr John Berry White Medical Museum in Dibrugarh is finally set to open its doors to the public on July 1, coinciding with National Doctors' Day.

The museum, which commemorates the rich legacy of medical education in Northeast India, had remained closed despite the completion of renovation and beautification work due to administrative hurdles and prolonged delays. The decision to open the museum was finalized during a review meeting

chaired by Dibrugarh Deputy Commissioner Bikram Kairi. The meeting was attended by Dibrugarh MLA Prasanta Phukan, Dibrugarh Municipal Corporation (DMC) Mayor Dr Saikat Patra, Assam Medical College and Hospital (AMCH) Superintendent Dr Dhrubajyoti Bhuyan, representatives of the Indian Medical Association (IMA), and other officials. Following the meeting, MLA Prasanta Phukan described the museum as a prestigious heritage project that had suffered years of neglect. He announced that the responsibility for managing

the facility would now be handed over to the Dibrugarh Municipal Corporation.

A dedicated management committee comprising representatives from the IMA, AMCH, and the district health department will be formed to oversee the museum's operations and future development. Mayor Dr Saikat Patra assured that the civic body would take responsibility for maintaining cleanliness and proper upkeep of the museum premises. Plans are also underway to improve the site's aesthetics through landscaping and the installation of

solar-powered lighting. The Rs 2.1-crore project was funded under Oil India Limited's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative and was originally scheduled for completion in April 2019. However, despite a Memorandum of Understanding signed between Oil India Limited and INTACH in January 2018, the project faced repeated delays. The museum honours Dr John Berry White, a British surgeon who served in Assam for 24 years and dedicated his life savings to establish the Dr John Berry White Medical School in 1900.



The institution later evolved into Assam Medical College in 1947, becoming the foundation of modern medical education in Northeast India. Residents and members of

the medical fraternity have welcomed the announcement, expressing hope that the museum will preserve and showcase the region's rich medical heritage for future generations.

Suspected Militant Killed, Arms Recovered in Manipur Operation

Imphal, Jun 18: Security forces have intensified operations across several districts of Manipur following recent incidents of armed violence, with large-scale combing and area domination exercises underway in Kangpokpi, Churachandpur and Thoubal districts.

The move comes as authorities continue efforts to strengthen security, prevent further disturbances, and ensure the safety of residents in sensitive and vulnerable areas. According to Manipur Police, joint teams of security forces have been conducting coordinated operations in areas identified as vulnerable following recent community clashes and armed incidents.

The operations include extensive searches, surveillance activities, and increased deployment of personnel to maintain law and order. Security officials said the objective is to prevent the movement of armed groups and ensure peace and stability across affected regions. The latest security measures follow an encounter operation conducted on June 16 by the Indian Army and

Assam Rifles in the area between Molphei and Songkong villages. Acting on specific intelligence inputs regarding the presence of suspected militants, security forces launched an operation in the area. During the mission, troops came under fire from suspected armed individuals, following which security personnel retaliated. The exchange of fire resulted in the death of one suspected militant. After the operation, security personnel recovered an AK-47 rifle, magazines, ammunition, explosives, and other materials from the encounter site. Officials stated that the recovered items have been taken into custody and further investigation is underway.

A case has also been registered in connection with the incident. Following the encounter and other recent disturbances, security forces have increased their presence in multiple locations across Kangpokpi, Churachandpur and Thoubal districts. Cord-on-and-search operations are being carried out in coordination with various security agencies to identify possible threats and prevent illegal activities. To strengthen security arrangements,



checkpoints, commonly known as nakas, have been established at important locations across the affected areas. These checkpoints are aimed at monitoring movement, preventing the transportation of illegal weapons or materials, and ensuring quick response capabilities in case of emergencies. The Director General of Police (DGP), Manipur, is personally monitoring the ongoing combing and area domination operations. Senior security officials are reviewing ground situations regularly and coordinating with different agencies to maintain effective law enforcement. Authorities have appealed to residents

to cooperate with security personnel during the operations and remain alert. Officials emphasized that the intensified measures are part of a broader strategy to restore normalcy, protect communities, and create a secure environment across the state. The continued deployment and coordinated efforts by the Army, Assam Rifles, Manipur Police and other security agencies underline the administration's focus on maintaining peace and preventing escalation of violence. Investigations into recent incidents are ongoing, and security forces remain committed to ensuring stability in the affected districts.

Excise Department and Assam Rifles Bust Drug Networks

Aizawl, Jun 18: In a major crackdown on narcotics trafficking, the Mizoram Excise and Narcotics Department, in coordination with Assam Rifles, carried out a series of successful anti-drug operations across the state on Tuesday, leading to the seizure of large quantities of heroin and methamphetamine tablets and the arrest of six individuals, including a Myanmar national. The operations underscore the growing efforts of law enforcement agencies to curb the movement of illegal drugs through the northeastern region, particularly along routes linked to the international border with Myanmar. The largest seizure was reported from Khatla locality in Aizawl late on Tuesday night.

Acting on specific intelligence inputs, officials recovered 350 grams of heroin concealed in 30 soap cases, a method commonly used by traffickers to transport narcotics. Three individuals were arrested in connection with the seizure. The accused were identified as Vanlallianzaupa (33), a Myanmar national residing in Zokhawthar in Champhai district, K.C. Lal-

rintluanga (38) of Ramhlun South in Aizawl, and Lalthamangaihzuali (30) of Bawngkawn in Aizawl. Authorities also seized a Tata Intra V17 vehicle allegedly used for transporting the contraband. Earlier in the day, another operation conducted near Temple Square in Tuikual South, Aizawl, resulted in the recovery of 241 grams of heroin. The narcotics were allegedly found in the possession of Gin Khan Sang (28), a resident of Churachandpur district in neighbouring Manipur. Officials arrested the suspect and registered a case under the relevant provisions of the law. In a separate joint operation, personnel of the Excise and Narcotics Department and the Field Intelligence Unit (FIU) of Assam Rifles intercepted a major consignment of methamphetamine tablets at Tlamsam village in Champhai district, located near the India-Myanmar border. During the operation, authorities seized 9,786 methamphetamine tablets weighing approximately 950 grams.

Two individuals, identified as Lalramnghaka (30) and

Zosangzuala (38), both residents of Zion Veng in Champhai, were taken into custody for their alleged involvement in the trafficking network. Officials said the coordinated operations reflect the increasing vigilance of enforcement agencies amid concerns over cross-border narcotics smuggling.

Mizoram, due to its strategic location along the Myanmar border, has often been used as a transit route by drug traffickers operating in the region. All six accused have been booked under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985. They were produced before the court on Wednesday for further legal proceedings. Authorities have stated that investigations are continuing to identify the broader network behind the trafficking operations and to determine the source and intended destination of the seized narcotics.

The successful operations are being viewed as a significant step in the state's ongoing fight against drug trafficking and substance abuse.



Silluk Celebrates Yoga and Harmony

Silluk, Jun 18: Nestled amid the serene foothills of Arunachal Pradesh, Silluk village in East Siang district is preparing to host 'Prana Silluk', a large-scale yoga gathering on June 21 to mark International Yoga Day.

The event is being organized by the Department of Panchayati Raj in collaboration with the District

Administration, East Siang, and aims to celebrate the harmony between nature and human well-being while promoting healthy living, environmental consciousness, and active community participation. Renowned for its spotless streets, lush greenery, and tranquil atmosphere, Silluk has earned recognition as a

model village that embodies the principles of balance, harmony, and sustainable living. Its commitment to cleanliness and ecological preservation makes it an ideal venue for a unique wellness experience that combines yoga with the beauty of nature. Beyond commemorating International Yoga Day, 'Prana Silluk' will highlight the village's remarkable achievements in community-led sanitation and environmental sustainability.

Silluk has gained appreciation for maintaining a waste-free environment through citizen-driven cleanliness initiatives and responsible management of natural resources. The event is expected to showcase how grassroots

action can effectively support broader goals of wellness, sustainability, and community development. Participants will have the opportunity to practice yoga amidst pristine natural surroundings, breathing fresh mountain air and experiencing a sense of calm away from the distractions of urban life. Surrounded by rolling landscapes, community-maintained green spaces, and a peaceful rural setting, the village offers an ideal environment for reflection, rejuvenation, and holistic well-being. What truly distinguishes Silluk is the collective spirit of its residents. The community's dedication to preserving forests, protecting water

sources, and maintaining cleanliness reflects the discipline, mindfulness, and responsibility that yoga seeks to cultivate.

This unique blend of environmental stewardship and community participation has made Silluk a shining example of sustainable village development. Carrying the inspiring motto, "Breathe Pure. Nourish the Soul. Experience Silluk," the event invites participants to reconnect with themselves and nature. Organizers hope that 'Prana Silluk' will not only celebrate yoga but also inspire visitors to embrace healthier lifestyles and appreciate the value of environmental conservation and community-driven progress.



Talks with CM ease tensions for one group as fresh blockade threat looms in Tripura

Agartala, June 18: A section of surrendered militants in Tripura has expressed optimism after holding discussions with Chief Minister Prof. (Dr.) Manik Saha on their long-pending rehabilitation demands, even as another group of former insurgents has threatened to launch a statewide National Highway and railway blockade on June 24. The development highlights the continuing challenges surrounding the rehabilitation and welfare of surrendered militants in the state, an issue that has remained under discussion for several years. Representatives of various surrendered militant organisations met the Chief Minister at his official residence earlier this week.

The meeting came after the groups withdrew a proposed 72-hour road blockade that was scheduled to begin on June 12. The agitation was called off after the state government assured them that their grievances would be



discussed at the highest level. The talks focused on issues related to rehabilitation, livelihood opportunities, welfare assistance and other benefits sought by former insurgents who have returned to mainstream society after laying down arms.

The meeting was attended by Tribal Welfare Minister Bikash Debbarma, the Chief Secretary, Director General of Police and senior government

officials. Representing the surrendered militant groups were Prasenjit Debbarma, Parimal Debbarma, Alindra Debbarma and Vidyadhar Tripura. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Prasenjit Debbarma described the discussions as positive and constructive. He said the government had listened carefully to their concerns and assured them that their demands would be examined. He expressed hope

that concrete steps would now be taken to resolve issues that have remained pending for a long time. Officials believe the dialogue could help reduce tensions and pave the way for a more permanent solution to the concerns of surrendered militants seeking rehabilitation and social integration. However, even as one group appears satisfied with the government's response, another group of surrendered militants has renewed its call for a National Highway and railway blockade on June 24.

The protesting group claims that its members surrendered individually before security agencies, including the police, Assam Rifles and Border Security Force (BSF), over the past several years but were not covered under any formal rehabilitation agreement.

According to the group, demands related to financial assistance, employment opportunities, rehabilitation support and welfare measures have remained unresolved despite

repeated appeals to the authorities. The issue gained further attention after the Tripura government signed a rehabilitation agreement last year with surrendered cadres of the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF).

Under the agreement, around Rs 250 crore was earmarked for development and welfare initiatives benefiting tribal communities and the rehabilitation of former militants.

Following that settlement, several groups that say they were left out of rehabilitation packages have intensified their demands for similar benefits and official recognition. In recent months, repeated threats of highway and railway blockades have raised concerns among residents and businesses, as such protests often disrupt transportation, trade, educational activities, healthcare services and the movement of essential commodities across the state.

Serchhip completes digitisation of voter enumeration forms under Special Intensive Revision

Aizawl, June 18: Serchhip district has successfully completed the digitisation of Enumeration Forms under the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 2026, marking an important milestone in the electoral roll revision process.

Officials said the digitisation work was completed late on June 17 after weeks of extensive fieldwork and verification carried out across the district. Serchhip district covers three Assembly constituencies — 26-Serchhip (ST), 27-Tuikum (ST) and 28-Hrangturzo (ST) — with a total electorate of 55,389 voters.

During the revision exercise, authorities identified 1,184 cases where Enumeration Forms could not be collected. These included deceased voters, electors who could not be traced, individuals who were absent during the exercise, permanently shifted voters, duplicate entries and a small number of people who declined to sign the forms. The exercise began on May 30, when Booth Level Officers (BLOs) launched a door-to-door campaign to distribute



Enumeration Forms to households across the district.

Election officials said the task was particularly challenging due to adverse weather conditions, difficult terrain, scattered settlements and various logistical hurdles. Despite these difficulties, BLOs carried out the exercise across all parts of the district, ensuring that every possible household was reached. The collection, verification and subsequent digitisation of the forms were completed on schedule on June 17. District Election Officer Paul L.

Khuma thanked all those involved in the revision process

for their support and commitment. He appreciated the efforts of Election Branch officials, Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs), Booth Level Officers (BLOs), members of the media, community leaders and other stakeholders.

Khuma said the successful completion of the digitisation process reflected the collective effort and cooperation of all stakeholders working to ensure an accurate and updated electoral roll in the district as part of the Special Intensive Revision 2026.

Assam gears up for Ambubachi Mela as Kamakhya Temple prepares to welcome lakhs of devotees

Guwahati, June 18: Assam has set an ambitious goal of becoming an energy-surplus state, with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announcing a series of major reforms aimed at strengthening the power sector, improving electricity supply and expanding clean energy generation.

The decisions were taken during a high-level review meeting chaired by the Chief Minister with senior officials and stakeholders from the power sector.

The government said the reforms are part of a long-term strategy to build a reliable, efficient and financially strong electricity network capable of meeting the state's growing energy requirements. Sharing details of the roadmap, Sarma said the government is focusing on improving the financial

health of power utilities, reducing transmission losses, enhancing grid stability and increasing investments in sustainable energy projects.

One of the key proposals involves listing Assam Electricity Grid Corporation Limited (AEGCL) and Assam Power Generation Corporation Limited (AGCL) on the stock exchange. The move is expected to allow the state-owned utilities to access capital markets and raise additional funds for infrastructure development and future expansion projects.

The government has also fixed a target to bring down Transmission and Distribution (T&D) losses from the current 13 per cent to 8 per cent over the next few years. Officials believe that reducing these losses will improve operational efficiency and strengthen the financial po-

sition of power distribution agencies. The Chief Minister reiterated the government's zero-tolerance approach towards power theft and directed authorities to intensify enforcement measures across the state.

He stressed that eliminating illegal power consumption is essential for ensuring a stable and sustainable electricity system. As part of efforts to improve energy security, the government will explore the possibility of expanding the state's Pump Storage Project capacity.

Such projects are designed to store energy and help maintain grid stability during periods of high demand or fluctuations in power generation. The meeting also decided to accelerate the implementation of all ongoing power projects in the state.

In addition, the govern-

ment will examine the feasibility of establishing small hydroelectric power projects in different parts of Assam to increase renewable energy generation and diversify power sources.

Officials said the reforms are aimed at creating a modern power sector that can support industrial growth, economic development and rising household electricity demand.

The focus will also remain on ensuring affordable and uninterrupted power supply for consumers across urban and rural areas.

The Chief Minister noted that Assam's long-term objective is to reduce dependence on external sources of electricity and generate enough power to meet its own requirements while creating surplus capacity for future needs.

Two suspected drug traffickers arrested in joint police operation in Nagaon

Nagaon, June 18: Two suspected drug traffickers were arrested during a joint anti-narcotics operation carried out by police in Assam's Nagaon district, officials said on Thursday. The operation was conducted late on the night of June 17 in the Lalipathar area under Dhing following specific intelligence inputs.

The raid was jointly carried out by Dhing Police and Ahomgaon Police with assistance from members of the Village Defence Party (VDP). During the operation, police apprehended two individuals identified as Baharul Islam and Rajibul Islam.

A soap case containing suspected narcotic substances was recovered from their possession. Police also seized a Bullet motorcycle bearing registration number AS 02 R 2666 during the raid. According to police sources, Baharul Islam is a resident of Devaguri under Laharighat in Morigaon district, while Rajibul Islam belongs to Duwamari.

Investigators suspect that the two



had been involved in drug trafficking activities in different parts of Nagaon and Morigaon districts for a considerable period. Officials said both accused are currently being questioned as part of the investigation. Police

are attempting to gather information about the source of the suspected contraband, the extent of the alleged trafficking network and whether other individuals may be involved in the operation.

Arunachal Pradesh and Assam join hands to strengthen action against illicit excise trade

Itanagar, June 18: Arunachal Pradesh and Assam have agreed to strengthen cooperation in excise administration, prevention of illicit trade and revenue mobilisation following a ministerial-level meeting held in Itanagar on Wednesday.

The meeting was chaired by Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chow-na Mein and attended by Assam Minister for Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, Excise, Border Protection and Development Atul Bora, along with senior officials from the finance and excise departments of both states.

According to an official statement, the discussions focused on enhancing coordination between the two neighbouring states in areas related to excise manage-



ment, enforcement measures, revenue generation and the prevention of illegal trade in excisable goods.

Deputy Chief Minister Mein, who also holds the Finance, Tax, Excise and Narcotics portfolio, emphasised the need for stronger inter-state cooperation to address emerging challenges in the sector. He high-

lighted the importance of coordinated action, technological innovation and regular engagement between departments to improve governance and enforcement. Speaking during the meeting, Mein said Arunachal Pradesh and Assam share a long-standing relationship built on mutual trust and cooperation.

He noted that close coordination between neighbouring states is essential for the effective implementation of laws, policies and administrative measures. He further stated that challenges in excise administration cannot be addressed in isolation and require continuous collaboration among states. Expressing confidence in

the outcomes of the discussions, he said regular dialogue and joint initiatives would help strengthen governance systems while safeguarding public interest.

During the meeting, officials from both states delivered presentations on ongoing initiatives, operational experiences and key challenges faced in excise administration. The presentations also highlighted areas where greater cooperation and information-sharing could improve enforcement and compliance. The two sides discussed measures to curb illicit trade more effectively and explored ways to strengthen monitoring mechanisms along inter-state borders. Revenue mobilisation and improving administrative efficiency were also among the major issues deliberated upon.

Jaintia Hills Coal Miners Reject Government Committee Proposal, Demand Relaxation in Mining Rules

Shillong, June 18: Coal miners in Meghalaya's Jaintia Hills have rejected the state government's proposal to form another committee for framing a "Small Scale Mining Policy", insisting that their immediate demand is relaxation of the 100-hectare land requirement under the scientific mining framework. The decision came after a meeting between the state government and the Jaintia Coal Owners, Miners, Suppliers and Workers Association (JCOMSWA).

While the government proposed forming a committee headed by the Chief Secretary to examine mining regulations and land requirements, miners termed the move as another delay tactic without any clear assurance on the resumption of mining activities.

At the centre of the dispute is the scientific mining guideline, which requires a minimum of 100 hectares of

land for obtaining a mining lease. JCOMSWA leaders argued that such a requirement is unrealistic for most local landowners in Jaintia Hills.

The miners have demanded a system similar to limestone mining, where plots below five hectares can be treated as minor mineral leases, allowing small-scale operators to carry out mining under simpler regulations.

"The government has asked us to nominate members for the committee, but there is no assurance about when mining will actually resume," said Wansha Nongtdu, a resident of East Jaintia Hills who attended the meeting.

The ongoing hunger strike by miners will continue, with protesters stating that the economy of Jaintia Hills, particularly areas such as Wapung, has suffered severely since the National Green Tribunal (NGT) ban

on coal mining in 2014. Thousands of families dependent on coal mining have faced financial hardship after the decade-long suspension of extraction activities.

To address the economic distress, the state government suggested that affected families could seek assistance under the Meghalaya Environment Protection and Restoration Fund (MEPRF). However, miners rejected the proposal, stating that environmental restoration funds cannot replace their demand for legal rights to carry out mining on their own land.

The association said that no final decision would be taken until after a High Court-appointed committee visits Jaintia Hills on June 29. Until then, the miners said their protest would continue, demanding a practical framework for small-scale mining instead of further administrative procedures.

Lack of crossing facilities on VIP Road sparks public concern in Agartala

Agartala, June 18: Growing traffic restrictions along Agartala's busy VIP Road have triggered concern among residents, students and daily commuters, with many demanding the creation of safe and designated crossing points at key junctions to ease movement and improve accessibility.

Local residents have alleged that the absence of proper crossing arrangements at two important connecting roads has created daily difficulties

for thousands of pedestrians and motorists. They claim that instead of facilitating safe movement through traffic management measures, road crossings at crucial points have effectively been blocked, leading to inconvenience for the public. The issue has particularly affected students attending several educational institutions in the area, including Sri Krishna Mission School, Acharya Prafulla Chandra Memorial School, Acharya Prafulla

Chandra Memorial Institution and the BED College.

Many students reportedly face challenges in reaching their schools and returning home due to restrictions on crossing VIP Road. The concern centres on two important shortcut roads developed to improve connectivity in the city. One road links Amrakunja and Kunjaban with VIP Road near Shaheed Bhagat Singh Yuva Awas, while another connects the area adjacent to Heritage Park with

Gurkhabasti through VIP Road. Residents said these roads were originally intended to reduce travel time and facilitate smoother transportation across the city. However, commuters argue that the absence of designated crossing facilities where these roads meet VIP Road has undermined their purpose.

People using these routes are often forced to take lengthy detours to reach nearby destinations. The situation is said to be particularly difficult

for patients travelling to and from Govind Ballabh (GB) Hospital, senior citizens, government employees and others who rely on the roads for daily commuting. Residents claim that ambulances, motorcyclists and private vehicle owners are also affected by the restrictions. "The roads were built for public convenience, but the inability to cross at the connecting points has turned them into a source of frustration. What should have been a time-saving route

has become an obstacle," a local resident said. Commuters further pointed out that the additional travel distance results in increased fuel consumption, higher transportation costs and added traffic pressure on surrounding roads. Many residents have urged the authorities to review the current traffic arrangements and introduce safe pedestrian and vehicle crossing facilities to ensure that the roads serve the purpose for which they were constructed.



Parties in Tripura mobilize for the election of Village Committees



Agartala, Jun 18: Following the Supreme Court’s directive to hold Village Committee (VC) elections on September 27, all political parties have jumped into action. Major opposition parties including the Congress and CPI(M) have declared that they will run as vigorously as the ruling coalition partners, the BJP and TIPRA Motha.BJP

General Secretary Bipin Debbarma stated that the party is always prepared to confront any election and that the Village Committee polls will not be an exception. TIPRA Motha, which was crucial in obtaining the directive from the top court, is already in the field. Pradesh Congress president Asish Kumar Saha stated that the party would run

in elections wherever it had enough support, while CPI(M) state secretary Jiten Choudhury stated that the party would run for every seat in the 587 Village Committees. The Supreme Court’s decision was applauded by both leaders. Pradyot Bikram Kishor Debbarma, the head of TI-PRA Motha, came under fire from Jiten Choudhury for taking credit for the Supreme Court win. He said that Pradyot was using a “double standard.” He stated that TIPRA Motha needs to leave the coalition with the BJP in order to demonstrate that it is truly fighting for democracy, and that Pradyot is battling the government in court while sharing power with it in the state.

Inquiry of errors in school textbooks is ordered by Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi

New Delhi, Jun 18: On Wednesday, Mohan Charan Majhi, the chief minister of Odisha, ordered an investigation into errors discovered in the textbooks required for Classes 1 through 8 (2026–2027 academic session) and to identify the persons, departments, or agencies accountable.According to those with knowledge of the situation, Majhi “took a serious view” of the problem at a high-level review meeting and urged accountability and remedial action. Attendees included chief secretary Anu Garg and minister of school and mass education Nityananda Gond. Concerns regarding the quality of the updated textbooks created in accordance with the National Education Policy 2020 led educators, parents, and educators to call

the conference.According to the Chief Minister’s Office, Majhi gave authorities instructions to make sure that all mistakes are fixed right away and that precautions be taken to stop such mistakes from happening again. At the review meeting, he asked for copies of the textbooks.

According to Majhi, a three-person team would look into the situation, identify who was at fault and how the mistakes happened, and provide a report in seven days. The committee will probably recommend remedial measures as well. The individuals mentioned above stated that the committee’s conclusions will be followed by additional action. Strict penalties are probably in store for individuals held accountable for the errors, they continued.The head



of Odisha’s Primary Teachers Association, Brahmananda Maharana, stated that 1,678 faults were found in the textbooks, including spelling issues, factual errors, incorrect names of notable individuals, and incorrect images. Among the errors noted is a picture of the Karnataka legislative

assembly instead of the Odisha legislative legislature. The errors prompted concerns about the quality-control and screening processes used in the textbook creation. Officials stated that the textbooks must be updated as quickly as possible because the school year has already begun.

In a 2018 rape-murder case, a Gauhati court overturned a death sentence and cleared a man

Guwahati, Jun 18: The Gauhati High Court completely overturned the September 2018 trial court ruling that had sentenced him to death by acquitting a man who had spent almost eight years on death row for the alleged rape and murder of an 11-year-old girl in Assam’s Nagaon district. This significant judicial intervention highlights the precarious nature of capital punishment verdicts.

The prosecution’s case against Nagaon resident Zakir Hussain was painstakingly shredded by a division bench made up of Chief Justice Ashutosh Kumar and Justice Arun Dev Choudhury, which overturned his conviction and ordered his immediate release from detention unless needed in any other legal proceedings. The case started with a horrific occurrence in March 2018 in Bata-drava, Nagaon district, where a little girl was allegedly beaten and set on fire. This crime sparked great public outrage throughout Assam and sparked large-scale demonstrations calling for harsher penalties for sex-



ual offenders.According to police records, Hussain was 19 years old at the time of the occurrence. In September 2018, the Nagaon District and Sessions Court sentenced him to death for murder and life in prison for rape under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses (POCSO) Act. Three people were accused of committing the crimes, according to the first complaint filed by the victim’s family at Batadrava Police Station. All of them were later arrested. Anan Kumar Bhuiyan, the defense attorney,

disclosed that two of the defendants were minors and were handled differently under the Juvenile Justice Act. The case was moved to the Gauhati High Court for review since the legal structure compels the High Court to approve any death penalty granted by a district court.

Furthermore, Hussain’s family filed a separate appeal to contest the conviction. Following extensive hearings, the High Court re-examined evidence before acquitting the accused, Hussain, in a gang-rape case involving a Class-V student who suffered fatal injuries. The defense highlighted discrepancies in witness statements and medical reports, arguing that the trial court misinterpreted a dying declaration made by the victim, whose severe burns compromised its reliability. Key evidence was reportedly not presented in court, leading to a conclusion of not guilty beyond reasonable doubt. While this ruling is subject to appeal, it emphasizes the need for utmost judicial scrutiny in death penalty cases.

During a police operation in Dhalpur, 96 cattle were recovered and three were detained



Dhalpur, Jun 18: Following a tip, a group from

Dhalpur Two vehicles suspected of unlawfully

transporting cattle were stopped by Outpost. Police retrieved 36 livestock from the second car and 48 cattle from the first during the operation.In relation to the incident, three people were arrested, and additional legal actions have been started.According to the authorities, an investigation is being conducted to find out more information about the cattle’s ownership and transportation.

Police use tear gas shells to scatter the protesting crowd as three injured Kuki men are moved from RIMS

Imphal, Jun 18: Tensions at the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) persisted till late on Wednesday for the second day in a row. Three injured Kuki people were moved from the facility. Strong security guards escorted the injured.A crowd protesting the hospital admittance of three injured Kuki men was dispersed by police using tear gas shells.The three men, who were injured in a firing incident at Leilon Vaiphei village, had been brought to RIMS on Monday under heavy security arrangements for medical treatment. Claiming that the three injured people were militants, protesters from the Naga and Meetei groups asked that they be taken out of the hospital.On Tuesday night, the demonstration, which started on Monday, grew more intense as many people gathered outside the hospital gate and yelled slogans. At first, police officers tried to keep the mob under control and stop the situation from getting worse.To disperse the crowd and reestablish order, security personnel used tear gas shells as tensions increased and the situation became unstable.To avoid any unfortunate events, security has been strengthened both inside and outside the hospital.

Between 2011 and 2020, India repaired 21.76 million hectares of land: Bhupender Yadav

New Delhi, Jun 18: According to India’s second Bonn Challenge progress report, which was released on Wednesday by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the country has successfully brought 21.76 million hectares (Mha) of land under restoration efforts, compared to the 26 Mha target for 2030. Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav launched the study, stating that the advancements show how public involvement, scientific innovation, and policy commitment can come together to make environmental restoration a viable route to sustainable development. In contrast to the Bonn Challenge’s goal of repairing 26 million hectares by 2030, about 21.76 million hectares of land have been put under restoration. During a speech in the nation’s capital, the minister stated, “As a Party to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), India has consistently advanced sustainable land management.” The Bonn Challenge is a voluntary global restoration commitment that was started in 2011. India promised in 2015 to repair 13 Mha of deforested and damaged land by 2020, and an

additional 8 Mha by 2030.9.8 million hectares of land had been restored, according to the first progress report published in 2018. Prime Minister Narendra Modi updated his goal to restore 26 Mha by 2030 at COP 14, a year later. Countries utilize the IUCN’s restoration barometer to assess forest landscape restoration (FLR) based on policies, financial flows, and monitoring systems. Telangana leads with 4.18 million hectares under restoration, followed by Madhya Pradesh (3.78 Mha), Odisha (2.64 Mha), Gujarat (1.73 Mha), and Andhra Pradesh (1.61 Mha), contributing to a total of 21.76 million hectares restored nationwide. Over the past five years, around 170,000 hectares have been restored under the Green India Mission, along with 320,000 hectares through CAMPA-supported activities. Joint Forest Management spans approximately 81.53 Mha, while agroforestry covers over 121,000 hectares and bamboo plantations nearly 60,000 hectares. The “Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam” campaign has seen over 266 crore saplings planted, and the Aravalli Green Wall Initiative has exceeded its targets. Additionally, a goal has been established to restore 54,000 hectares of mangrove areas by 2028 under the MISHTI programme.

Dibrugarh’s drainage problems are seen when monsoon rains cause severe waterlogging

Dibrugarh, Jun 18: The season’s first major monsoon spell brought life to a standstill in large parts of Dibrugarh on Wednesday, as an intense three-hour downpour triggered widespread waterlogging across the city and once again highlighted chronic deficiencies in its drainage infrastructure.

Rainfall that started at around seven in the morning flooded almost half of the city, impacting eleven of the twenty-two municipal wards in Dibrugarh. Residents in a number of communities had to cross knee-deep water to go about their everyday lives, and major roadways were temporarily transformed into waterways. Mancotta Road next to the Thana Chari-ali Flyover was one of the worst-hit areas, with significant portions of the road inundated due to overflow-

ing drains. On a number of important roadways, traffic flow was seriously hampered.As floodwater reached residential neighborhoods in Graham Bazar, Khalihamari, West Milannagar, Jiban Phukan Nagar, Lachit Nagar, and Chowkidinghee, the effects went beyond the roads. Significant annoyance and property damage were reported by residents in Santipara, Khaniagaon, Gangapara, Padum Nagar, Lakhi Nagar, and Guardpara due to water seeping into their homes. Dibrugarh Municipal Corporation (DMC) Commissioner-in-Charge Navas Das claims that the unexpected buildup of water was caused by the city receiving more than 100 mm of rainfall in just three hours.The drainage system was overloaded by the unusually high rainfall. We anticipate an improve-

ment by the afternoon because high-capacity pumps have been used to direct surplus water into the Brahmaputra,” Das said. Residents, however, attributed recurrent waterlogging to years of poor drainage upkeep and uncontrolled plastic waste accumulation. Many said that in order to avoid the rainy season, city authorities had neglected to carry out prompt desilting and cleaning operations.The state of the Dibrugarh Town Protection (DTP) Drain, the city’s main drainage outlet intended to release rainwater into the Brahmaputra river, has drawn particular attention. According to the locals, the drain’s carrying capacity has been greatly diminished by encroachments, silt deposits, plastic debris, and water hyacinth, which frequently causes overflowing during periods of high rainfall.

A 19-year-old NEET candidate kills himself in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu



New Delhi, Jun 17: In the Coimbatore region of Tamil Nadu, a 19-year-old NEET candidate committed suicide, sparking new demonstrations against the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) and rekindling the state’s long-standing desire for exemption from the medical entrance exam.

The student was recognized by the police as Anunkeer-thana, who had previously taken the NEET twice and was getting set to do so again. She was upset about having to retake the test after the recent NEET question paper leak, which resulted in a retest for those impacted, according to investigators.She appears to have been motivated by the frustration of yet another test, a senior police official said.No suicide note was found at the location, according to the police. To find out what caused her death, an investigation is being conducted.

Protesters in Coimbatore demanded that NEET be discontinued as a result of the incident.

In addition, the ruling DMK has declared a statewide demonstration to reiterate its call for Tamil Nadu to be excused from NEET.Since NEET’s launch, Tamil Nadu has continuously resisted it, claiming that pupils from

Justice is determined by human wisdom, not artificial intelligence

New Delhi, Jun 18: The Indian legal profession faces a significant crisis, with up to 40% of practitioners potentially using fake law degrees, as revealed by the Bar Council of India’s recent verification exercise. This scandal has raised serious concerns about the legitimacy of legal credentials, which erodes public trust in the justice system. Compounding this issue, the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools has introduced a second layer of inauthenticity, as courts have unknowingly relied on fabricated legal citations generated by AI. The Supreme Court’s Draft AI Regulations (2026) aim to mitigate these dangers by prohibiting certain algorithmic decision-making and enforcing mandatory disclosures. However, the efficacy of these regulations is contingent on the establishment of enforceable oversight.

A broader response is necessary, including rigorous credential verification and a reform in legal education, to ensure that technology aids, rather than replaces, human judgment in the legal field. Without addressing these intertwined issues, the profession risks becoming automated and detached from its foundational principles of justice.

The government explains why the issue is limited to Telegram: Numerous bots, “most preferred” for terrorist attacks, and modifying capabilities

Shimla, Jun 18: In the Delhi High Court on Thursday, the Center gave an explanation for why Telegram was singled out for a temporary ban prior to the June 21 NEET re-examination. Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta, speaking on behalf of the Indian government, claimed that Telegram is particularly vulnerable to the widespread spread of information due to its bot design. According to LiveLaw, he informed the court that a single Telegram user can produce up to 40 bots, which can then grow and establish vast automated networks.SG Tushar Mehta used a government assessment to support his claim that Telegram’s bot infrastructure makes it possible to distribute information widely and build complex networks with little human intervention. He contended that other texting platforms do not offer this feature in the same way. The SG added that because Telegram uses a cloud-based technology, it is challenging for law authorities to pinpoint the real users responsible for illegal activity. According to Livelaw, investigators frequently have trouble identifying the perpetrator, even if the



platform bans an account.According to Mehta, “this feature seriously hinders law enforcement agencies’ ability to identify co-conspirators, trace communication chains, and establish attribution during the course of investigation.” The SG also cited a government analysis that said that certain elements built into Telegram’s

architecture made it a preferred venue for terrorist activities.

According to Bar and Bench, he informed the court that Telegram’s platform design has also caused regulatory and law enforcement issues in a number of other jurisdictions.The SG underlined that Telegram was not accused

of non-compliance by the government. Rather, he contended that although the platform had followed government directives, the actions it had taken were insufficient to resolve the issues brought up by authorities. Telegram’s message-editing tool was also criticized by the SG for not having a visible timestamp that shows when changes were made. He explained the issue by pointing out that if exam papers were distributed on June 21, a user might upload them on June 22 and then change the time and date to make it look like they were posted on June 18. According to Bar and Bench, he informed the court that a comparable problem had emerged during the 2024 NEET dispute.

Telegram’s legal team opposed the ban, claiming that it was unjust and unreasonable to restrict the entire platform for its 150 million Indian users. The company insisted that it had followed all government orders since June 1 and argued that authorities had suspended access to the entire platform even though it had removed content connected to the purported NEET paper leak.

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Stopping Elder Abuse Requires Everyone

As India is greying at a faster clip, it is witnessing a worrying rise in the abuse of elders. A recent study across 10 states showed an almost two-thirds rise in the mistreatment of this vulnerable population in a year, with own families emerging as the biggest perpetrators. The data revealed the pains of growing old in a society that is uncaring of those it considers unfit and financially dependent. This harsh reality is also reflected in the sharp rise in distress calls to the elders’ helpline in India’s tech capital, Bengaluru—up from 735 in 2024-25 to 1,172 in 2025-26. Yet this is only a part of the picture as elder abuse mostly goes unreported, with stigma a strong deterrent. The World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, observed this Monday, focused on finding systemic solutions. Among the steps India can rightly claim to have taken in that direction is enacting the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (Amendment) Act, 2019, which updated the 2007 legislation to widen the set of those liable for care and raise the levels of prescribed punishment. Dedicated tribunals have been set up to address complaints under the law. Jurisprudence has evolved to widen the definition of abuse and the actions parents can take. But these are systems for redress. Prevention, on the other hand, needs a whole-of-society approach. The Union health and family welfare ministry has recognised the breakdown of traditional family structures as a leading cause of elderly distress. Planning for financial and physical independence within nuclear families can go some way in addressing the fraying societal net. Free, high-quality healthcare would go even longer in restoring dignity. All other states can learn from Kerala, which offers a model of free insurance and mobile clinics, besides psychological and community support for elders. Governments also need to make it easier to access pension and normalise civic infrastructure aimed specifically at helping elders lead a dignified life. These can no longer be on a distant wish-list, as the reality is changing fast. By the time the independent nation hits its century, every one in five Indians will be aged 60 or above—up from one in every eight today. If not for the sake of humanity and decency, politicians should mind that it will be a formidable voting bloc, too. Elder abuse is emerging as a serious social concern, affecting the dignity, safety, and well-being of older people across communities. Experts and social organisations say preventing abuse of senior citizens requires more than legal measures — it demands a collective effort involving

families, communities, healthcare providers, governments, and society at large. As populations age, the challenges faced by older adults are becoming more complex. Many elderly people experience neglect, emotional distress, financial exploitation, or physical harm, often within environments where they expect care and protection. Addressing the issue requires awareness, stronger support systems, and a cultural shift towards respecting and valuing older generations. Elder abuse is often described as a hidden problem because many cases go unreported. Older people may hesitate to speak about their experiences due to fear, dependence on caregivers, emotional attachment to family members, or concerns about social stigma. Traditionally, older adults often relied on joint family systems for care and support. However, changing lifestyles, migration, urbanisation, and increased work-related mobility have transformed family structures. Many elderly people now live alone or depend on limited support networks. While many families continue to provide care and respect, reduced daily interaction can increase the risk of loneliness and neglect. The growing number of older adults living independently highlights the need for stronger community-based support systems. Loneliness is a major risk factor linked to elder vulnerability. Older adults who feel isolated may become more dependent on limited relationships, increasing their risk of exploitation. Social participation can improve emotional health. Community centres, senior groups, volunteer programmes, and recreational activities can provide meaningful connections. Technology can also help elderly people stay connected, though many require support to use digital tools safely. The prevention of elder abuse requires cooperation across all sections of society. Families, neighbours, government agencies, healthcare workers, and community organisations all have roles to play. A successful approach must combine prevention, protection, and support. Prevention means creating respectful relationships and awareness before abuse occurs. Protection involves helping those at risk. Support ensures that survivors receive care and assistance. Elder abuse is not only a family issue; it is a social responsibility. Protecting older adults requires empathy, awareness, and action from everyone. As societies continue to age, the way we treat senior citizens reflects our values and priorities. Building a safer environment for elderly people means strengthening families, supporting caregivers, aongest inclusion.

New CM DK Shivakumar Faces Race Against Clock To Deliver On Promises

D K Shivakumar’s populist approach was evident within hours of him assuming charge as the new Chief Minister of Karnataka. Among the raft of the new measures announced were free bus passes for all students, a ₹2,000-crore grant for improving roads in Bengaluru, a private employment exchange system, establishment of 10,000 Bharat Jodo youth associations and initiatives to address the concerns of those building houses. But below the layers of hope and excitement, the new CM and his administration face a number of challenges—administratively and politically—including mobilising resources for the ongoing and new schemes, and implementing them effectively. Shivakumar, keen on getting his government out of predecessor Siddaramaiah’s shadow, may announce more initiatives in the days to come. But the real challenge would be in continuing the Congress’s flagship guarantee schemes promised before the elections that require over ₹50,000 crore in annual allocations. Adding to the challenge will be funding the other initiatives launched in the last three years and the fresh programmes announced now. Most importantly, resources would need to be generated for all of them without burdening the people further. Taking the bureaucracy into confidence to ensure the effective implementation of these programmes would be no mean task. Officials, especially those at the district and taluk levels, play a pivotal role in shaping public opinion. All the grand plans at the top may not yield the desired outcomes if the government fails to ensure responsive, accountable and non-partisan delivery of the promised services at all levels, even as Bengaluru’s



development and its sustainability remain a huge problem. Providing corruption-free governance is a top priority for Shivakumar—but it will be a Herculean task. Justice B Veerappa, the Karnataka Upalokayukta, recently pointed to corruption spreading across every state department and warned that a failure to curb the menace could lead to dangerous consequences. The other big challenge for the new CM comes from the state Congress party’s internal dynamics. With former CM Siddaramaiah remaining active in Karnataka politics, the new CM and the party face an undesirable scenario fraught with the uncertainties of dealing with two power cen-

tres. Politically, that would be the most consequential challenge for the new CM. With just under two years to prove his mettle as CM, it’s clear that Shivakumar faces a race against time. Karnataka’s new Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar has stepped into office at a crucial moment, facing the challenge of balancing public expectations, political responsibilities, and the urgent need to deliver on promises. Known for his organisational skills and political experience, Shivakumar now faces a race against time to prove his leadership and strengthen the government’s position. The new Chief Minister inherits a state with major expectations from cit-

izens, who are looking for faster development, better governance, job opportunities, improved infrastructure, and solutions to everyday concerns. While taking charge, Shivakumar has emphasised his commitment to administration, welfare measures, and fulfilling the commitments made by his party. However, governing Karnataka comes with complex challenges.

The state is one of India’s leading economic centres, home to the technology sector, major industries, agriculture communities, and rapidly growing urban areas. Managing the competing demands of different regions and communities will require careful

planning and quick decision-making. The biggest test before Shivakumar is maintaining momentum while converting political promises into visible results. Voters often judge new governments by their early performance, and the first few months are considered critical for setting the tone of an administration. A major priority for the new government is implementing welfare programmes and policy decisions announced during the election period. These promises created strong expectations among the public, and delays could lead to criticism from opposition parties and citizens. The Chief Minister’s team must now work on administrative planning, budget allocation, and execution mechanisms. Announcing schemes is only the first step; ensuring that benefits reach people effectively remains the bigger challenge. Political observers say Shivakumar’s ability to coordinate between ministers, government officials, and party leaders will play an important role in determining how quickly the administration moves. Shivakumar’s rise to the top post followed a period of intense political discussions. As a senior leader with years of experience, he has built a reputation for managing party affairs and strengthening organisational structures. But running a government requires a different set of skills. A Chief Minister must handle policy decisions, economic concerns, public demands, and internal coordination simultaneously. The new leader will need to maintain unity within the party while ensuring that governance remains the central focus. Internal disagreements, if not handled carefully, could distract from administrative priorities.

Rework Crop Strategies And Build Long-Term Resilience As Rainfall Deficit Spreads

As El Niño conditions strengthen in the Pacific, India’s monsoon is showing signs of strain across a dozen states. By mid-June, rainfall is about 35 percent below the normal nationwide, and central India faces a sharp 63 percent shortfall. The monsoon’s advance has stalled across much of Maharashtra, while Mumbai is closely monitoring its reservoir levels as the supplies are expected to last only around 45 days if the conditions persist. In the south, Tamil Nadu farmers are unsure about planting Kuruvai rice because dam storage is low, while reduced Cauvery flows at the Karnataka border are unsettling others. The weather office has stated that early-June deficits do not decide the whole season, but there is now a nearly 60 percent chance of a poor monsoon, which is a serious worry for the whole nation. The next 6-8 weeks will be crucial. The Centre is working with states to launch crop-specific backup plans, but execution must be on a war footing. Short-duration, drought-resistant seeds must reach vulnerable districts quickly, along with clear advice for farmers on what to plant, when. At the same time, MGNREGA funds should go towards cleaning tanks, repairing canals and improving groundwater recharging before the monsoon reaches its peak. More than just issuing warnings, city administrations should focus on finding leaks, managing demand and planning for emergency water supplies. Still, emer-

gency actions can only provide short-term relief. India’s main weakness is its heavy reliance on the short monsoon season. In the next few years, a national task force should focus on water budgeting at the district level, expanding micro-irrigation and encouraging farmers in dry areas to grow less water-intensive crops. Groundwater use in overdrawn areas needs stricter rules, and cities and industries should be required to treat and reuse wastewater at scale. As climate change intensifies, the real long-term fix would be to restore neglected water systems. In 2023, the government’s first water-body census counted over 2.4 million lakes, tanks and ponds; but many are still encroached, polluted or neglected. Restoring these over the next decade would create a storage network and help manage droughts. Along with watershed development, recharging of aquifers and widespread rainwater harvesting, this would make the country much more resilient. But for now, the top priorities are protecting crops, saving water and keeping food inflation in check. As rainfall patterns become increasingly unpredictable and several regions face rainfall deficits, farmers, policymakers, and agricultural experts are calling for a major shift in crop planning and water management practices. The changing climate landscape is forcing a rethink of traditional farming methods, with greater focus on climate-resilient agriculture, sustainable water use, and

long-term strategies to protect food security. A shortage or uneven distribution of rainfall can have serious consequences for agriculture, particularly in regions where farming depends heavily on the monsoon. Delayed rains, long dry spells, and irregular precipitation patterns can affect sowing decisions, crop growth, productivity, and farmers’ incomes. Experts say that temporary solutions are no longer enough. Instead of responding to each drought-like situation separately, agricultural systems must be redesigned to handle uncertainty. This requires changes in crop selection, irrigation practices, soil management, technology adoption, and government support systems. Agriculture remains highly dependent on weather conditions. In many parts of India, the timing and intensity of rainfall determine the success of a farming season. When rainfall falls below expected levels, farmers face difficult choices about whether to sow, delay planting, change crops, or reduce cultivation. A rainfall deficit does not only mean less rain. Its impact depends on when the shortage occurs. A dry period during sowing can delay planting, while a lack of rain during flowering or grain formation can sharply reduce yields. The increasing frequency of extreme weather events has made farming more complicated. Farmers who traditionally relied on historical rainfall patterns are now finding that past experiences may not always predict future conditions.

This uncertainty affects both small farmers and large agricultural producers. Small farmers often have fewer resources to invest in irrigation systems, improved seeds, or alternative farming methods, making them more vulnerable. One of the most important strategies for dealing with rainfall shortages is crop diversification. Experts believe farmers must move away from excessive dependence on water-intensive crops in areas where water availability is declining. Traditional crops that require large amounts of water can become risky when rainfall is uncertain. In such conditions, farmers can consider alternatives that are better suited to local climate conditions. Millets, pulses, oilseeds, and certain drought-resistant varieties can provide greater stability in dry conditions. These crops generally require less water and can support soil health. Diversification does not mean completely abandoning existing crops. Instead, it involves creating a balanced farming system where farmers have multiple sources of income and reduced risk. For example, combining food crops with horticulture, livestock activities, or agroforestry can help farmers manage climate-related uncertainty. Climate resilience in agriculture means the ability of farming systems to withstand shocks such as droughts, floods, heat waves, and irregular rainfall. Several practices can improve resilience: Research institutions have developed crop varieties that

can tolerate drought, heat, and changing weather conditions. Wider adoption of these varieties can help farmers maintain productivity even during difficult seasons. However, farmers need access to quality seeds, technical information, and affordable inputs. Healthy soil plays a major role in protecting crops during rainfall shortages. Soil with good organic matter can hold moisture for longer periods and reduce dependence on frequent irrigation. Practices such as compost application, crop residue management, and reduced soil disturbance can improve soil quality. Water management has become one of the most critical areas of agricultural planning. Traditional irrigation methods often result in significant water loss. More efficient systems, such as drip and sprinkler irrigation, can help conserve water and deliver moisture directly to crops. Rainwater harvesting, farm ponds, and groundwater recharge projects can also strengthen water security. The monsoon has always played a central role in Indian agriculture. Millions of farmers plan their cultivation around seasonal rainfall forecasts. However, climate change has altered rainfall behaviour in many areas. Even when total rainfall appears normal, distribution can be uneven. Heavy rainfall over a few days followed by long dry periods may not support crops effectively. This means agricultural planning must focus not only on the amount of rainfall

but also on timing, intensity, and local conditions. Weather forecasting tools and digital agriculture platforms can help farmers make better decisions. Timely information about expected rainfall, temperature changes, and soil conditions can reduce uncertainty. Crop insurance is particularly important during unpredictable weather conditions. If farmers suffer losses due to drought or extreme rainfall, timely compensation can prevent economic distress. However, experts say insurance systems must become faster, more transparent, and easier for farmers to access. Building resilience is not only about surviving droughts. It is also about creating farming systems that remain productive for future generations. Unsustainable farming practices can damage soil, reduce groundwater levels, and increase dependence on external inputs. Sustainable agriculture focuses on maintaining productivity while protecting natural resources. Practices such as organic matter improvement, mixed cropping, efficient water use, and biodiversity protection can create stronger agricultural systems. Farmers’ decisions are also influenced by markets. If alternative crops are promoted but farmers cannot find buyers, adoption becomes difficult. Therefore, crop diversification must be supported by market development. Better storage facilities, processing industries, and supply chains can encourage farmers to grow a wider range of crops.

Air India tests no-meal economy fare on domestic routes



Mumbai: Air India has introduced a new low-cost fare category on select domestic routes. The new “Basic” fares in Economy Class have been introduced on a pilot basis, offering passengers a lower-priced ticket that excludes complimentary meals. The move adds a fourth option to Air India’s existing fare families, Value, Classic and Flex, all of which continue to include meals and a range of bundled benefits. New fare offers low-

er-cost travel option. Unlike the airline’s traditional economy fares, the Basic fare is designed for travelers who prefer to pay only for essential services. It includes a 15 kg checked baggage allowance, 7 kg cabin baggage allowance and complimentary tea or coffee during the flight. Passengers who wish to have a meal can purchase one separately before departure. According to the airline, meals can be pre-booked up to 24

hours before departure, with options including vegetarian, non-vegetarian, Jain and diabetic meals. The carrier stressed that the Basic fare is entirely optional and does not replace any of its existing fare categories. Passengers can continue to choose from the Value, Classic and Flex fare buckets, depending on their travel preferences and service requirements. The airline said the Basic fare is currently available only through its direct booking channels, including its website, mobile application, contact centre and airport ticketing offices. “Being trialled on select domestic routes, the Basic fare is available for travel in Economy Class and is designed for travellers who prioritise value,” the airline said in a statement. Air India added that the pilot programme will be closely monitored and a decision on whether to expand or continue the offering will be taken after assessing customer response and feedback. The introduction comes at a time when airlines globally are increasingly experimenting with unbundled offerings to provide lower entry-level fares while allowing customers to choose and pay for additional services separately. For Air India, which is in the midst of a multi-year transformation programme under Tata Group ownership, the move also reflects efforts to balance customer choice with cost management.

India sees 33 pc of Asia’s risk insurance claim notifications



Mumbai: India accounted for one-third of all transactional risk insurance claims notifications in Asia during 2025, underscoring the growing adoption of such insurance solutions amid rising deal activity and increasing sophistication in the country’s mergers and acquisitions (M&A) market, according to a report released on Wednesday. The report by Marsh — a global insurance broker and risk advisor — showed that India contributed 33 per cent of all transactional risk insurance claims notifications in Asia during the year. Claims activity across Asia-Pacific witnessed a sharp rise, with notifications increasing 76 per cent year-on-year in 2025, it said. Marsh clients in the region received more than \$80 million in claims payments during the year, the highest annual payout recorded for Asia. Growing deal sizes, rising cross-border transactions, increased regulatory scrutiny and more sophisticated deal structures are driving the adoption of transactional risk insurance among private equity firms

and corporate acquirers in India. Sanjay Kedia, CEO and President of Marsh India, said transactional risk insurance is increasingly being viewed as a strategic tool to manage complexity, mitigate downside risks and enhance deal certainty as India’s deal landscape expands. The report noted that financial statement-related breaches emerged as the leading cause of warranty and indemnity insurance claims notifications across Asia, accounting for 41 per cent of all such claims. It highlighted a sharp increase in tax liability insurance claims, which more than doubled year-on-year amid heightened regulatory and tax scrutiny across the region, adding that most claims in some insurers are now providing preliminary coverage guidance within three days of claim notification, while 92 per cent of claims receive substantive responses within 30 days. India’s M&A ecosystem continues to evolve, demand for structured risk-transfer solutions is expected to grow further, supporting smoother deal execution and better protection against transaction-related risks, the report added.

India past South Korea to become sixth valued market

Mumbai: Indian stock market edged past South Korea to reclaim the sixth-largest market tag globally, topping \$5 trillion in market capitalisation (m-cap) following the US-Iran peace deal. Data showed India’s m-cap stood at Rs 4,76,48,719 crore in Thursday’s trade, which was roughly \$5.05 trillion in dollar terms. In comparison, South Korean market was just shy of \$5 trillion mark. The peace deal offered a three-fold macro benefit for India and a reason for EM investors to diversify holdings from the overcrowded AI trade. A likely fall in Brent to \$75-80 a barrel could bring proforma benefit of 64 per cent on the current account deficit (CAD). Second, it addresses supply chain bottlenecks and potential raw material shortage worries across multiple sectors and concentrated sector exposure” in the EM universe. That same absence — of semiconductor and memory risk — is now its most compelling structural attribute, he said in a note.

Medanta expands advanced cardiac care reach with shockwave technology and Nagaland partnerships

Kohima: Medanta—The Medicity has strengthened its presence in the Northeast healthcare market with the deployment of Shockwave Intra-vascular Lithotripsy (IVL), an advanced technology designed to treat complex heart artery blockages caused by severe calcium deposits, while deepening its engagement with Nagaland through strategic partnerships and patient outreach initiatives. Cardiovascular disease remains India’s biggest health challenge, accounting for nearly one in every three deaths. As cases of coronary artery disease continue to rise, doctors are increasingly treating patients with hardened calcium deposits in heart arteries, which can complicate angioplasty and stent procedures. Padma Shri awardee Dr. Praveen Chandra, Chairman, Interventional Cardiology at Medanta Gurugram, said Shockwave IVL uses controlled ultrasonic pressure waves to break calcium deposits without damaging surrounding healthy tissue, enabling safer and more effective stent placement. Associate Consultant Dr. C Manpa Phom said the

technology is helping doctors successfully treat patients who previously had limited treatment options. In Kohima, Medanta’s growing footprint in Nagaland is expected to improve access to advanced tertiary healthcare services for patients across the state. The hospital’s accreditation under the Chief Minister’s Health Insurance Scheme (CMHIS) and its focused outreach efforts could reduce dependence on distant medical centres while creating greater awareness about specialised cardiac care in the region. Medanta has signed an MoU with the Government of Nagaland for CMHIS accreditation and partnered with IDAN and the Department of Youth Resources and Sports to publish a health awareness booklet launched by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio in September 2025. The hospital has also launched a dedicated Northeast helpline offering assistance in Assamese, Bengali, Nagamese, English and Hindi. Nagaland residents can consult Dr. C Manpa Phom at Faith Hospital, Dimapur, on June 20.

NSE IPO windfall: Early institutional investors set for multifold gains

Mumbai: The Indian Pharmaceutical Market (IPM) posted 12.1 per cent year-on-year growth in May 2026, marking its sixth consecutive month of double-digit expansion and the most sustained high-growth run in over two years, a report said on Wednesday. The report from Equirus Securities said Indian pharmaceutical companies, which account for 83 per cent of the IPM, registered growth of 11.9 per cent in May, while multinational companies grew 13.3 per cent during the month. IPM growth improved to 10.7 per cent on a moving annual total (MAT) basis in May 2026, supported by a well-balanced growth mix of volume at over 3.2 per cent, price at over 4.5 per cent and new Introductions at over 3 per cent. The report noted that all three growth levers improved simultaneously, indicating broad-based market expansion. The firm highlighted simultaneous strength in both chronic and acute therapies during the month. Chronic therapies reached a series-high growth of 14.6 per cent, with their share rising to 40.6 per cent



of the market, led by cardiac segment at over 14.7 per cent and anti-diabetic at over 14.5 per cent. Acute therapies also touched a se-

ries-high growth of 8.3 per cent, the report noted. Therapy growth remained broad-based, with nine of the 10 key therapies recording double-digit growth during the month compared with six therapies in March. Vitamins, Minerals, and Nutrients (VMN) therapy segment led growth at 15.6 per cent, followed by cardiac and anti-diabetic therapies. Respiratory therapies rebounded to 10.9 per cent, while anti-infectives remained the only therapy below double-digit growth at 8.1 per cent, although this represented a recovery from earlier lows. “Within anti-diabetics, Mounjaro (GLP-1) continued to drive growth, followed by the Dapagliflozin-Metformin-Sitagliptin combination. In the cardiac segment, Cilnidipine-Telmisartan recorded the highest growth of 28 per cent, followed by Sacubitril-Valsartan,” the report said.

BMW launches locally assembled MINI Countryman C at Rs 47.5 lakh in India

Mumbai: BMW Group India has expanded its premium vehicle lineup with the launch of the locally assembled MINI Countryman C, priced at an introductory Rs 47.50 lakh (ex-showroom). The move marks a significant step in the brand’s localisation strategy and positions the premium crossover as a more accessible offering in the luxury compact SUV segment. Speaking at the launch event in Chennai, BMW Group India President and CEO Hardeep Singh Brar said the petrol-powered MINI Countryman C has been introduced at an aggressive price point to strengthen the brand’s presence in the market. Thomas Dose, Managing Director, BMW Group Plant, Chennai, said the launch represents a key operational milestone for MINI in India as the new Countryman C will be assembled locally through the completely knocked down (CKD) route at the company’s Chennai facility. CKD vehicles are imported in parts and components before being assembled at a local manufacturing unit. According to Dose, local assembly has enabled MINI to position the Countryman C as a more competitive alternative to the performance-focused Countryman John Cooper Works (JCW) All4. Bookings for the premium crossover have opened across authorised dealerships nationwide, while customer deliveries are set to commence immediately



Floridian Kuenstner, Vice-President, Mini, Region China, Asia-Pacific, Middle East, Eastern Europe and Africa, BMW Group, said the vehicle is based on the front-wheel-drive UKL2 platform, which it shares with the BMW X1. The MINI Countryman C is powered by a 1.5-litre three-cylinder turbocharged petrol engine paired with a seven-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission (DCT). The power-

train produces 156 bhp and 240 Nm of torque, with power delivered to the front wheels. The crossover has been designed with enhanced road presence and a larger cabin, featuring ICE-specific styling elements such as a redesigned octagonal grille, updated front and rear bumpers, adaptive LED headlamps and champagne-coloured exterior trim. Feature highlights include a pan-

oramic sunroof, head-up display (HUD), Level 1 Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), a 12-speaker Harman Kardon audio system and Park Assistant Plus with a 360-degree camera. The newly launched MINI Countryman C is expected to take on established rivals in the premium compact SUV segment, including the Audi Q3, Mercedes-Benz GLA and BMW X1.

Northeast beauty shoppers get global brands and new deals as Flipkart brings Glam Up Fest to Guwahati

Aizawl: Beauty consumers in Northeast India are gaining greater access to global brands, new product categories and technology-driven shopping experiences as Flipkart expands its presence in one of the country’s fastest-growing beauty markets. For the first time, Flipkart hosted its flagship Glam Up Fest 2026 in Guwahati, reflecting the region’s growing influence on beauty and personal care trends. The Northeast has emerged as a leading market for Korean beauty products, face serums, premium fragrances and ingredient-led skincare, while also recording strong growth in male grooming and sun-care categories. A major attraction for consumers was the introduction of popular Korean beauty brands Beauty of Joseon, TirTir and d’Alba in Guwahati, giving local shoppers direct exposure to products that have gained popularity across global markets. The event brought together more than 600 creators, influencers and consumers from across the Northeast, alongside leading brands including The Derma Co, Mamaearth and Plum. Visitors participated in live tutorials, creator-led sessions in regional languages and interactive beauty experiences cover-



ing skincare, K-Beauty and sun care. Flipkart also showcased consumer-focused technology such as AI-powered skin diagnostics, Virtual Try-On and Live Video Commerce, aimed at helping shoppers make more informed purchasing decisions online. The company will follow the event with its nationwide Glam Up Sale from June 19 to 27, offering limited-period discounts, curated collections and new product launches across beauty and personal care categories for consumers across India.

Defence Minister Koizumi stated that Japan’s enhancement of its defense capabilities is ‘essential’ to avert the possibility of war

South-Korea: Japan must “strengthen its defence capabilities”, Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi has told the BBC, emphasising the need to revisit the pacifist posture that has defined the country since World War Two.He said boosting defence, “reinforcing its alliance with the United States, and expanding collaboration with like-minded countries” was part of “building multi-layered deterrence critical for ensuring that no new war breaks out in this region”.Koizumi said he supported a revision to Article 9 because of how the region has changed over the past eight decades. ”Speaking not as defence minister but as a member of parliament, Japan has not amended its Constitution even once since World War Two. Given how dramatically the security environment has changed, we need to adapt to those changes if Japan is to remain peaceful,” Koizumi said. Beijing is arguably the biggest challenge, and its claims over self-governed Taiwan are the new flashpoint in an old, fraught relationship. The southwestern Senkaku islands, which the Chinese call Diaoyu, stretch towards Taiwan and form what’s called the First Island Chain. It has been described as a strategic barrier of containment between China’s coastal waters and the wider Pacific. But in the past year Chinese aircraft carriers have occasionally operated beyond these islands. Japan’s Defence Ministry identified China’s military moves as the “greatest strategic challenge” in its latest white paper report submitted to Cabinet. The ministry is expected to repeat the same in its upcoming annual government report. Last month, Koizumi rebutted Beijing’s claim that his country was engaging in a “new militarism” and argued it was China and its “huge arsenal” of weapons that was of “serious concern” to the international community. Defence is among the top priorities for the current administration, which has committed to historic spending increases and argues these reforms are needed in what is now an increasingly tense region. China has emerged as a formidable global player, and North Korea’s nuclear ambitions, which have seen it test-fire ballistic



missiles over Japan, show no signs of slowing down.Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who came to power in October 2025, has also pushed for revising Article 9 of Japan’s constitution, which renounces war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. It also states that land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained.But Japan is keen to keep talking to Beijing, he insisted He spoke of the recent changes in Japan’s defence policy, such as relaxing decades-old arms export rules.For the first time in about 50 years, Tokyo can now sell or transfer defence equipment and lethal weapons to the 17 countries with which it has signed formal agreements, including the US and the UK. Australia has selected Japanese war ships. Discussions are under way with the Philippines for used destroyers from Japan’s Maritime Self-Defence Force. We are in deep talks with Indonesia, and New Zealand has also showed interest in acquiring Japanese destroyers,” Koizumi explained in a sit-down interview at his office in Tokyo.“This vision of trading equipment and assets throughout the Indo-Pacific is something we have never seen before.” ”Unfortunately, there have not been many oppor-

tunities for direct communication recently. However, as I stated at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Japan is always open to dialogue. We will continue sending that message and hope that opportunities for dialogue can be created whenever necessary.”Takaichi is not the first Japanese leader to seek these changes. Nobusuke Kishi in the 1950s argued for Japan to have a more normal military posture. Koizumi’s father, Junichiro Koizumi, who was PM in the early 2000s, also supported constitutional revision, including reconsidering Article 9.More recently the late Shinzo Abe, Kishi’s grandson, became an advocate of amending the so-called pacifist clause during his time in office.But the shift has accelerated under Takaichi, prompting some of the country’s largest anti-war protests in decades.Koizumi, 45, also told the BBC that Japan needed to clarify the status of the SDF or Self-Defence Forces. Legally and politically, Japan doesn’t call it a military - although operationally it functions as one.The SDF should be able to carry out its mission with pride and honour, and Japan must possess defence capabilities that remain steadfast even in today’s challenging security environment,” he added. “I met with my China counterpart in November of last year. Because there are

areas where our views differ, I conveyed my desire that we continue engaging in dialogue,” Koizumi said. Takaichi is not the first Japanese leader to seek these changes. Nobusuke Kishi in the 1950s argued for Japan to have a more normal military posture. Koizumi’s father, Junichiro Koizumi, who was PM in the early 2000s, also supported constitutional revision, including reconsidering Article 9 More recently the late Shinzo Abe, Kishi’s grandson, became an advocate of amending the so-called pacifist clause during his time in office.But the shift has accelerated under Takaichi, prompting some of the count ”The SDF should be able to carry out its mission with pride and honour, and Japan must possess defence capabilities that remain steadfast even in today’s challenging security environment,” he addedCritics have said that formally recognising or expanding the SDF could threaten the pacifist stance of Article 9. Some even argue it doesn’t stand in the way of the government’s objectives.“We don’t need to amend Article 9 for defensive operations against China. So it’s more a political agenda than something based on military rationality,” says Hirohito Ogi, a senior research fellow at the Institute of Geoeconomics, studying military strategy and defence policy.If, for example, there was a threat to the southern islands that Japan controls but Beijing also claims, Ogi believes the current constitution is sufficient. “The attack on US bases located in Okinawa or Kyushu region should be interpreted as a direct military attack on Japan.”While his Liberal Democratic Party is pushing for it, “ultimately, the decision belongs to the Japanese people”, Koizumi said.“Here, constitutional revision is decided through a national referendum. The timing and circumstances under which the public is asked to make that decision involve major political judgements. ry’s largest anti-war protests in decades.Koizumi, 45, also told the BBC that Japan needed to clarify the status of the SDF or Self-Defence Forces. Legally and politically, Japan doesn’t call it a military - although operationally it functions as one.

Canada should ‘indefinitely exclude’ people with mental illness from assisted dying

Canada: Canada’s assisted dying laws should “indefinitely exclude” people whose sole condition is a mental illness, a new parliamentary committee report recommends.The debate around expanding medical assistance in dying, known as MAID, to people with mental illness is one of the most contentious in Canada since the country allowed the end-of-life policy a decade ago. Wednesday’s report by the joint House and Senate committee on Medical Assistance in Dying could guide how - and if - Canada chooses to move forwards on the already twice-delayed expansion of the programme.Last month, Prime Minister Mark Carney said he would wait for the report before deciding on next steps.The joint parliamentary committee’s 98-page report contains a single recommendation: that Canada “indefinitely exclude persons whose sole underlying medical condition is a mental illness from eligibility for medical assistance in dying”.It noted that there are a “divergence of perspectives” on the issue, and that a reoccurring point raised in testimony before the committee was the “pressing need for increased and more equitable access to adequate mental health services”.Some committee members, however, disagreed with the findings and published a dissenting report, arguing the process was “fundamentally flawed”, “biased” and favoured testimony

from those opposed to the expansion.“When you have bad inputs, you have bad outputs,” Kristopher Wells, a dissenting senator from Alberta, told the BBC.“That is why we’re calling into question the reliability and the credibility of the report and the recommendation.” Canada’s government must respond to the report by 11 July In 2023, Canada first delayed eligibility for Maid for people suffering solely from a mental illness for a year over concerns the health system was not ready for the expansion, before again delaying it again to 17 March 2027. Along with the second delay, the government recommended a parliamentary committee undertake a comprehensive review of the plans. Earlier this year, that committee held a series of hearings where medical experts and advocates testified on the current assisted dying scheme and the potential impact of its expansion.The committee also heard from European experts whose countries allow assisted dying solely for mental illness, such as the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. Their recommendation was hailed by the Conservative opposition as one that “will save thousands of lives”.“Moving forward with this expansion is reckless and dangerous,” said Conservative MP Tamara Jansen on Wednesday. She called for an expansion for people solely with mental illness to

be “permanently repealed” The prime minister has not yet taken a public position on the matter.Carney’s government would need to pass new legislation if it wanted to further delay the MAID expansion.But whatever his government decides may not end the debate.Dr Sonu Gaind, a University of Toronto professor and a witness who testified to the panel against expanding MAID for mental illness, told the BBC that such a move “would have started providing death to suicidal people struggling with mental illness who could have gotten better”.“Assessors cannot predict when a mental illness won’t improve, in fact flipping a coin would be more accurate,” he added. There are several legal challenges against Canada’s mental illness exemption, including one launched by Claire Brousseau, a 49-year-old Toronto woman with bipolar disorder and PTSD. Canada’s current assisted dying laws are a result of similar legal challenges. The remaining 4% were patients whose death was not imminent, but who had a “grievous and irremediable medical condition”.A poll by Canadian firm Angus Reid released earlier this month suggested that the majority of Canadians supported MAID - about 77%. But that support fell to 42% when it came to allowing access for those whose sole

condition is a mental illness. ”At issue here is a question of readiness,” he told reporters. “What we want to make sure is the system is trained.” The government said earlier this week the healthcare system was not yet ready for such an expansion. Opposition parties have called for an indefinite pause on broadening the category of people who were eligible, according to CBC News. Canada legalized MAID in 2016 for people with a terminal illness and expanded it in 2021 to people with incurable, but not terminal, conditions. The procedure, which usually involves an injection, is carried out by medical professionals in the 10 provinces and three northern territories.If passed, the draft law introduced by Holland would also require an assessment of the healthcare system’s readiness in two years.“What I specifically heard from my health counterparts in provinces and territories is in order to get to that state they were going to need a significant amount of time,” he said.Last year disability rights and religious advocates told Reuters that the pace of planned changes brought additional risks of people opting for MAID because they were unable to access social services. Reporting by Ismail Shakil in Ottawa, editing by David Ljunggren and Nick Zieminski



More than 30,000 people have died with medical assistance in Canada since 2016, more than 10,000 of them in 2021 when the law was expanded to people whose deaths were not “reasonably foreseeable. Trudo Lemmens, chair of health law and policy at the University of Toronto, called the parliamentary committee’s report “a wise recommendation that reflects the evidence.” Lemmens, who previously sat on a euthanasia review committee in Ontario, said that because it is impossible to predict which people might recover from mental illnesses, it is difficult for such people to meet Canada’s criteria, which requires patients to have an “irremediable” condition. The Canadian government is facing two major lawsuits involving euthanasia, referred to in Canada as medical assistance in dying, or MAID. Disability groups argue that allowing euthanasia for people who are not dying but have disabilities

is discriminatory and may pressure vulnerable people to seek the procedure. Another lawsuit filed by Dying With Dignity, an advocacy group that supports expanding assisted dying, and others contend that preventing people with mental illnesses from seeking euthanasia violates their rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In recent years, doctors and provincial authorities have reported euthanasia deaths among people seeking the procedure because they were poor, homeless or unable to seek the government support they needed to live. Carney has not publicly voiced an opinion on euthanasia, saying he likes to take “informed positions” and would wait for the parliamentary report. Helen Long, CEO of Dying With Dignity Canada, said in a statement she hopes the voices of people with severe mental illness will be heard as the government moves forward.

Search for six-year old Ebola patient armed men storm DR Congo hospital

Gaza: Authorities in east-ern Democratic Republic of Congo are searching for a six-year-old Ebola patient and her mother after armed men stormed the hospital where they were being treated.The child was taken from Wanamahika Hospital, in the city of Butembo, by “very angry” men with knives, local health official Dr Lubambo Maboko Gaston said in a statement.It is unclear whether the men were known to the child, but suspicion and fear surrounding Ebola treatment centres have been rife during the current outbreak.In an interview with the Reuters news agency, Gaston urged the child and her mother to go to a health centre, as they risked “worsening their health” and “infecting their

this species and the World Health Organisation has said it could take months for a jab to be ready.The current Ebola outbreak has the potential to be one of the largest ever, the head of Africa’s Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said on Tuesday, echoing a similar projection made earlier this month by the US CDC.“If we don’t stop the outbreak very soon it will be worse than what we had in West Africa and eastern DRC,” Jean Kaseya told a meeting of African heads of state and donors, referring to an outbreak which killed more than 11,000 in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone roughly a decade ago, as well as a less deadly surge in DR Congo in 2018.He



relatives”.Ebola treatment facilities have come under attack multiple times during the ongoing outbreak, in which almost 200 deaths and 840 cases have been confirmed. Last month, police in the town of Mongbwalu fired shots in the air after angry crowds attempted to reclaim the bodies of loved ones who had died at a health facility Days before, crowds set fire to isolation tents in hospital in Rwampara - a town 85km (53 miles) south-east of Mongbwalu - after they were prevented from taking the body of a man thought to have died from Ebola. The body of a dead Ebola victim is highly infectious and can lead to the virus spreading further when preared for burial.“People are not properly informed or sensitised about what is happening. For a certain segment of the population, especially in remote areas, Ebola is an invention by outsiders - it does not exist,” local politician Luc Malembé told the BBC last month.“They believe it is the NGOs and hospitals creating this to make money, and this is tragic. The surge in cases has been caused by a rare species of Ebola known as Bundibugyo. There is currently no vaccine for

told the Reuters news agency that many of those who come into contact with infected people were still not being traced - a key way of bringing the outbreak under control.“We have an outbreak in an urban area where there is insecurity, where there is this mining and trade activity, and also where we are not reaching all the people who must be in the contact list,” he said. ”If we don’t reach these people, we cannot say that we can win with this outbreak.”The Congolese health ministry says it has stepped up surveillance systems, contact tracing and treatment infrastructure, with dedicated centres in several affected towns. The WHO has dedicated \$3.9m (£2.9m) to tackling the outbreak, while Africa CDC has announced a \$319m budget.Cases are currently concentrated in the provinces of Ituri, South Kivu and North Kivu, where the six-year-old girl was taken from the hospital on Monday.Ituri remains the main centre of transmission.The WHO has warned that conflict in eastern DR Congo is making it more difficult to tackle the Ebola outbreak. The M23 rebel group is in control of large parts of both North and South Kivu.

Eight Methods to Manage Frizzy Hair

If humidity causes your hair to become dry and frizzy, adopting these straightforward haircare practices can aid in restoring shine and minimizing frizz. Humidity and frizz frequently occur together. An abundance of moisture in the atmosphere can lead to hair expansion, resulting in flyaways, puffiness, and unmanageable strands. Although you cannot influence the weather, implementing a few straightforward adjustments to your haircare regimen can assist in minimizing frizz.

Start With A Sulphate-Free Shampoo: Harsh shampoos can strip your hair of its natural oils, leaving it dry and more prone to frizz. Opt for a gentle, sulphate-free formula that cleanses without causing excessive dryness. **Never Skip Conditioner:** Conditioner helps seal the hair cuticle and lock in moisture, reducing



frizz and making hair easier to manage. Focus on the lengths and ends, and leave it on for a few minutes before rinsing. **Use A Microfiber Towel:** Rubbing wet hair with a regular towel can create friction and worsen frizz. Instead, gently squeeze out excess water with a microfiber towel or an old cotton T-shirt to minimize breakage and flyaways.

Apply A Leave-In Serum Or Cream: A lightweight anti-frizz serum or leave-in cream creates a protective barrier against humidity. Apply it to damp hair, concentrating on the mid-lengths and ends for smoother strands. **Limit Heat Styling:** Frequent use of straighteners, curling irons, and blow dryers can damage the hair cuticle and in-

crease frizz. If you must use heat, always apply a heat protectant and stick to the lowest effective setting. **Choose Protective Hairstyles:** Loose braids, buns, ponytails, and twists can help keep hair under control and reduce exposure to humid air. They also prevent tangles and minimize unnecessary friction throughout the day. **Deep Condition Once A Week:** A nourishing hair mask or deep-conditioning treatment once a week can replenish lost moisture and improve hair texture. Ingredients like argan oil, shea butter, coconut oil, and aloe vera can help tame frizz naturally. **Sleep On A Silk Pillowcase:** Cotton pillowcases can cause friction while you sleep, leading to tangles and frizz. Switching to a silk or satin pillowcase helps hair retain moisture and stay smoother overnight.

Expert-Recommended Facial Treatments to Consider Before the Rainy Weather



The onset of the monsoon season can provide much-needed respite from high temperatures; however, it also presents a fresh array of challenges for the skin. The rise in humidity, varying temperatures, and environmental pollutants can result in a complexion that feels congested, oily, and susceptible to sudden breakouts. Although numerous individuals revamp their skincare regimens with the seasonal shift, specialists assert that professional facial treatments are equally vital in facili-

itating a smooth transition for the skin. The key, however, isn't chasing an instant glow. It's about preparing the skin to remain balanced, hydrated and resilient in the weeks ahead. Kausar Siddiquee, Beauty Manager, BBLUNT Salon, believes the shift in weather often leads to concerns surrounding excess oil production and clogged pores. "As we move into the monsoon season, the increase in humidity can make skin feel oily, congested and prone to breakouts. This is one of the most common concerns

clients share in the salon during this time," she says. **Prioritise Deep Cleansing and Hydration** One of the biggest misconceptions about monsoon skincare is that humidity eliminates the need for hydration. In reality, skin can often become dehydrated beneath a layer of excess oil, creating an imbalance that leads to irritation and dullness. Siddiquee recommends facials that focus on deep cleansing while simultaneously replenishing moisture levels. Treatments designed to purify and hydrate the

skin can help remove impurities, unclog pores and improve overall texture. "I always recommend treatments that focus on deep cleansing, hydration and skin barrier support," she explains. "Facials such as hydrating, corrective and purifying-based treatments help remove impurities, unclog pores, replenish moisture and improve overall skin texture." An added benefit? Professional treatments can enhance product absorption, allowing your at-home skincare routine to work more effectively.

Choose Treatments That Strengthen the Skin Barrier

For those considering more intensive procedures before monsoon, experts advise taking a gentler approach. Rather than opting for aggressive treatments that may increase sensitivity, the focus should be on maintaining a healthy skin barrier. Dr Tanvi Mahale, Cosmetology Expert, Nuvana, notes that the season can trigger a host of concerns, from excess sebum production to dullness and breakouts. "The monsoon brings a set of skincare challenges from increased humidity and excess oil production to clogged pores, breakouts and dullness," she says. "Instead of opting for aggressive treatments, I recommend focusing on skin-strengthening and hydration-focused facials that nourish and uplift the skin barrier." Among the treatments she recommends are HydraFacials, LED light facials and skin-rejuvenation protocols that support skin health without causing unnecessary irritation.

Think Beyond Surface-Level Glow

While facials can help improve the appearance and texture of the skin, Dr Mahale believes a more holistic approach can amplify results. "At Nuvana, I recommend pairing facials with IV drips, which not only help enhance the results of the facial but also deliver essential nutrients and vitamins that work towards energy levels, collagen production, immunity and more," she says.

The latest trend in luxury beauty is not a serum

For many years, the concept of beauty was characterized by rapidity. Transformations achieved overnight, serums promising instant radiance, and miraculous components were at the forefront of discussions. In contrast, a new philosophy is now transforming the industry. Consumers are growing more aware of the products they apply to their skin, favoring nourishment over mere novelty and prioritizing long-term health over immediate solutions.

At the heart of this movement lies slow beauty, a growing approach that prioritizes intentional rituals, ingredient transparency, and skin health that evolves over time rather than overnight. And surprisingly, one of the most talked-about ingredients emerging from this shift isn't a newly discovered active or laboratory innovation. It's ghee.

Long revered in Ayurveda and Indian households for its nutritional and therapeutic benefits, ghee is now finding a place in skincare and haircare formulations, proving that sometimes the most relevant beauty ingredients are those that have existed for centuries.

Why Beauty Is Looking Backward to Move Forward

As consumers become increasingly ingredient-aware, there is a growing desire to reconnect with traditional remedies that offer both authenticity and efficacy. Meeta Ghuwalewala, Founder, TVAH, feels the renewed interest in ghee reflects a larger movement away from complicated skincare routines and toward mindful beauty practices. "In an era where consumers are moving away from complicated skincare routines and embracing mindful beauty, ghee is emerging as a powerful ingredient in the world of slow beauty," she explains. "Rooted in ancient Indian traditions, ghee aligns perfectly with the growing focus on simplicity, nourishment, and long-term skin health over instant results."

Rich in healthy fats, antioxidants, and essential nutrients, ghee is valued for its ability to deeply moisturize and support the skin barrier. Unlike many aggressive formulations designed to deliver immediate visible changes, ghee works more gradually, helping restore balance while strengthening the skin's natural resilience.

This gentle approach feels particularly relevant today, as increasing exposure to pollution, stress, environmental aggressors, and overactive skincare routines leaves many consumers seeking comfort rather than correction.

The Return of Ayurvedic Beauty Wisdom

One traditional preparation attracting renewed attention is Shata Dhauta Ghrita, an Ayurvedic formulation created by repeatedly washing ghee to transform its texture and improve skin absorption.

Ghuwalewala notes that this centuries-old preparation is especially valued for its soothing and restorative properties. Known to help calm dryness, irritation, and sensitivity, it represents the growing consumer appetite for heritage ingredients that serve modern skincare needs.

Its resurgence is emblematic of a broader trend within beauty, one that celebrates cultural wisdom while adapting it to contemporary lifestyles.

The Philosophy Behind Slow Beauty

While ghee's popularity may appear trend-driven on the surface, experts suggest its appeal runs much deeper. "Con-



sumers are choosing products made from ingredients with proven benefits instead of quick fixes that may not provide prolonged results," says Dr Poonam Arya, Dermatologist, Radiance Aesthetic Clinic.

She believes ghee's rise is closely linked to the values that underpin the slow beauty movement itself. Unlike ingredients marketed as instant solutions, ghee supports the skin through consistent care and nourishment over time. "What makes ghee so compelling for the slow beauty movement is that it has a reputation as a nourishing, not a transformative ingredient," Dr Arya explains. "It fits into the philosophy of supporting overall skin health through a consistent, caring routine." This perspective resonates strongly with consumers seeking rituals rooted in authenticity, tradition, and long-term well-being rather than rapid results.

More Than an Ingredient, a Cultural Reconnection

The resurgence of ghee also signals a broader shift in consumer behaviour. Across categories, people are increasingly gravitating toward products and practices that feel culturally familiar, emotionally resonant, and historically trusted. Dr Arya notes that ghee's growing presence in beauty reflects the merging of traditional wisdom with modern expectations. Consumers are no longer viewing heritage ingredients as outdated; instead, they are rediscovering them through a contemporary lens. While no single ingredient can serve as a universal solution, ghee's return to prominence highlights an important evolution within the beauty industry, one that values depth over novelty and rituals over trends.

The Future of Beauty May Be Slower Than We Think

As the beauty landscape continues to evolve, slow beauty is proving to be more than a fleeting movement. It represents a fundamental shift in how consumers define self-care, wellness, and beauty itself. In that context, ghee feels remarkably relevant. It embodies many of the qualities modern consumers are searching for: simplicity, nourishment, transparency, heritage, and intention. The increasing popularity of ghee in skincare and haircare highlights that innovation does not necessarily entail complete reinvention. Often, the most significant beauty solutions are those that have consistently proven their worth over time. As the slow beauty movement gathers pace, this modest ingredient is rising not merely as a fad, but as an emblem of a more thoughtful and lasting perspective on beauty.

Natural brows paired with softly blended blush are setting the standard for summer beauty in 2026

The defining beauty trend of summer 2026 is undoubtedly the resurgence of restraint. Full-coverage glamour is being overshadowed by skin-first makeup, which emphasizes a few strategically applied elements for significant effect. At the forefront of this trend are structured, natural brows complemented by a gentle blush, resulting in a look that is polished, radiant, and effortlessly contemporary. The New Beauty Uniform Is All About Balance. Brows have long been the unsung heroes of a beauty look, but this season they're taking centre stage. Rather than sharp arches or heavily sculpted shapes, the focus is on enhancing what's already there. According to Monika Khullar, Head Training & Artistry at Anastasia Beverly Hills, the secret



lies in maintaining softness. She recommends brushing the brows upward and filling only

sparse areas to subtly define the face while preserving a natural finish. Well-groomed brows create the framework for the rest of the face, offering polish without appearing overdone, a key characteristic of this season's barely-there beauty movement. **Soft Blush Is Summer's Secret to Instant Radiance** Once the brows provide structure, blush brings warmth and freshness back into the complexion. Khullar notes that cream and liquid formulas are particularly suited for warmer weather, thanks to their lightweight texture and seamless finish. Shades such as soft peach, warm pink and coral lend an effortless flush that brightens the skin while complementing a wide range of skin tones. The goal isn't dramatic colour, but rather a healthy-looking glow

that mimics naturally sun-kissed skin. **Feature-Focused Makeup Is Replacing Full-Face Glam** The shift towards structured beauty is one that Sanchi Sehgal, founder of Dream Beauty, has also observed. She believes summer makeup is moving away from heavy, full-face looks and embracing a more feature-focused approach. According to Sehgal, brows have the power to define facial features and create a polished appearance with minimal effort. When paired with softly blended blush, they strike the perfect balance between structure and freshness. The blush acts as a subtle accent, infusing the complexion with colour and vitality without stealing attention from the overall look. **Less Contour, More Glow** Summer beauty is less about

precision and more about effortless enhancement. Overly sculpted contours and intense cheek colour can take away from the natural elegance that structured brows and diffused blush bring to the face. Instead, the focus is on creating dimension through softness. The combination of expressive brows and a delicate flush feels lightweight, modern and easy to wear throughout the day. **The Effortless Formula for Summer 2026** The appeal of this pairing lies in its simplicity. Structured brows frame the face, while a wash of blush adds warmth and radiance. Together, they celebrate healthy-looking skin and understated confidence. Because sometimes, the freshest beauty looks aren't about adding more, they're about knowing when to stop.

Farzi Actor Bhuvan Arora and Wife Vaneja Gupta celebrate baby boy’s arrival, share first photo



Mumbai : Bhuvan Arora, best known for his performance in the hit web series Farzi, has embraced a new chapter in his personal life. The actor and his wife, Vaneja Gupta, have welcomed a baby boy, sharing the happy news with fans through a heartfelt social media post.

Taking to his Instagram handle, Bhuvan Arora made the announcement along with photos, “09/06/2026 It all started to make sense, years and years passing by but it never hit this hard. I had heard others saying, and saying it with a lot of conviction. That moment, that second.. will change everything. I used to smile, thinking people just say it to make themselves feel special, but That morning, that scary and special morning, when i, wearing an ill fitted hospital shirt and trousers, Holding my wife’s hand, was sitting in the labour room watching tears drip out of her eyes, witnessing what i today

know, was no Less than magic, bearing unimaginable pain with a smile on her face and joy in her eyes. Maybe because women are smarter and stronger than men, they truly are, she foresaw what i never could. Maybe that is how nature has designed us. She knew what was about to happen. As my gaze shifted from her face i realised that the doctors had multiplied, hurdling around us... and then came the moment, the moment i had only heard of, the moment i had anticipated a million times in my head over the last few months, and it hit me too, and it hit me like nothing has before ,i heard it, the first cry of my child followed by a loud chorus of congratulations.. but it was all blurry.. all i could think of was, is Vaneja fine?? and then our wonderful doctor with a glint in his eyes said “hand me your phone let me take a picture of the THREE of you”. And gave in my arms, the most delicate and precious

thing i have ever held. That was it!"

He also wrote, “Tara na disse ya chann kho jave tenu sang rakhna” never held so much meaning as it today does. By gods grace we all came out fine and now i know the real objective of our lives We are both nothing.. nothing but human shields to our little one. It’s been over a week we keep reliving that moment in our head over and over again. And if you find us, outside of this digital world somewhere, smiling without any reason, don’t think of us as mad people. Actually even if you do, it doesn’t matter.” Raj and DK’s crime thriller series Farzi 2 shoot has begun. Recently, Shahid Kapoor took to his Instagram stories to share a selfie with Vijay Sethupathi from the sets of Farzi 2. The photo shows them smiling widely for the camera. They are both seen with thick-framed black glasses on. “Spexy men at work!” wrote Shahid. Meanwhile, the actor also shared a series of BTS photos from Farzi 2 shoot on Instagram. The first photo shows him seated in a chair with a car in the background. Another captures him with Bhuvan Arora and DK, all looking intently at something. A third picture shows the director giving instructions to Shahid and the rest of the team. “Sunny days are back !! Farzi ing away !!” wrote Shahid.

Suniel Shetty calls Welcome To The Jungle a ‘Dhurandhar ensemble’, reveals toughest on set challenge

Mumbai : Bollywood star Suniel Shetty has opened up about his experience working on ‘Welcome to the Jungle’, and shared his experience of working with an ensemble cast of “dhurandhar” actors in the film.

Speaking about his character, Yeda Anna, the actor joked that audiences have long believed the character is forgetful and slightly crazy, adding with a laugh that age may now be making him genuinely resemble the role. “Everyone thinks Yeda Anna is a crazy person who forgets everything. The truth is, I’ve actually started becoming like that. I forget names, I forget things, and I keep asking, ‘What was that? What was that?’ Sometimes I feel Yeda Anna hasn’t really changed in me. Age ki vajah se hoga (It might be because of age),” he said. While the film is packed with action, comedy and larger-than-life moments, Shetty revealed that the toughest challenge was not the action sequences but maintaining a straight face amid the nonstop humour on set.

“It is an action, comedy, fun film. But the problem here was not of action. Problem yeh tha ki aese mahaul mein straight face kaise rakhe (The problem here was how to keep a straight face in such an environment.) Kyunki co-artist jab koi punch line maarta hans dete the shot kat jata tha (The real challenge wasn’t the action. It was keeping



a straight face. Whenever a co-actor delivered a punchline, everyone would burst out laughing),” he shared. He added, “To challenge ye tha ki hum logon ko hasayenge par khud nahi hansenge (We had to make people laugh without laughing ourselves, and that was the hardest part).”

Directed by Ahmed Khan, ‘Welcome To The Jungle’ boasts one of the largest ensemble casts. Apart from Akshay Kumar and Suniel Shetty, the film also stars Disha Patani, Jacqueline Fernandez, Arshad Warsi, Jackie Shroff, Paresh Rawal, Raveena Tandon, Lara Dutta, Farida Jalal, Johnny Lever, Shreyas Talpade, Tusshar Kapoor, Rajpal Yadav, Krushna Abhishek, Kiku Sharda, Daler Mehndi, Aftab Shivdasani, Mukesh Tiwari, Yashpal Sharma, Kiran Kumar, Zakir Hussain, Vinu Dara Singh, Urvashi Rautela, Hemant Pandey, Bri-

jendra Kala, Feroze Khan, Puneet Issar, Sudesh Berry, Jeetu Verma, Vrihi Kodvara, Adityaa Singgh and Bhagya Bhanushali, among others. Praising the film’s massive ensemble cast, Shetty said the chemistry among the actors is what gives ‘Welcome to the Jungle’ its unique appeal.

“This film is not about one person. Yeh 25-30 dhurandhar actors ki film hai (It is a film of 25-30 ‘dhurandhar’ actors). That’s where the charm is, that’s where the hype comes from. Everyone has their own fan base and followers, and together we will take this film forward,” he said. The veteran actor also spoke about the importance of multi-starrer films at a time when many young actors worry about sharing screen space. According to him, actors should fear failure, not success. “Today’s youngsters often become insecure when it’s a two-hero

or multi-hero film. But your security lies in doing such films and entertaining audiences together. When you perform alongside a fellow actor and support each other, the film works. Failure should be the biggest insecurity for an actor. Success can never be insecure,” he stated.

Highlighting recent examples of successful ensemble projects, Shetty pointed to films where multiple stars shared the spotlight while still receiving individual appreciation, reinforcing his belief that strong collaborations ultimately benefit everyone involved. “You see ‘Dhurandhar’, it’s a multi-star cast film that has worked. It’s ‘Border’ (Border 2), a multi-star cast film that has worked. There is Sunny Deol, there was Diljit Dosanjh, there was Varun Dhawan, still Ahan (Ahan Shetty) got his place. ‘Welcome to the Jungle’ is slated to hit theatres on June 26.

Cocktail 2 advance booking: Shahid Kapoor, Kriti Sanon, Rashmika Mandanna film sells 57k tickets

Mumbai : Cocktail 2 is showing signs of momentum at the box office ahead of its release. The Shahid Kapoor, Kriti Sanon and Rashmika Mandanna starrer has crossed 57,000 tickets in advance sales for its opening day, giving the film a late boost after a relatively slow start to pre-bookings.

According to trade tracker Sacnilk, Cocktail 2 has collected Rs 1.97 crore in advance bookings without block seats. Including block seats, the figure stands at Rs 3.67 crore. With the film still having one more day of pre-sales before release, the final advance booking number could see a further jump. Advance booking for the film opened on Sunday, but the initial response was modest. However, as release day draws closer, ticket sales have begun improving, offering some encouragement for the makers. While the current figures are not among the year’s biggest pre-sales

numbers, they place Cocktail 2 in a comfortable position ahead of its theatrical debut. Industry watchers will now be looking at whether the film can convert the growing interest into a strong opening-day collection.

The timing seems to be working in Cocktail 2’s favour. The film arrives in cinemas on June 19 without any major Hindi film releasing alongside it. Last week’s releases, Main Vaapas Aaunga and Bharat Bhagya Viddhaata, have left room for a fresh release to attract audiences. Cocktail 2 is less likely to face competition from Haunted 3D: Echoes Of The Past, which has failed to create an impact at the box office during its second weekend run. As the film heads towards release, the makers have continued promoting it with fresh music. On Wednesday, they unveiled Bandhu 2.0, a recreated version of the popular song



Tumhi Ho Bandhu from the original Cocktail. The song has generated mixed reactions online, with some viewers embracing the nos-

tagic touch while others have been more divided in their response.

Featuring music by Pritam, Bandhu 2.0 has been

sung by Kavita Seth and Neeraj Shridhar, with lyrics penned by Irshad Kamil. The song aims to recreate the friendship-driven spirit

of the original while giving it a contemporary flavour for a new generation of listeners. Directed by Homi Adajania, Cocktail 2 is pro-

duced by Dinesh Vijan, Luv Ranjan and Ankur Garg. The screenplay has been written by Tarun Jain and Luv Ranjan.

Bombay high court permits Preity Zinta to sue over alleged AI identity misuse

Mumbai : Actress Preity Zinta has filed a plea alleging that various online platforms like Meta and Google created, uploaded and disseminated content on her generated from artificial intelligence (AI), thereby violating her personality rights and copyright and causing huge damage to her reputation and reputation.

The actress also alleged violation of his moral rights under the Copyright Act, 1957. A single-judge bench of Justice Abhay Ahuja allowed her plea seeking patent permission, allowing the actress to file an injunction suit. The Bombay High Court also observed that since the objectionable activities and acts were organised on online



platforms and many of the respondent parties had their offices outside Mumbai, some part of the trial was beyond the jurisdiction of the court. Granting the patent permission, the court said it will have the right to hear, examine and dispose of the suit.

In recent years, the advent of AI has led to infringement

of personality rights. Several actresses’ personalities have been created by using AI to spread disinformation. Actors including Amitabh Bachchan, Anil Kapoor, Jackie Shroff, Arjun Kapoor, Varun Dhawan, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Abhishek Bachchan, Salman Khan, R. Madhavan, Hrithik Roshan, and Vivek

Oberoi have successfully obtained court protection or injunctions enforcing personality/publicity rights.

The earliest and most widely cited landmark victories were by Amitabh Bachchan, Anil Kapoor, and Jackie Shroff, whose cases helped establish and strengthen judicial recognition of celebrity personality rights in India. Meanwhile, on the professional front, the actress is gearing up for the release of her upcoming film ‘Batwara 1947’. The makers of the film recently unveiled the character posters of the core cast of the drama. The character posters show Shabana Azmi, Sunny Deol, Preity Zinta, Karan Deol, Ali Fazal, and Abhimanyu Singh in a fresh avatar.

AR Rahman dismisses mockery over ‘anti national’ remark on main vaapas aaunga

Mumbai : Oscar-winning composer AR Rahman has reacted to the social media debate surrounding Imtiaz Ali’s latest film ‘Main Vaapas Aaunga’, dismissing criticism that branded the movie “anti-national” with a laughing emoji on Instagram. The film, which has been steadily gaining momentum at the box office through positive word-of-mouth, recently became the subject of online discussion after a section of social media users questioned its portrayal of Pakistan. Rahman responded with an emoji on Wednesday after coming across a satirical Instagram post that mocked claims that the film was promoting an “anti-national” narrative. The post carried the headline: “Anti-National? Movie dares to show Pakistan without terrorists and secret agents.” Rahman shared a screenshot of the satirical post on his Instagram Stories and reacted with a laughing emoji.

‘Main Vaapas Aaunga’ marks the fifth



collaboration between Rahman and filmmaker Imtiaz Ali after ‘Highway’, ‘Rockstar’, ‘Tamasha’ and ‘Amar Singh Chamkila’. For ‘Main Vaapas Aaunga’s soundtrack, Rahman reunited with lyricist Irshad Kamil. Released theatrically on June 12, 2026, ‘Main

Vaapas Aaunga’ is a Hindi-language period romantic drama directed and co-written by Imtiaz Ali. The film stars Diljit Dosanjh, Naseeruddin Shah, Vedang Raina and Sharvari Wagh in a multi-generational story centred on the 1947 Partition of India.

Daveigh chase dies at 35, partner reveals

Agency : Daveigh Chase, the actor widely recognized for lending her voice to Lilo in Disney’s Lilo & Stitch and for her memorable portrayal of Samara Morgan in The Ring, has passed away at the age of 35. The news of Chase’s passing was first reported by TMZ on Wednesday.

Citing information shared by her boyfriend, Roy Hernandez, the report revealed that the actor died on Tuesday after battling complications related to meningitis. The illness reportedly led to a severe bloodstream infection, which later progressed to sepsis. Hernandez further shared that Chase had been hospitalized in Los Angeles earlier this month after reportedly suffering from severe malnutrition. Although reports surrounding the cause of her death have garnered significant attention, further details about her



medical condition remain undisclosed. Her family has also not released an independent statement regarding her passing so far. Chase rose to prominence as one of Hollywood’s most recognizable child stars after voicing Lilo in Disney’s 2002 animated classic Lilo & Stitch, a role she later reprised in the franchise’s television adaptation.

That same year, she lent her voice to Chihiro Ogino in the English dub of the Oscar-winning Japanese animated film Spirited Away. She further cemented her place in pop culture with her portrayal of Samara Morgan, the haunting antagonist of The Ring, a performance that earned her an MTV Movie Award for Best Villain.

As she transitioned from child star to adult actor, Chase took on a variety of roles across film and television. She was particularly known for playing Rhonda Volmer in HBO’s Big Love, appearing throughout the show’s five-season run. Her body of work also included projects such as Donnie Darko, Beethoven’s 5th, ER, Sabrina the Teenage Witch, Mercy, and several other notable productions. According to TMZ, Chase’s family has since launched a GoFundMe campaign following her passing. The outlet also reported that she encountered several legal issues after stepping away from the entertainment industry, though she had largely stayed out of the spotlight in recent years.

Daniel Cormier breaks silence after alleged Eric Trump DMs posted from his account

Daniel Cormier found himself at the center of controversy in the MMA world on Sunday. It happened after a post from his account shared alleged screenshots of a conversation with Eric Trump, in which the former president’s son was seemingly seen questioning the possibility of fixed fights at a UFC White House event.

The post was later deleted, with both Cormier and Trump denying that any such exchange ever occurred.

Now, Cormier appears to have grown frustrated with ongoing questions about the alleged social media post from his account and has finally addressed and clarified the situation to set the record straight. Cormier said he only became aware of it after arriving at the White House, when he was informed by the UFC social media team.

“I have no idea how long it was up, I have no idea how long it had been taken down. Whoever did this, whoever hacked my Twitter, they posted, took it down, because they think that people are going to



believe stuff like that. At the end of the day, I would never do anything like that,” the 47-year-old said on his YouTube channel. He added, “I would never engage in those conversations. I would never go to Twitter and post that after engaging in those conversations. I just wouldn’t do

that. That’s not what I do.” Cormier said additional messages were also shared from his account without his authorship, though he accepted responsibility for one reply amid the backlash, writing, “Are people really this dumb?” He mentioned that the message was posted even as

his account had allegedly been compromised. Cormier said that sharing alleged Trump direct messages “wouldn’t make sense logically” while he was traveling to the White House, where the Donald Trump family was expected to attend UFC Freedom 250. He added that the incident

has caused issues, not with the UFC itself, but with his sponsors.

“I’m telling everyone it’s just not true, and people just don’t seem to want to believe it. ... I understand the trolling and all that – I get it, people do it all the time, but it’s like, I’m telling you straight up, it isn’t true. That man did not come up to me and ask me any of that type of stuff. I don’t think he’s stupid enough to do that,” Cormier said. He also presented a technical argument that he and Eric Trump do not follow each other on X, meaning that would prevent any direct messages between them, though platform settings can allow messages from non-followers if enabled. Ultimately, Cormier has grown frustrated with repeated questions about the viral post and firmly denies any involvement in its creation or sharing.

“All you news outlets, leave me the f*ck alone,” he iterated. “There was nothing to it. My Twitter got hacked. Someone got into my sh*t, and started posting stuff.”

Chilling details in Maharashtra woman’s suicide two months after marriage

Mumbai, June 18: Days after a 26-year-old woman allegedly died by suicide in Maharashtra’s Ambernath, police investigations have revealed chilling allegations of dowry harassment, constant CCTV surveillance and social isolation inside her matrimonial home.

Vishakha Tilkar, a commerce graduate from Pune, allegedly died by suicide on Tuesday, less than two months after her arranged marriage to Dr Nitin Tilkar on April 30. her family has accused her husband, a BHMS doctor, and in-laws of subjecting her to continuous physical and mental harassment over dowry demands and suspicions about her character. According to the complaint, no dowry was given at the time of the wedding.

However, Vishakha’s family alleged that soon after the marriage, her husband and in-laws began pressuring them to provide 50 grams of gold. Police said the demand became a recurring source of harassment. Vishakha’s father, who works as an autorickshaw driver in Pune, was allegedly unable to fulfil it. Senior Police Inspector Ramesh



Patil of Shivaji Nagar Police Station said the accused family “routinely harassed the deceased physically and mentally because they did not receive any gifts during the wedding.” “Recently, they began demanding 50 grams of gold as dowry, which her father a rickshaw driver in Pune was unable to provide,” Patil said.

The family’s allegations go beyond dowry demands. They claim Vishakha was kept under constant scrutiny inside the house, with CCTV cameras allegedly installed to monitor her movements. Her husband and in-laws were also allegedly suspicious of her character and prevented her from interacting with neigh-

bours, effectively isolating her from those around her. According to the complaint, tensions escalated on Sunday when Vishakha was seen speaking with a woman living nearby.

Her family alleged that she was later assaulted by her husband and in-laws for interacting with the neighbour. After the alleged assault, Vishakha reportedly called her parents in Pune and told them about the harassment she had been facing. Her parents were planning to travel to Ambernath to speak with her in-laws and intervene in the matter. However, before they could reach her, Vishakha allegedly died by suicide on Tuesday.

Rafael Nadal reacts to Lionel Messi’s revelation about taking inspiration from his documentary after World Cup hat-trick

Lionel Messi has credited Rafael Nadal with inspiring his record-breaking hat-trick at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, revealing he watched a documentary on the Spanish tennis great hours before taking the pitch against Algeria. The 38-year-old Argentina captain made history earlier this week in Kansas City. In his 200th international appearance, Messi delivered a vintage performance, dismantling the Algerian defence to secure a 3-0 victory. He opened the scoring in the 17th minute with a curling open-play effort before striking twice more in the 60th and 76th minutes. The feat made him the oldest player to register a World Cup hat-trick, eclipsing Portuguese rival Cristiano Ronaldo. It also pushed his all-time tournament tally to 16 goals, equalling German Miroslav Klose’s long-standing record.

However, the catalyst for the historic night came from an entirely different sport. Speaking to reporters in the mixed zone, Messi detailed his pre-match routine.

“I love playing football. It has been my passion since I was a child. When I feel good, I give everything I have,” Messi explained. “Right now, we’re watching a series about Rafa Nadal, and I identify with him in many ways. We are very similar in the sense that I always want to give my maximum and feel good.” The Spaniard replied on Instagram: “Thank you Leo, good luck for the World Cup!”

The mutual admiration between the two sporting icons is well-documented. When Messi led Argentina to the 2022 World Cup title in Qatar, Nadal publicly expressed his joy. “Without supporting Argentina, when Messi lifted the trophy, I was moved to tears. For the emotion of seeing someone so great achieve what he missed after suffering so much for it,” the Spaniard said at the time.

The career trajectories of both legendary athletes have always been defined by a narrative of overcoming setback after setback to solidify their slot at the very top of their games.

Messi retired from internation-



al football after consecutive Copa America final heartbreaks against Chile in 2015 and 2016. At the time, he said, “I tried my hardest. It’s been four finals, and I was not able to win.



I tried everything possible. It hurts me more than anyone, but it is evident that this is not for me. I want more than anyone to win a title with the national team, but unfortunately,

it did not happen.” But the legendary Argentinian, whose career was often underlined by his lack of titles with his national team, is enjoying a third-act encore glittering with a burgeon-

ing trophy haul. In 2021, he won his first-ever international trophy at the Copa America. He followed it up with the biggest prize of them all in Qatar in 2022, before adding the inter-continental Finalissima and another Copa America to his collection in 2023 and 2024, respectively.

Nadal, meanwhile, was plagued by severe injuries throughout his career. In 2005, he was diagnosed with Müller-Weiss syndrome, a rare degenerative foot condition. He prominently battled tendinitis and hip flexor and abdominal tears. His regular use of painkillers also caused perforations in his intestines. Yet his legend has been in his resilience, which saw him enjoy a 23-year-long career and retire from professional tennis in 2024 with 22 Grand Slam titles to his name, the second most in men’s tennis history. Messi will need to channel that Nadal-esque resilience once again as the World Cup intensifies. Argentina, currently topping Group J, could put one foot in the knockouts with a win against Austria next Monday.

Indian education system is extortion machine: Rahul Gandhi at Kota rally

New Delhi, June 18: Describing India’s education system as a “rejection system” rather than a selection system, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged that that the system places excessive financial burden and stress on students and middle-class families. Addressing a rally titled ‘Chhatro Ki Goonj’ (echo of students) in the coaching hub of Kota, Gandhi said that the current education structure is “extremely stressful and unfair”.

“India’s education system is an extortion machine. We want a system that allows you to dream big,” he said, adding that young people in the country are being subjected to too much pain, stress and unhappiness. The leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha said that India’s education system puts pressure on children, stresses them and crushes them. “This is not good for the country.

I want all of us to work together to ensure that no student in this country ever feels what this girl felt,” he said at the rally where he spoke to students on various issues such as pa-



per leaks and unemployment. “This is not a political meeting. This is a meeting about you, about the young people who are struggling to get a future. This evening is about you, the challenges that you are

dealing with every single day,” he said in his opening remarks.

He claimed that the system pushes students mainly towards a few career paths such as engineering, medical and civil services, while

discouraging alternative aspirations. He cited examinations such as NEET, JEE, UPSC Civil Services Examination, SSC Exam and RRB, saying that lakhs of candidates compete for a very limited number of successful outcomes.

“For NEET alone, around 22 lakh students appear, but less than one lakh get selected. These are extremely difficult odds,” he said. He further alleged that the education economy extracts large amounts of money from families each year. “Students and their families spend amounts comparable to the government’s entire education budget just for one examination,” he claimed.

The BJP, however, accused Gandhi of playing politics at the expense of medical aspirants who are in the final leg of preparations for the June 21 NEET-UG re-exam.

“Is it because of the Congress’ internal politics that you want to play with the students’ sentiments there?” BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said at a press conference in New Delhi.

Kerala CM: Will not leave PM SHRI

Thiruvananthapuram, June 18: The Kerala government on Wednesday indicated that the state will not withdraw from the Prime Minister Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) scheme, but would try to seek a conditional implementation of the initiative in a manner that would give the state the freedom to fix the curriculum. Addressing a press conference in Thiruvananthapuram, chief minister VD Satheesan said that Kerala is currently a signatory to the PM-SHRI scheme because the previous Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Union Ministry of Education on the scheme in October last year and received funds of ₹92 crore as part of the Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan (SSA).

“We are forced to continue with the project. But our condition is that we will not allow the Union government to interfere in the state’s curriculum framework. We will not allow it to select the schools for the scheme. It is the right of the state government to select the number of schools. We are the competent authority to prepare the curriculum. So we will submit a letter to the Union government on these conditions,” Satheesan said.

The chief minister said that a cabinet sub-committee of four ministers has been formed to study the project’s implementation and examine its legal aspects. The sub-panel has N Shamsudheen, the state general education minister, as the convener, and higher education minister Roji M John, culture and tourism minister PC Vishnunad and excise minister M Liju as members.



A row was triggered after the CPI, the second-biggest partner in the coalition, complained that the deal was signed without discussion or approval by the cabinet. Subsequently, the Pinarayi Vijayan-led government, under pressure from the CPI, announced it would inform the Union government to keep the scheme in abeyance, hinting that it was withdrawing from the proposal.

The PM-SHRI scheme, under which funds are released to the states to boost infrastructure in government schools, is controversial in Kerala where both the LDF and the UDF have maintained that it is “an ideological project of the BJP-RSS to infuse majoritarian nationalism” in students. Both coalitions in the past have alleged that the BJP-led Centre is trying to indirectly implement the National Education Policy (NEP) through the scheme and withhold SSA funds from non-signatory states. On Wednesday, Satheesan said that the CPM did not send a letter to the Centre asking the latter to keep the scheme’s implementation

in abeyance.

“We objected to the scheme earlier because the deal was signed without informing or discussing it in the cabinet,” he said. He added that the state government would not sacrifice its rights regarding the education sector while implementing the scheme. He said Kerala is owed at least ₹1,100 crore as part of the scheme by the Union government.

At the same time, the CPI(M) accused the UDF of going back on its promise that PM-SHRI would not be implemented in the state under its government.

“When the previous government signed the deal on PM-SHRI, the UDF propagated the lie that the deal was part of CPM-BJP bonhomie. At the time, UDF leaders like VD Satheesan, KC Venugopal and PK Kunhalikutty said the UDF, if elected to power, will not implement the scheme. They were lying to the people. IUML leaders, who spoke of throwing the deal in the Arabian Sea, are now taking the lead to implement it,” the CPM state secretariat said.

Sunil Gavaskar Expresses Belief That Ishan Kishan Has Already Obtained His South African Visa



New Delhi: Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar has strongly backed wicket-keeper-batsman Ishan Kishan to secure his place in India's squad for the 2027 ODI World Cup, declaring him a "complete player" who is now almost impossible to leave out.

Gavaskar's glowing endorsement follows Kishan's blistering 125 off just 79 balls—his second One-Day International century, arriving nearly four years

after his famous maiden double-hundred. The left-hander's explosive return to form has shifted the selectors' focus, earning him a spot in the upcoming ODI series ahead of high-profile contemporaries Sanju Samson and Rishabh Pant. Speaking after Kishan's masterclass, Gavaskar suggested the 27-year-old has already done enough to book his ticket for the next World Cup cycle. "I think

he's got his visa already," Gavaskar remarked. "Somebody else has to really play out of their skin to keep Ishan Kishan out of the team. He's such a big contributor in the T20 format and he's batting so well." Kishan's blistering 125 off 79 balls against Afghanistan in Lucknow—where he accelerated from 50 to 100 in a mere 19 deliveries—caps off a sensational run of form across formats in 2026. The left-

hander crossed the 1,000-run milestone in ODIs during the knock, carrying forward his rich vein of form from the T20 World Cup earlier this year, where he plundered 317 runs and became the first Indian wicketkeeper to score a half-century in the tournament's history. Gavaskar highlighted a noticeable evolution in Kishan's technical game over the past 18 months, noting that technical flaws

that once plagued the batsman have been completely ironed out. "Look at that shot Graham [Swann] was talking about, the lofted extra-cover drive. He's got a very good defence as well. Anything short, he's quick to go on to the back foot and pull it away for sixes," Gavaskar said. "He's just a complete player now, and he's become a complete player over the last year and a half. Earlier, you thought maybe around the off stump he was a little vulnerable. He didn't quite have that lofted extra-cover drive. That's what he's got now, and it's so hard to keep him quiet." Kishan's adaptability has also caught the eye of former England spinner Graeme Swann, who praised the batsman's selfless approach and tactical maturity during his fluid partnership with Shubman Gill. Kishan, who hammered down the selectors' doors in the domestic circuit last year to break into the T20 World Cup setup, is currently operating as India's primary and wicketkeeper.

Luis Diaz Sparks Colombia To Commanding Victory Over World Cup Debutants Uzbekistan



New Delhi: Luis Diaz produced a dazzling display as Colombia marked their return to the FIFA World Cup with a commanding 3-1 victory over tournament debutants Uzbekistan in their Group K opener at a vibrant Azteca Stadium on Wednesday. After missing out on qualification for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, Colombia arrived in Mexico determined to make an immediate impact. They were handed an added incentive before kick-off when fellow Group K contenders Portugal were held to a surprise 1-1 draw by DR Congo, opening the door for Nestor Lorenzo's side to seize early control of the group. While Colombia were overwhelming favourites against an Uzbekistan side playing their first World Cup match, the South Americans initially found it difficult to turn their dominance into goals. They controlled possession and spent long spells camped inside the opposition half, but Uzbekistan remained disciplined and organised in defense. The breakthrough finally arrived four minutes

before the interval, and it was crafted by Colombia's brightest star. Diaz, who tormented the Uzbek defence throughout the evening, delivered a superb ball into the penalty area and Daniel Munoz ghosted in behind his marker before producing an instinctive hooked finish that flew past the goalkeeper. The goal capped a first half in which Colombia had largely dictated proceedings. Uzbekistan rarely threatened and struggled to venture into Colombia's half, but they emerged from the break with renewed belief and gradually grew into the contest. Their historic World Cup moment arrived on the hour mark. Eldor Shomurodov's effort forced a save from goalkeeper Camilo Vargas, who could only parry the ball into a dangerous area. Abbosbek Fayzullaev reacted quickest, rising to head home from close range and score Uzbekistan's first-ever goal at a FIFA World Cup. For a brief period, the contest appeared far more complicated than Colombia had anticipated.

Shafali Verma Wants Continued Wins to Secure Semi-Final Qualification Without Pressure



Chandigarh: India continued their impressive start to the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 with a commanding 95-run win over the Netherlands in Leeds, moving to the top of Group A. Speaking on JioStar's 'Adidas Match Centre Live', Indian batter Shafali Verma reflected on India's dominant start to the tournament, the guidance she received from senior players Smriti Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur. "It feels really good to win the first two matches of the T20 World Cup. We won both games by big margins, which is crucial in a

tournament like this. The atmosphere in the dressing room is very positive. We want to keep winning and make sure we qualify for the semi-finals without any last-minute pressure. Things are going as per plan, the batting is clicking, the bowlers are delivering, and the fielding has been sharp. We need to carry this momentum into the upcoming games. Every match is important, and we are not taking anything for granted. We want to keep improving and stay focused on the bigger goal of lifting the trophy", said the Indian opener. On the ad-

vice she received from Smriti Mandhana at the start of her innings, she added, "I couldn't execute my plans the way I wanted in the last match against Pakistan. I was a bit rushed, and my shot selection wasn't ideal. But against the Netherlands, I kept it simple. I decided to just watch the ball and react. I didn't overthink. The shots came naturally. I only went after deliveries in my hitting arc. It felt like I was in auto mode. At the start, I kept reminding myself to play along the ground. Smriti didi kept telling me to watch the ball closely. It sounds like a small thing, but as a batter, it makes a huge difference. It helps you stay balanced and time the ball better. We kept talking about it throughout the innings. That constant communication helped me stay focused." After defeating Pakistan and Netherlands, the Indian women are now scheduled to face South Africa. We have two to three days of practice before the next match against South Africa. We all know that from here on, every game is crucial. There is no room for complacency. Everyone must stay alert and focused, in batting, bowling, and fielding. In a World Cup, you cannot afford to take any match lightly. Every opposition is tough, and every game matters.

Ronaldo's Fear Factor Fading? DR Congo Defender's Candid Remarks Raise Eyebrows Worldwide

New Delhi: For years, facing Cristiano Ronaldo meant building an entire game plan around stopping him. After DR Congo's historic 1-1 draw with Portugal at the FIFA World Cup 2026, midfielder Ngal'ayel Mukau suggested those days may be gone, revealing his side had no special strategy to contain the 41-year-old. Mukau made the candid remarks after helping DR Congo earn their first-ever World Cup point, more than five decades after Zaire's only previous appearance at the tournament in 1974. His comments offered a glimpse into how opponents now view Ronaldo, still one of football's greatest players, but no longer the unstoppable force who once shaped every defensive plan. Speaking after the match, Mukau said DR Congo had not put together any special plans to stop Ronaldo, a statement that quickly caught attention given the Portugal captain's status as one of the greatest players in football history.



"To be honest, no, not really," Mukau said when asked if his side had targeted Ronaldo specifically. "We know that Ronaldo isn't the same as before. He's a bit older now. Still, he's one of the greatest, much respect to him. But he is older now." The midfielder maintained his stance when pressed further, while continuing to

praise the 41-year-old. "For sure, when you get older, it's not the same. It's not the same efforts you can make. But still, too much respect for him. One of the greatest to play the game." Mukau's comments came after another frustrating night for Ronaldo, who struggled to impose himself on the contest as Portugal failed to overcome a

spirited Congolese side. The Portugal captain missed two good chances in the second half, both from close range, as Roberto Martinez's side were forced to settle for a draw. One of those opportunities drew a visible reaction from Bruno Fernandes, who had been positioned behind Ronaldo and appeared better placed to finish.

Raj Tilak: India A Captain Redeems Himself With Sri Lanka Triumph



Mumbai : In his first assignment as captain, Tilak Varma briefly lost control of his ship. Leading the India A side in Dambulla, Tilak's team lost their cool, culminating in an ugly post-match brawl where his 15-year-old opening batter, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, ended up in a physical altercation with the Sri Lankan team. Sooryavanshi, just 15 years of age, snapped at select opposition players who celebrated wildly after the

hosts beat India in a controversy-filled Super Over. Driven by the raw emotion of the moment, Vaibhav ended up shoving a Sri Lankan player and had to be physically dragged out of the fray by his teammate and batting partner, Suryansh Shedge. For a cricketer like Tilak, who is being considered as a future leader of the senior Indian team, the incident came as a massive blot. While Tilak wasn't the one throwing shoves, his own

actions had stoked the fire. His animated, furious gestures at the on-field umpires during the final stages of the game had allowed the team's temper to boil over, setting the stage for the chaos that unfolded after the final whistle. Social media was quick to crucify the young side. Former India batter Sanjay Manjrekar led the calls for strict disciplinary action, demanding Sooryavanshi be dropped for the subsequent must-win match against Afghanistan A. "If I was India A coach or manager, I would have left Vaibhav Suryavanshi out for this game v AFG. Only to let him know that it's not OK to get physical on the field. Whatever the provocations," Manjrekar posted on X. But Sanjay Manjrekar is 60. Tilak Varma is 23. The impressionable minds of this ultra-young Indian squad have been nurtured on a vastly different competitive philosophy: 'Ye naya Hindustan hai. Ye ghar me ghusega bhi, aur marega bhi.'

Following Vozinha's Heroics, His Mother Secures US Visa To Watch World Cup

Mumbai : Cape Verde goalkeeper Vozinha is set for an emotional reunion at the World Cup after U.S. officials moved to ensure his mother can travel to the United States in time to watch him play against Uruguay on Sunday. The 40-year-old became one of the early stars of the tournament this week after producing a string of outstanding saves to help Cape Verde hold Spain to a shock 0-0 draw in the nation's first-ever World Cup match. But amid the celebrations, Vozinha revealed that his mother, Ana Candida Evora, had been unable to travel to the United States because of visa-related difficulties. That situation is now expected to be resolved. House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries announced on Wednesday that he had spoken with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and urged the State Department to do everything possible to ensure Evora



could attend Cape Verde's next Group H match in Miami. "No mother should miss the chance to see her child make history," Jeffries said in a statement, according to AP. said all fees had been waived and travel arrangements were being made to get Evora to Sunday's match. The development comes just days after Vozinha emerged as one of the breakout stars of the World Cup. Spain entered the tournament as overwhelming favourites against Cape Verde, one of the smallest nations in the competition. Instead, they were repeatedly frustrated by the veteran goalkeeper,

who produced seven saves to preserve a famous draw. The performance quickly captured global attention and turned Vozinha into one of the stories of the opening week of the tournament. After the match, however, the goalkeeper revealed that his mother had not been in the stands to witness the biggest moment of his career. Vozinha said she had been unable to secure the documents needed to travel to the United States in time for the match. The issue unfolded against the backdrop of tighter U.S. immigration measures that had initially required citizens from doz-

ens of countries, including Cape Verde, to post bonds of up to \$15,000 when seeking entry into the country. The Trump administration later suspended that requirement for World Cup ticket holders and their families, but critics argued the move came too late for many supporters hoping to attend the tournament. According to AP, the State Department had previously said it had no record of Evora applying for a visa but was working with Cape Verdean authorities to resolve the situation. A U.S. State Department official later told Reuters that visa staff in Praia were working closely with her to complete the process. "We can confirm our visa team in Praia is in close touch with her and providing the needed services," the official said in a statement provided to Reuters. Reuters also reported that officials believed part of the delay stemmed from the fact that

Evora did not hold a valid Cape Verde passport when she first explored travelling to the United States, an issue that is now being addressed. The expected arrival of Vozinha's mother adds another uplifting chapter to Cape Verde's remarkable World Cup story. The island nation has already exceeded expectations by taking a point from Spain in its tournament debut and now heads into Sunday's meeting with Uruguay believing another surprise could be possible. After becoming one of the faces of the tournament with his heroics against Spain, the goalkeeper is now expected to have his mother in the stands to witness the next chapter of a World Cup journey that has already captured the imagination of fans around the world. For a player who waited until the age of 40 to make his World Cup debut, sharing that moment with family may mean as much as any result on the pitch.